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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Unchained Manhood

The Performance of Black Manhood

During the Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction Eras

A dissertation submitted in satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Mark Asami Okuhata

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Unchained Manhood

The Performance of Black Manhood

During the Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction Eras

by

Mark Asami Okuhata

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Brenda Stevenson, Chair

My dissertation examines the ways in which formerly enslaved black men constructed their gender identities. According to the cultural logic of the nineteenth century, black men were emasculated subjects who were rendered “boys” by the slave regime. However, I argue that former male slaves parlayed the cultural conditions of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction Eras into performative demonstrations of their manhood. My first chapter is an introduction to the intersectional study of black manhood. By delineating a historiography of the gender concept, I argue that the study of black men as gendered subjects demands scholarly attention. My second chapter centers on black soldiers during the Civil War. By handling, parading, and

discharging firearms, I argue that armed black men signified a stark break from the Colonial and antebellum periods. By the war's end, I argue that the demilitarization of the Union Army, and the end of Reconstruction precluded black men from employing firearms as a means of constructing their black manly identity. My third chapter investigates the ways in which slavery and the Civil War impinged upon the bodies of black men during the postwar. By tracing the history of black male bodies, I argue that black men's physicality informed and constrained their postwar gender performances. This third chapter is crucial for not only understanding postwar black manhood; it provides theoretical implications for the study of corporeality and gender construction as well. My fourth chapter situates black manly values and beliefs within the context of the economy. I explore black manly identity in relation to the volatile economic milieu of Reconstruction policies, rising taxes, agricultural fluctuations, and the "Panic of 1873." Rather than pursue a middle-class model of self-made manliness, I argue that a historical ethos of cooperation best describes black men's economic roles. In my fifth and final chapter, I examine black men within the context of their families and communities. Here I explore black manhood relationally to black women and children, as well as to the larger black and white communities. I contend that postbellum freedom offered former male slaves novel opportunities to demonstrate their roles as husbands, fathers, and citizens. Moreover, I conclude that with the end of Reconstruction, the resurgence of white superiority undercut black men's performances as gendered subjects.

The dissertation of Mark Asami Okuhata is approved.

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2014

For

Kristy Kulikoff Okuhata

The Love of My Life

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Vita

Mark Okuhata holds a bachelor's degree in the Department of History from California State University, Fullerton; as well as a master's degree in the Department of American Studies from California State University, Fullerton. In 2004, Mark delivered a conference paper that analyzed the governing philosophy of documentarian Ken Burns entitled "Passing the Baton: An Evaluation of *The West* as a Public Memory Source" at the Western Social Science Association's 46th Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah; and was the Honorable Mention Recipient of California State University's Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. From 2005 to 2007, Mark attended the American Studies doctoral program at the University of Kansas where he designed and taught a course entitled "Understanding America."

CHAPTER ONE

Am I Not a Man?

An Introduction to the Study of Black Manliness

Am I not a man and a brother?

- Antislavery slogan, circa 1830¹

Silence surrounded the auction block. Then a voice of frail desperation filled the antebellum air. “Yes, sir,” declared Israel – a crippled black slave who was up for sale – “I kin do as much ez ennybody.” With an audience of prospective buyers before him, along with his wife and children nearby, the feeble yet brazen Israel continued his plea. “Marsters, ef you’ll only buy me and de chillum with Martha Ann, God knows I’ll wuk myself to deth for you.” By delivering his woeful entreaty, Israel’s position as a male slave mirrored the frailty of his broken body. As a form of human chattel, Israel lacked considerable power over his own life; and while attempts at persuasion and appeals of the heart provided some means of agency on the auction block, ultimately, Israel’s future – and the integrity of his family – rested in the hands of other men. Luckily for Israel, his earnest supplication had the desired effect. Upon hearing Israel’s assurances of hard work, a compassionate buyer collectively purchased Israel and his family.²

Although noteworthy for its agreeable outcome, Israel’s distressing experience on the auction block was neither startling nor uncommon. For Israel, and the millions of enslaved African Americans residing in the United States, negotiating their lives under the authority of other Americans was a persistent feature of perpetual servitude. Facing punishment, sale, or death, enslaved African Americans had few viable options – with the exception of successfully running away from the South, or in rarer cases, manumission or self-purchase – to effectively

refute their subjugation. This perennial bondage aggrieved slaves in multiple ways, including their ability to freely express themselves as gendered subjects. As chattel property of white masters, enslaved Americans were not only robbed of their freedom, dignity, and humanity, they were also deprived of their maturity as full-fledged men and women. Rendered “dependents” in both law and practice, black men and women were reduced to the diminutive status of children – referred to in Southern parlance as “boy” and “girl.” For black men in particular, their infantilized status directly impinged upon their identities as men since, according to the cultural logic of the nineteenth century, boyhood not only signified immaturity, but veritable emasculation. Indeed, as subservient “boys” under the power of white men, abolitionist societies posited black manhood in terms of a question – “Am I not a man and a brother?” – while fugitive slaves such as Lewis Clarke fervently proclaimed, “A SLAVE CAN’T BE A MAN!”³ Thus, in a nation that extolled the virtue of independence, enslaved black manhood became synonymous with its absence.⁴

This study seeks to examine this purported absence of black manhood during the antebellum era of 1800-1861. In addition, this study explores the ways in which black men expressed their manhood immediately after slavery – beginning with the years of Civil Warfare from 1861-1865 and continuing into the Reconstruction Era from 1865-1877. I have broadly delimited this study from 1800 to 1877 for several reasons. It was the nineteenth century that witnessed an exponential growth and entrenchment of the slave regime as well as its violent collapse – a time when millions of purportedly “emasculated” slaves became realized “men,” when thousands of black men carried and fired guns on an unprecedented level, and when possibilities of black manhood were performed during freedom like never before. Combined

with the economic, social, and political vicissitudes of the nineteenth century, I believe this broad span of time offers a fertile ground for black manhood studies.

Although broadly delimited, this study centers on the juxtaposition between enslavement and freedom. I believe that by examining black manhood over these two adjacent periods, the concept of black manhood may be better defined. It is this comparative approach between two distinct eras of analysis – or what anthropologist Clifford Geertz has coined “reciprocal relief” – that may distinctively define two variants of black manhood in relation to one another.⁵ In other words, by juxtaposing black manliness during slavery and an unfettered manhood during freedom, I believe we may gain a better understanding of both. Moreover, this study is organized thematically by chapter. Chapter Two focuses on the incorporation of firearms as a thematic component of black manly expression; while Chapter Three explores the corporal history and constitution of the black male body. Black manly identity in relation to the postwar economy constitutes the theme of Chapter Four; whereas Chapter Five delineates black men’s gender roles within the family and community. Since this study is one of juxtaposition, each thematic chapter examines black manhood within the contexts of both enslavement and freedom.

With this methodological structure in mind, I argue that slavery did not completely emasculate black men. In some instances, enslaved black men constructed a manly identity by demonstrating their physical prowess, providing gifts to their families, and by partially performing the manly ideals of southern “mastery” and “honor.” However, when studied in relation to their gender performances during the Civil War and after emancipation, enslaved black men performed a severely constrained version of manhood under slavery – one that underscores the stifling restrictions imposed upon black manhood during the antebellum era. Moreover, I contend that the residual legacies of slavery ambivalently informed black manhood

during the years of civil warfare and Reconstruction. Whereas the repressive restrictions and harsh conditions of enslavement spurred black men to manly performances on the battlefield and cooperative efforts in the marketplace, these same restrictions and conditions left black men with empty pockets, debilitating injuries, and a persistent struggle with white supremacy that would ultimately bring their fullest expressions of manhood to an end.

Since my study incorporates concepts that may be unfamiliar to readers, I wish to delineate several terms that prove integral to the study of black manhood. First, *gender* is a socially constructed concept that imbues cultural “meaning” upon the male and female sexes. Whereas biological *sex* connotes “difference” based on the anatomical organs of male and female bodies, gender refers to values and beliefs that cultures attribute to men and women. Moreover, since gender is an ongoing construction of meaning, it is neither fixed nor immutable. In other words, what it means to be a man or women has changed over the course of time, and it is this ongoing change in gendered meaning that offers fresh insights for those interested in the human condition.

Second, *manhood* or *manliness* refers to male character traits and identities that belong to the nomenclature of nineteenth-century America. Whereas in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the term “masculinity” connotes an innate set of male traits corresponding with the supposed physical, aggressive, and sexualized nature of the male body, such meaning belongs to the centuries of American history following this study.⁶ In the nineteenth century, the term and meaning of masculinity was unknown to Americans. Instead, nineteenth-century American culture employed the terms manhood and manliness as a set of cultural ideals that males aspired to rather than something they inherently possessed. In the parlance of dominant America culture, for example, it was manly for men to garner social respectability, to heed the dangers of

intoxication, to practice self-control, to pursue superiority in the marketplace, to participate in self-government, and to assert themselves as independent citizens.⁷ Moreover, manliness could be employed as allusions to male character. Authors were praised for their “manly words of admonition,” voters exercised their “manhood suffrage,” and abolitionists polemically deemed slavery a “mighty waste of manhood.”⁸

Third, making use of Judith Butler’s theoretical works, I employ the concept of gender “performance” throughout this study. Gender *performance* is a type of gender construction. According to Butler, gender is a type of “doing” – a performance if you will – that allows one to understand gender construction as a series of beliefs and behavior put on display. However, as Butler is careful to explain, “one does not ‘do’ one’s gender alone. One is always ‘doing’ *with or for another*, even if the other is only imaginary.”⁹ In other words, Butler acknowledges that gender performance is historically and culturally bound by one’s perception of audience members, and it is this perception – of real or imaginary audience members – that informs and constrains one’s “doing” of gender. Gender performance, then, could be described as “a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint,” and it is this dynamic – between black manly “performers” and the historical “scenes” that constrained them – that is the substance of this study.¹⁰

My source material primarily consists of ex-slave interviews conducted by journalists and government officials from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the end of the 1930s. I include the estimated 3,500 interviews conducted by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) between 1936 to 1938; the 206 interviews conducted by journalist Orland Kay Armstrong in the 1920s, the 100 interviews conducted by Fiske University in the 1920s; the postbellum newspaper and magazine interviews collected and published by historian John Blassingame; and the 48

interviews conducted by the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission (AFIC) during and after the Civil War. Moreover, I include evidence from Civil War Pension files published in Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer, eds., *Voices of Emancipation* (2008); Freedmen's Bureau records published in the *Publications of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project* (1985-2013); autobiographical narratives written by former slaves, and primary source materials published in Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen* (1976). Specifically in regard to my chapter on black manhood and guns, I incorporate 129 letters written by black soldiers in Edwin S. Redkey's *A Grand Army of Black Men* (1992).¹¹

Finally, I wish to locate my study amongst an important body of scholarship that has proven indispensable to my understanding of race and gender. Although my study is a response to a scholarly void, I owe my academic debts to a rich historiography of intersectional works, beginning with the earliest narratives of enslaved black men in America.

Although histories of black men in America have been part of our national literature for centuries, early works did not produce knowledge of black men as gendered Americans. Rather, early histories of (or by) black men were mostly centered on those exceptional few who either escaped from enslavement or who took advanced leadership positions. Early slave narratives such as Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), and Venture Smith's *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But resident above sixty years in the United States of America* (1798), focused on exceptional experiences emphasizing a contest between "good and evil."¹² Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), and *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) are antebellum exemplars of this moral tradition – a genre that bolstered abolitionist aims and testified to the inherent evils of slavery.¹³

Postbellum publications also focused on the words and deeds of exceptional black figures such as Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901). However, these latter narratives emphasized a forward-looking paradigm – a “more practical and less romantic” view of the past that was “more about a rise to success for the individual and progress for the race as a whole.”¹⁴ Even the masterful works of W.E.B. Du Bois – including *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America* (1924), and *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (1935) – rarely provided explicit insights into gendered values and beliefs that engendered black men. When Du Bois did include “gender” into his analysis, he traced the experiences and contributions of black women, such as his chapter entitled “The Freedom of Women,” in *The Gift of Black Folk* (1924).¹⁵

The origins of black manhood as a gendered identity could be traced to more recent scholarship – namely the Civil Rights and White Feminist Movements of the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶ Paralleling the consciousness-raising context of the era, a series of pioneering works materialized that emphasized gender as an important “site” of study. Barbara Welter's “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” in the *American Quarterly* (1963), followed by Aileen S. Kraditor's *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (1970) introduced a set of dominant gendered ideals that were labeled the “cult of true womanhood” and the “cult of domesticity,” respectively. Although these collective sets of gendered ideals illuminated different gendered expectations for women in the nineteenth century, Welter and Kraditor's concept of gender was “unconsciously” racialized as white middle-class women. This conflation of “gender,” women, and “whiteness” continued in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's article “The

Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century American” in *Signs* (1975), and Nancy F. Cott’s *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (1977). Both Smith-Rosenberg and Cott emphasized the distinct lives of white middle-class women with varying degrees of independence from the male realm.¹⁷

By the 1980s, the concept of gender emerged as a burgeoning field of study. Although largely the domain of white women’s studies, the field blossomed with exciting publications such as Mary Beth Norton’s *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (1980), Linda K. Kerber’s *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (1980), and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (1982). Although the gender concept continued to center predominantly on white middle-class women, the concept of gender had made great strides in the historical profession. By the mid-1980s, the *American Historical Review* published a telling article by Joan Scott, whose title confirmed the gender concept’s viability: “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” (1986).

Despite the preponderance of white women as gendered subjects, the 1980s witnessed a racialized direction for the gender concept. Non-White races and ethnicities intersected with gender to create a more inclusive understanding of the gender concept. Studies of Native American women came to the fore such as Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine’s *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (1983), along with Sara Evans’s first chapter “The First American Women,” in *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (1989). Latina history also emerged, such as Lillian Schlissel and Vicki Ruiz’s *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives* (1988). And in the early 1980s, studies of black women arrived on the academic scene, such as Angela Y. Davis’s *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), and Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott,

and Barbara Smith's work, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women Studies* (1982). As previously marginalized women became the focus of gender studies (or at least alternative versions of gender studies), the concept of gender no longer assumed whiteness.

In 1985, two monumental works continued to re-situate the racial category of "woman." Deborah Gray White's *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (1985), and Jacqueline Jones's *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present* (1985) rendered black women as women rather than as racialized others. By the late 1980s, additional literature on black women as gendered subjects followed, such as Hazel Carby's *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (1987), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (1988), and Cynthia Neverdon-Morton's *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925* (1989).

While scholars racialized gender, historian E. Anthony Rotundo sought to "re-gender" gender by studying men as gendered subjects. After a series of independent articles over the span of fourteen years, Rotundo published his pioneering work *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (1993). It was Rotundo's analytical framework that established a useful meta-narrative for nineteenth-century manhood studies. According to this meta-narrative, three ideals dominated northern white middle-class manhood: the communal man, the self-made man, and the primitive-passionate man. As Rotundo explained, the dominant colonial typology of manhood was defined in relation to the community. According to this ideal, "a man's identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community." However, by the early nineteenth century, the dominant communal ideal

transitioned into an individualized manhood – when men’s achievements in the market became central markers of their manliness.¹⁸ Sociologist Michael Kimmel came to the same conclusion in *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (1996). “The Self-Made Man [was] a model of manhood that derives identity entirely from a man’s activities in the public sphere,” explains Kimmel, “measured by accumulated wealth and status, by geographic and social mobility.”¹⁹

According to Rotundo and Kimmel, the latter decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the demise of the self-made manhood ideal. In its place, a new typology and a new nomenclature dominated American culture: “primitive” or “passionate *masculinity*” – an ideal that centered on an aggressive, physically strong body unfettered by Victorian notions of “self-control” and “character.” According to Rotundo and Kimmel, men strove to attain *masculinity* through physical aggression, sinewy strength, and sexual virility.²⁰ “In the closing years of the century, ambition and combativeness” as well as “competitiveness and aggression were exalted as ends in themselves,” wrote Rotundo; “toughness was now admired, while tenderness was a cause for scorn. Even sexual desire, an especially worrisome male passion in the nineteenth century, slowly gathered legitimacy. Indeed, the body itself became a vital component of manhood: strength, appearance, and athletic skill mattered more than in previous centuries.”²¹

While Rotundo neglected black manliness in his analytical framework, Michael Kimmel included examples of black manliness, albeit sparingly. However, when black manliness or masculinity entered Kimmel’s analysis, black men functioned as “the other” – a negative reference that further defined what white middle-class manhood was not. Thus, Kimmel’s approach included black manhood, but mostly as a foil for white manly construction.²²

Gail Bederman addressed black manhood with more thoughtfulness in her intellectual history, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States*,

1880-1917 (1995). Making use of Foucauldian discourse theory and methodology, Bederman traced the connection between manhood and race in the discourse of “civilization” at the turn of the century. Unlike Rotundo and Kimmel who relied on textual analyses of letters, biographies, prescriptive literature, and popular culture, Gail Bederman selected four Americans to delineate the discourse: Ida B. Wells, G. Stanley Hall, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Theodore Roosevelt – four Americans who “left a large enough body of sources to reveal their cultural assumptions about race, manhood, and civilization.” Thus, Bederman had no pretensions of including “representative” gendered subjects, since subjects are created through the discourse.²³

The strengths of Bederman’s work could be found in the discourse itself. The discourse positioned white males (specifically anglo-teutonic and to a lesser extent Scandinavian) as the pinnacle of civilization, white females as subordinate helpmates, followed by uncivilized non-white males and females as exemplars of primitivism. Making use of the discursive projects of her four subjects, Bederman demonstrated how each subject employed the discourse to serve his/her own goals. The weakness of Bederman’s methodology was her decision to exclude a black man as a discursive producer. She does mention Du Bois as a possible subject, but she does not explain why she chose to exclude him.

A year after Bederman’s work, historians Brenda Stevenson and Glenda Gilmore published individual studies that included analyses of black men alongside black women, white women, and white men. In Brenda Stevenson’s *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (1996), Stevenson demonstrated that antebellum southerners of both races idealized “family life” and “community” as models for personal fulfillment. However, Stevenson argued that race created an “an expansive cultural gap” that resulted in “profoundly” different families and communities for black and white southerners. While Stevenson

highlighted racial differences, Glenda Gilmore emphasized relational differences in *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (1996).

Ostensibly, Gilmore emphasized the experience of black middle-class womanhood, however, her analysis includes relationships between both white and black races complicated by intersections of class and gender; or what theorist Robyn Wiegman has called “genderraceandclass” instead of gender, race, and class.²⁴ Gilmore reminded us that identities are formed relationally to one another, including intra-racial social class identities.

In terms of manhood, Gilmore dedicated an entire chapter to the rise of the South’s “New White Man” – a discursive device that “stated bluntly that the prerogatives of manhood – voting, sexual choice, freedom of public space – should be reserved for him alone.”²⁵ Black middle-class men and women had a different conception of manliness: the “Black Best Man.” “Some African Americans, those who saw themselves as Best Men and Best Women,” wrote Gilmore, “demanded that class serve as a marker of manhood and womanhood.”²⁶ To explicate the Black Best Man concept, Gilmore included a poignant example:

When the editor of a white newspaper referred to Laura Lomax as Harris’s “sweetheart” and “a colored girl,” the editor of the black newspaper was quick to take exception: “We will remind [the white editor] that she is a respectable young lady, whose family is more prominent and wealthy than his.” Then he invoked the Best Man bargain: “We want our ladies respected....White men make us respect white ladies, and they must make white men respect ours....They must not look upon us *all* as boys and wenches.”²⁷

According to Gilmore, the Black Best Man was also defined in relation to the black laboring class. “An integral piece of the Best Man compromise,” explains Gilmore, “was the requirement that leading African Americans influence for the better the behavior of poor blacks.”²⁸ In another illustrative example, Gilmore included the comments of a Black Best Man in Charlotte who “glanced out of his office window to see a group of black men and women

flirting, laughing, and eating ice cream on the corner. He castigated the men,” explained Gilmore, “calling them ‘corner-loafers and suckers who strut like a peacock, assume the air of a turkey gobbler, have the cunning of a fox, the grin of a possum, the cowardice of a cat, and are the boss liars of town.’”²⁹ At a time when Jim Crow white supremacy gained currency in North Carolina, black middle-class men constructed their manhood strategically out of class status to thwart attacks of black inferiority.³⁰

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, articles on black manliness appeared in Indiana University Press’s “Blacks in the Diaspora” series, edited by historians Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins: *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men’s History and Masculinity, vol.1, “Manhood Rights”: The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood 1750-1870* (1999), and *vol.2, The 19th Century from Emancipation to Jim Crow* (2001). Hine and Jenkins arranged independent articles into ten main categories under general rubrics relating to ancestry, labor, culture, resistance and representation, soldiers, political leaders, the working-class, professions and fraternal organizations, sport, and military, and archetypes. Each article provided vignettes of individual black men, and thoughtful studies of economic and political black manhood. Although the articles collectively lacked an overarching synthesis, Hine and Jenkins offered a helpful fifty-eight page history of black manhood in their first volume entitled simply “Black Men’s History.”

Articles on Black Manhood could also be found in a reader edited by Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover entitled *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (2004). This reader included articles by Diane Barnes and Edward Baptist – two historians who identified impediments to black manly construction – obstacles that included racist laws, family exploitation, and forced migration. More importantly, Friend and Glover provided a vital

framework for conceptualizing white southern manhood and masculinity. According to Friend and Glover, white Southern manhood consisted of two key markers of status: honor and mastery. Making use of W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* (1941), Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (1982), and Stephanie McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (1995), Friend and Glover maintain that an honorable public status in the eyes of the community and a personal sense of mastery over dependents (wives, children, and slaves) generally defined southern white manliness. Friend and Glover also noted several ancillary traits of white southern manhood, including propensities towards individualism, independence, emotionalism, anti-intellectualism, violence, and aggression (duels, vigilantism, and lynching). Despite this hegemonic archetype of honor and mastery, Friend and Glover maintained that many white Southerners either failed to obtain land and slaves, which in turn precluded their ability to garner honor and exercise mastery; while other southerners turned away from Old Southern manliness, preferring the self-made manly ideal via the New Southern market. However, in Craig Thompson Friend's follow-up reader, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives On Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, (2009), Friend concluded that northern self-made manliness did not win hegemonic supremacy in the South.³¹ Rather, the traditional dyad of honor and mastery survived the Civil War, albeit in two different forms. The first postwar ideal was the "Christian gentleman" –modeled upon the chivalry of Robert E. Lee. According to this ideal, Lee embodied a Christian man of faith and piety, who defied effeminacy in defeat; while maintaining honor among many and mastery over his household. The South's second manly ideal was the "masculine martial." Surprisingly, Lee embodied this ideal as well. As a southern soldier and hero, Lee idealized the martial warrior who demonstrated his honor by

violently protecting his “self, family, and region” from an external threat. Friend argued that these two ideals were far from exclusive. The Christian gentleman employed the masculine martial to advance his postbellum causes and “protect” his family from the fictive black rapist.

Craig Thompson Friend offered a helpful meta-narrative for white Southern Manhood and Masculinity. However, Friend did not provide a conceptual understanding of black manhood in the nineteenth century. Although Friend maintained that black southern men “wrestled with the contradictions between evangelical religion and more secular masculine ideals, readers were left wondering what that “wrestling” looked like. Friend did offer an analytical glimpse at black masculinity in the twentieth century. “Jim Crow and segregation severely limited black southern men’s opportunities to engage in the sport-oriented primitive masculinity that white southern men enjoyed,” wrote Friend. “Very few African Americans were hunters; the racial barrier in college football remained until 1955; and despite Willy T. Ribbs’s success in 1986, NASCAR is still a good ol’ boys club.”³² But in a preceding paragraph, Friend argued that “black men [through the 1920s] subscribed to male identities quite similar to those in the white community.”³³ Thus, black manhood was a concept that still required conceptual specificity.

Black manhood garnered monographic attention in Martin Summers’ *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class And the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930* (2004).³⁴ Making use of Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, Martin Summers argued that white manliness constituted a “hegemonic” manhood (not just a dominant “ideal”) that influenced, but was not the sole determinant of, black manhood. “Since cultural hegemony operates through the normativization of a historical bloc’s worldview and the consent of marginalized communities to that normativization,” Summers concluded that “the relationship

between these masculinities is not always one of antagonism. Thinking of hegemonic masculinity in this way allows us to treat black men as subjects,” argued Summers, “in a process of gender identity formation that, although ultimately shaped by the dominant culture, is not merely reactive, responsive, or resistant to the dominant culture.”³⁵ Summers’ analytical framework responded directly to Rotundo, Kimmel, and Bederman’s works by viewing black men as neither the negation of manhood, nor as discursive characters that could be manipulated, nor as marginalized men responding solely to white racist manhood.

Summers also offered a more fluid theory of gender – one that allows for the polysemous nature of gender, or what Martin Summers has called “a gendered self full of multiple meanings.”³⁶ This definition of gender was informed by Raymond William’s concept of hegemony, which “does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own.”³⁷ This framework became the foundation for Summers’ main thesis that at the beginning of the twentieth century, a black middle-class manhood based on Victorian values of sobriety, respectability, and market values transitioned into a new black *masculinity* that espoused “notions that were not dependent upon one’s relationship to the marketplace, that did not rely upon a patriarchal and hetero-normative posture, and that revolved around consumption and the body.”³⁸ Thus, Summers not only established a functional theory for studying black manhood, he also demonstrated how black manliness lost ground to black masculinity.

Editors Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster’s *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature 1820-1945* (2011) offered the most recent scholarship on black manhood and masculinity. This helpful reader provided scholarship on specialized

topics – particularly, helpful analyses on black manly honor within the slave community and black manliness within the free black community in the north. Historian Jeff Forret’s “‘He was no man attall’? Slave Men, honor, Violence, and Masculinity in the Antebellum South” argued that southern honor played a part in slaves’ gender construction. Since a violent defense of one’s honor – that is, in the form of defending self and family – could not be reasonably practiced against white southerners, Forret argued that black male slaves employed violence on each other as a means of performing manly southern honor. Historians Timothy Buckner, Erica Ball, and Julius Bailey also offered helpful scholarship on the free black antebellum community in the north. Collectively, they demonstrated that free northern blacks abided by gender constructions similar to white middle-class Victorians; specifically manly self-made principles based on economic achievement, self-discipline, sobriety, and frugality. Although this reader by Buckner and Caster is a must-read for black masculinity studies, scholarship on laboring black men eras remains scant.

By tracing the historiography of black manhood, readers can appreciate both the richness of the gender concept and the many avenues open for further examination. Gender distinctions between free and enslaved black men, for example, demand more analyses, as well as distinctions between black urban residents and rural laborers.³⁹ Future scholarship is also necessary to address generational distinctions amongst black men – that is, how black men’s age differences affected their constructions of black manhood during the antebellum and postbellum eras.⁴⁰ Finally, to what extent did the ongoing influx of African peoples – via the illicit slave trade of the nineteenth century – affect black manhood? It is my hope that future scholarship will examine these topics and add to the rich historiography that currently exists.

Currently, one avenue that demands further investigation is the analytical juxtaposition between black manhood during slavery and freedom. It is this avenue that I wish to explore. And in doing so, I hope that my study encourages others to fill in the gaps that I have left, contest the gaps that I have filled, and identify gaps that I have not seen. As anthropologist Clifford Geertz has maintained, cultural interpretation “is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other.”⁴¹

CHAPTER TWO

Their First Shot at Manliness: *Black Men and Firearms During the Civil War*

Is the negro not a man? Is he not capable of bearing arms?

- George N. Williams, *Christian Reporter*, June 17, 1863¹

Amidst the quiet danger of the early morning, Robert Smalls knew his purpose.

Commandeer a Confederate vessel. Mimic the countenance of his white captain. Sail out of Charleston harbor. And achieve what millions of enslaved Americans had yearned for – a life of freedom. Making his way passed the ominous reach of Charleston Harbor’s four Confederate strongholds – Castle Pinckney, Fort Ripley, Fort Johnson, and Fort Sumter – Robert Smalls skillfully guided the *Planter* – the 150-foot-cotton steamer he had been piloting as a slave – towards the open sea where ten Federal warships awaited. As the Union warship *Onward* came into view, Smalls hoisted a white bed sheet high above the *Planter*, signaling not only a flag of surrender, but in essence, the end of his lifelong servitude. By taking on this daring venture, Robert Smalls had achieved his purpose. Robert Smalls was free.²

The results of his escape were impressive. Sixteen enslaved Americans onboard the *Planter*, including Smalls and his family, garnered their freedom. And as a boon to the Union cause, Smalls delivered to the federal fleet two hundred pounds of Confederate ammunition, four battery guns, and the *Planter* itself – rigged with a “thirty-two-pound pivot gun on the foredeck and a twenty-four-pound Howitzer file on the afterdeck.”³ Such a feat by an ostensibly

“inferior” black slave was simply stunning. The New York *Tribune* lauded “the merit” of Smalls’s actions, while *Harper’s Weekly* deemed the incident “one of the most daring and heroic adventures since the war commenced.”⁴ Commendation was even paid to Smalls by way of poetic tribute.

He dared, this son of Negro sires,
The thrilling deed was safely done,
And Captain Smalls, as pilot steered
The ship past fire of rebel gun...
His wife, his children, all were then
Upon this country’s altars laid;
He won! Ask you the reason why?
*He was a man and not afraid.*⁵

Daring. Thrilling. Heroic. Rarely was such approbation bequeathed to a black “boy” – at least, not during the quotidian days of enslavement. However, the Civil War was anything but quotidian. While the war tested the resolve of the American experiment, the exigencies of civil warfare created unique opportunities for many Americans to behave in ways that defied cultural norms. This was especially true for enslaved black males who had been deemed unmanly dependents – incapable of performing brave action, incompetent in the use of firearms, and commensurate with the faculties of a white child. It was the extraordinary context of war that disrupted such assumptions, granting black men like Robert Smalls the opportunity to renegotiate gendered assumptions about their manhood. By steering a heavily-armed Confederate steamship to freedom, Robert Smalls not only demonstrated his bravery, acumen, and love of liberty, he also signified his manliness as a black man. As the poet extolled, “He was a man and not afraid.”⁶

Although Smalls was exceptional, his ability to craft a manly identity during the Civil War was shared by thousands of black men looking to better their lives. Many black men flocked to nearby Union lines, seeking refuge from bondage, protection for their families, and

employment as cooks, laborers, servants, teamsters, and soldiers. Free black men in the North and South also joined the Union ranks; answering the many clarion calls for national unity and freedom or taking advantage of recruitment bounties. Some slaves even joined the Union Army to seek revenge against former masters. “Jess put de guns into our hans,” challenged a slave named Tom, “and you’ll soon see dat we not only knows how to shoot, but *who* to shoot. My master wouldn’t be wuff much ef I was a soldier.”⁷ And yet others consciously enlisted in the Union Army to earn respect for their manliness. “We desire to take part in this contest,” wrote an eager black constituent, “and when our Government shall see the necessity of using the loyal blacks of the free States, I hope it will have the courage to recognize their manhood.”⁸ Whether the reason for enlistment was a combination of patriotism, freedom, economic gain, revenge, or manhood, an impressive 185,000 black soldiers joined the Union war effort – that is, roughly one black recruit out of every thirteen Union soldiers – or over one-fifth of the nation’s adult male population under age forty-five.⁹

The most famous black soldiers comprised the storied Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Colored Infantry – best known for their heroic assault on Battery Wagner. Although free residents of the North – where free blacks constituted a quarter of a million Americans by 1860 – members of the Fifty-Fourth were no strangers to hardship and discrimination. Indeed, the majority of northern “free” black men lived severely constrained lives. Economically, they were reduced to unskilled manual labor. Socially, they were restricted from using public accommodations. Unofficially, they were relegated to the unhealthiest sections of New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. And legally, they were forbidden from entering Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Oregon. While “free” black men obtained suffrage in New England and New York, they were prohibited from serving on juries and participating in state militias.¹⁰ Collectively,

their status of inferiority in the North prompted free black men to not only empathize with southern slaves, but to join former slaves in armed combat as well. As free northerner Charles W. Singer of the One Hundred-Seventh United States Colored Infantry (USCI) explained in a published letter, “the free colored man’s elevation is at issue, as well as the slave’s...I wish for nothing but to breathe, in this land with my fellow subjects, the air of liberty...I never will be satisfied so long as the meanest slave in the South has a link of chain clinging to his leg.”¹¹

Living in a liminal space between enslavement and freedom, northern free blacks had much to fight for. For soldiers of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry, their challenge was even more impressive, considering that their commander, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw – the son of a prominent Boston abolitionist family – espoused racist assumptions about the black race, and initially declined the offer to take command of the 54th Massachusetts, admitting “it would have been anything but an agreeable task.”¹² Fellow abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson shared similar sentiments. As commander of the First South Carolina (Colored) Volunteers, Higginson questioned his troops’ manly qualities, referring to them as a regiment of “young barbarians.” According to Higginson, he observed his men “stumbling on by themselves” with “the blind leading the blind,” practicing the “same pathetic patience which they carry into everything.”¹³ Thus, whether free or formerly enslaved, black soldiers sought to prove Shaw, Higginson, and their contemporaries wrong.¹⁴

But to prove their worth, black soldiers had to rebuke assumptions of their unmanliness. War provided them the opportunity. A poignant example of their struggle could be found in one of Robert Gould Shaw’s copious letters to his friends and family. According to Shaw, a federal officer stationed in Virginia once ridiculed the mere thought of arming black men, however, upon witnessing the conduct of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment first-hand, the white

officer ultimately recanted his beliefs and declared Shaw's regiment a "fine set of men."¹⁵

Indeed, black emasculation was on the minds of many white onlookers, including Shaw himself.

Prior to the assault on Battery Wagner, Shaw rallied his troops to battle with words that made no reference to race, freedom, or national unity. As the Fifty-Fourth prepared for the coming assault, Shaw cried out: "Now I want you to prove yourselves men!"¹⁶

And prove themselves they did. Although the men of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts failed to capture Battery Wagner from Confederate hands, they succeeded in parlaying the war into a theatrical stage for their manly performance. As a result, soldiers and civilians recognized the importance of the battle in terms of gender. One black soldier of the Fifty-Fourth put it simply. "We have shown ourselves to be men thus far," he proclaimed, "and shall always strive to do so."¹⁷ After hearing of the attack, Frederick Douglass invoked a gendered understanding of the battle as well. "In that terrible battle," wrote Frederick Douglass, "under the wing of night, more cavils...of Negro manhood were set at rest than could have been during a century of ordinary life and observation."¹⁸ Just as former slave Robert Smalls demonstrated manly resolve on the *Planter*, free northern soldiers performed their manhood on the battlefield.

There is little surprise that the wartime exploits of both former slave Robert Smalls and free northern black soldiers elicited vigorous white reactions. According to the cultural logic of nineteenth-century America, black men – regardless of their slave or "free" status – were incapable of performing military action because they instinctively lacked the necessary qualities of manhood. According to the hegemonic logic of the era, all black men were timorous creatures, considered overly docile, stupid, and indolent. Ex-slaves "are just learning to be men," reasoned a sympathetic white Union colonel, and are ordered to perform "menial" tasks commensurate with their inferior positions.¹⁹ Thus, black men were inherently incapable of

soldiery because they supposedly lacked manly qualities. “I don’t believe you could make soldiers of these men at all,” cautioned a northern missionary, “– they are afraid, and they know it.”²⁰ Some attributed these shortcomings to nature, while others believed enslavement had stunted black men’s manly attributes. Black men “have so long been under the rule of white men,” rationalized a white commander, “that they have become completely cowed.”²¹ Others believed that slavery transformed black men into “dwarfed and ill formed” chattel.²² Regardless of the professed cause, it was assumed that black men were innately incapable of handling firearms. When an 1862 state delegation urged President Lincoln to grant the employment of black soldiers, Lincoln admitted: “if we were to arm [the Negroes], I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels.”²³ Holistically, these supposed shortcomings made black soldiers not just an improbability but an absurdity.

This nineteenth-century “absurdity” had a history. Within the frontier society of Colonial America, for instance, the concept of armed black men was not an ominous proposition. Rather, it was a necessity. Concerned with communal survival, colonial authorities granted dependents – that is, enslaved blacks and white servants – permission to carry firearms in defense against wildlife, Native Americans, and occasional warfare with foreign states. In South Carolina, for example, a seventeenth-century observer noted “many trusty negroes” in defense of the colony; and in the eighteenth century, another observer noted that “a considerable number of active, able Negro slaves were enrolled in the militia.” According to the latter, any slave “whom in time of Invasion, kills an Enemy” was rewarded manumission. Frontier demands dictated such leniency.²⁴

In Virginia, colonial authorities practiced a more stringent policy. As early as 1640, legislators required all men *except* Afro-Virginians to “arm their households.”²⁵ In the same

year, Virginia legislators were hesitant to include Afro-Virginian slaves in a mandate that required men to bring firearms to church.²⁶ Their concerns stemmed from a fear of uprisings by a coalition of dependents – Afro-slave and Anglo-servant alike. In fact, in the same year, legislators’ fears were confirmed. Six Virginian servants and one Afro-laborer purportedly conspired to abscond with firearms and make their way to Dutch ships positioned off the Atlantic Coast.²⁷ In 1663, another revolt occurred in Gloucester County, Virginia, and again, Anglo-servants purportedly conspired with Afro-slaves.²⁸ Threats such as these tightened restrictions on militia participation, especially during the many threats of Dutch invasion in the late 1660s and early 1670s.²⁹ However, the watershed moment materialized in 1676 when Afro- and Anglo-Virginian “rabble” turned their guns on Governor Berkeley in what became known as Bacon’s Rebellion. Authorities were not only alarmed by the lower rank’s rancor towards the elite rank; they were greatly vexed by the last rebel holdouts consisting of eighty Afro-slaves and twenty Anglo-servants.³⁰ As a result, an official act of 1680 proscribed “Negroes[s] or other slave[s]” from owning guns or physically challenging (Anglo-) Christians. The same did not apply to Anglo-servants.³¹ In addition to a 1705 act that provided muskets to recently freed Anglo-servants, the ownership of firearms increasingly became a racial prerogative of Anglo-men.³² By 1738, Anglo-only gun ownership had been completely codified. According to Virginia legal code, both free and enslaved Afro-men (as well as Native Americans) were restricted from carrying firearms to militia service.³³

The importance of firearms to manly identity should not go unnoticed since most men – whether from the lower or middling ranks – participated in a vibrant and extensive gun culture.³⁴ In 1691, for example, an observer noted that “there is no custom more...observed among the young Virginians than they all Learn to keep and use a gun.”³⁵ In York County alone, 80 percent

of households owned a firearm, and during communal events such as wedding and funerals, men fired their weapons for ceremonial purposes.³⁶ Moreover, guns were imbued with patrilineal meaning. Just as men practiced primogeniture – that is, passing down inheritance to the oldest son – fathers handed down the family gun to their oldest sons as a symbolic transfer of manly power.³⁷ By outlawing Afro-colonial men from owning a gun, the Virginia legislature effectively excluded them from participating in the culture of Anglo-hegemonic manhood. Thus, by the first decades of the 18th century, guns no longer belonged to a man’s world. Guns belonged to a white man’s world.³⁸

Still, codification should not be confused with actual behavior. At certain times and for specific reasons, black males did possess firearms. In the Carolina Lowcountry, for example, slaves were issued guns to fend off birds from the rice crop.³⁹ In other instances, enslavers provided guns to their slaves for hunting purposes. Silas Jackson’s enslaver allowed almost “all of the slaves” to hunt for rabbits and opossums – a fact reified by anthropological findings of rabbit, opossum, raccoon, and deer remains near Carolina slave sites.⁴⁰ Pistols were also known to belong to slave men. According to South Carolina court records, a slave named Ed proclaimed that he “fear[ed] no man” upon returning from a Christmas ball. To back up his claim, Ed “drew a pistol” and ordered those around him to “stand back Gentlemen” – an act that brought him before the Court of Magistrates and Freeholders.⁴¹ And during the Revolutionary Era, one observer recorded that a “dextrous negroe will, with his gun and netts, get as much game and fish as five families can eat.”⁴² But it was the Revolutionary War itself that placed large numbers of firearms in the hands of black men. When Virginia Governor John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, offered freedom to any slave who joined the British army, Colonials quickly proffered a counter-proposal. “If we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably

will;” explained Alexander Hamilton to John Jay; “and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out will be to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is to give them their freedom with their muskets.”⁴³ Not every colony agreed with Hamilton’s rational. Even so, both northern and southern colonies contributed an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 armed slaves to the Continental Army.⁴⁴

Faithful black soldiers serving in the Continental Army may have allayed distant anxieties of Bacon’s Rebellion, but a series of early nineteenth-century slave revolts rekindled fears of armed black men. Although significant and at times violent, these revolts fostered widespread fear which sometimes blossomed into abject paranoia. The largest slave revolt in the United States occurred on the German Coast of Louisiana in 1811. Numbering between 300 and 500 enslaved men, the rebels sought to take New Orleans when militia quickly stopped their advance. Although unsuccessful, some of the black rebels reportedly carried firearms, which played into the worst fears of a society already on-edge.⁴⁵ Just a decade earlier, an enslaved blacksmith named Gabriel Prosser conspired with thousands of slaves to march on Richmond, Virginia. While the uprising failed to coalesce (due to a black informant who reported the plot to authorities), the Prosser Conspiracy of 1800 put slaveholders on an uneasy footing.⁴⁶

In 1822, South Carolinians averted a major slave uprising directed at Charleston. Led by a free black carpenter named Denmark Vesey, the conspiracy involved five separate raids on South Carolinian arsenals and militia. Since the plot was foiled, no whites were hurt.⁴⁷ Nine years later, yet another slave uprising ensued. Unlike the Vesey conspiracy, this uprising came to fruition. Led by a slave foreman named Nat Turner, 70 Virginian slaves went on a two-day killing spree in an attempt to capture Jerusalem. Fifty-nine whites were killed in the process.⁴⁸ Collectively, the thwarted conspiracies of Prosser (1800) and Vesey (1822); and the German

Coast (1811) and Nat Turner (1831) uprisings demonstrated the potential and real dangers of firearms in the hands of black men.

One white abolitionist deliberately attempted to put firearms into the hands of enslaved men. In 1859, John Brown and eighteen men captured the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, with plans of invading the southern Appalachians with the help of armed slaves. Although Brown and his men failed, they succeeded in reintroducing the terror of Nat Turner; and similar to Bacon's Rebellion, exposed the perils of armed slaves.

It is remarkable that just four years after John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, the Federal government decreed that thousands of black men be given firearms to fight for the Union.⁴⁹ And yet, the Federal government's decision to arm black men was not made in haste. Concerns over political opposition from the North and the border-states delayed official approval of black regiments. Abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass were exasperated by the government's reticence.

Our Presidents, Governors, Generals and Secretaries are calling, with almost frantic vehemence, for men. – 'Men! Men! Send us men!' they scream, or the cause of the Union is gone;...and yet these very officers...steadily and persistently refuse to receive the very class of men which have a deeper interest in the defeat and humiliation of the rebels, than all others....Why does the Government reject the negro? *Is he not a man?* Can he not wield a sword, fire a gun, march and countermarch, and obey orders like any other?...This is not time to fight only with your white hand, and allow your black hand to remain tied...a man drowning would not refuse to be saved even by a colored hand.⁵⁰

However, even with Congressional approval and unofficial black troops in the field by late 1862, armed black soldiers still seemed anathema to many.⁵¹ "We want you d---d niggers to keep out of this," proclaimed the Cincinnati police. "This is a white man's war."⁵² Such racial hubris paralleled an anecdote told by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw. Prior to the war, Colonel Shaw remembered discussions of possibly "arming...negro troops with pikes instead of firearms."

“Whoever proposed it must have been looking for a means of annihilating negro troops altogether,” mused Shaw. “The project is now abandoned, I believe.”⁵³

Of course, southerners shared in Northerners’ disapproval of black soldiers, but in the South, rejection of Confederate proposals to arm black men belied anxieties over gendered formulations regarding manhood and enslavement. The *Virginia Daily* explained the matter succinctly. “The very foundation of slavery would be fatally wounded if we were insane enough to treat black men as the equal of white, and insurgent slaves as equivalent to our brave white soldiers.”⁵⁴ The reasoning was convoluted and could be read like a geometric proof. Only blacks were slaves. Only free white males were manly. Only manly males could be brave soldiers. Therefore, black males were neither men, manly, nor brave soldiers. Confederate Major General Howell Cobb knew this formulation well. Writing to Secretary of War James A. Seddon, Cobb explained: “I think that the proposition to make soldiers of our slaves is the most pernicious idea that has been suggested since the war began,” wrote Cobb. “You cannot make soldiers of slaves, nor slaves of soldiers....The day you make soldiers of them is the beginning of the end...*If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong* – but they won’t make good soldiers.”⁵⁵ An Ohio officer understood the Southern view as well as Cobb, albeit in reverse. The very presence of black Union soldiers signified the end of Southern life, he believed, for Southerners “knew that soldiers never made slaves.”⁵⁶

Some northerners supported the use of black soldiers but cared little for ideologies of slavery, race, and gender. A white soldier named F.W. Sedgwick supported the establishment of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) since he was “perfectly willing that negroes should have a good a right to be shot as myself.”⁵⁷ Iowa Senator James W. Grimes shared similar sentiments with his constituents from Dubuque. I would rather “see a negro shot down in battle

rather than the son of a Dubuque,” declared the senator.⁵⁸ One Ohioan probably found Senator Grimes’ statement right on the mark since it matched his own reasoning for arming black men. “My doctrine is that a Negro is no better than a white man,” wrote the Ohioan, “and will do as well to receive Rebel bullets and would be likely to save the life of some white men.”⁵⁹ A poem written by an anonymous author could have been written by either man mentioned above. Entitled “Sambo’s Right to be Kilt,” the poet supported black enlistment for narrow-minded reasons.

Though Sambo’s black as the ace of spades,
His finger a thrigger can pull,
And his eye runs straight on the barrel-sights
From under his thatch of wool!
So hear me all, boys, darlings, -
Don’t think I tippin’ you chaff,-
The right to be kilt I’ll divide wid him,
And give him the largest half!⁶⁰

Reasons of racist expediency accounted for some support for black enlistment. Proponents of this view, however, recognized black manhood only if it buffered the endangerment of white manhood.

When President Lincoln finally approved the enlistment of black men with the official Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, abolitionists immediately recruited black men with fervid appeals to their manliness. At a Philadelphia recruitment rally in 1863, congressman Judge William D. Kelley framed the discussion of black recruitment in terms of gender. “Are you content to spend your lives as boot-blacks, barbers, [and] waiters....when the profession of arms...invites you to acknowledged manhood, freedom and honor?” queried Kelley. The Civil War “opened the way for the Afro-American to prove his manhood to the world,” Kelley claimed, and “the negro is the ‘coming man’ for whom we have waited.”⁶¹ Frederick Douglass made a similar appeal to gender. The wisest path to “manhood, equal rights and elevation, is that

we enter this service,” exhorted Douglass, “The opportunity is given us to be men.”⁶² And in his newspaper, *Douglass’ Monthly*, Frederick Douglass reiterated his gendered rally cry. “You owe it to yourself and your race to rise from your social debasement,” wrote Douglass, “and take your place among the soldiers of your country, a man among men.”⁶³

Throughout history, rallying cries for war often employed gender references to motivate men to battle. But gendered calls for war directed at enslaved and free black men merit particular attention. Civil War recruiters did not only make references to manliness as a trite strategy to drum up support. Rather, recruiters and their black audiences collectively understood the veritable stigma of emasculation that persecuted them. In other words, recruiters did not only question black manhood as a tool for recruitment, they also reiterated that their black manhood was already in question. Thus, strategic references to manliness were employed as a means of refuting what was already in doubt. Consider a recruitment manifesto distributed in 1863. It read:

Men of Color to Arms! To Arms....Our enemies have made the country believe that we are craven cowards, without souls, without *manhood*, without the spirit of soldiers. Shall we die with this stigma resting upon our graves? Shall we leave this inheritance of Shame to our children? No! A thousand times NO! Let us rather die freemen than live to be slaves....A new era is open to us...For generations we have suffered under the horrors of slavery, outrage and wrong; *our manhood has been denied*, our citizenship blotted out, our souls seared and burned, our spirits cowed and crushed, and the hopes of the future of our race involved in doubt and darkness....Now therefore is our most precious moment. Let us rush to arms.⁶⁴

The fifty-five black signers of this manifesto referred to gender as a possession previously lost. “Our enemies have made the country believe that we are...without manhood...Our manhood has been denied.” But they simultaneously made reference to gender as an identity to be gained. “Cannot we prove ourselves men?” they asked in conclusion. By referencing the past and future in gendered terms, these authors implored black men to prove themselves manly by disproving

their assumed emasculation. Put another way, recruiters employed gender as a means of refuting labels of emasculation as well as means of constructing a manly identity. And it was the Civil War that granted them the opportunity to do both.⁶⁵

Northern appeals to gender could have easily resonated with the south since, in terms of their assumed inferiority as soldiers, both free and enslaved black southerners suffered from a similar stigma of black emasculation. In fact, the inclusion of gendered themes in northern recruitment rallies is telling. Relative to the conditions of enslaved black men, northern free blacks had more opportunities to express their manhood – that is, they could legally marry, raise their children, receive remuneration for their labor, and freely congregate as a community. And yet, appeals to their manliness were commonly employed to recruit free northern black men.⁶⁶ Free black recruits like Alexander Newton, for example, considered slavery a “curse in my bones,” regardless of his free status. “I longed for an opportunity and the power to play the part of a Moses in behalf of my people,” recalled Newton. “I suppose that this was the wild dream of every child born during slavery.”⁶⁷ Likewise, in the South, references to gender were employed as a tool of recruitment. In late October of 1863, for example, black recruiters in Nashville took the stage and implored black men to enlist in the Union Army as a way of “present[ing] to the world a picture of manhood.”⁶⁸ Another black recruiter playfully chided the crowd. “Don’t ask your wife for if she is a wife worth having she will call you a coward for asking her,” chided the recruiter. “I’ve got a wife and she says to me, the other day, ‘Jerry, if you don’t go to the war mighty soon, I’ll go off and leave you, as some of the Northern gentlemen want me to go home to cook for them.’ . . . The ladies are now busy making us a flag, and let us *prove ourselves men* worthy to bear it.”⁶⁹ Such appeals to black manliness contributed to the high-turnout of black soldiers from both the North and South.⁷⁰

Appeals to manhood were not always successful. Ironically, manly ideals of respect inhibited some northern black men from joining the Union army. When abolitionist recruiters including Frederick Douglass spoke to a New York audience at Shiloh Church, their appeals drew the services of one lonely recruit. Douglass was dismayed and subsequently scolded the audience. In response, an audience member named Mr. Robert Johnson pushed back. According to a report of the meeting, Mr. Johnson, “by a few well-spoken words, convinced the meeting that it was not cowardice which made the young men hesitate to enlist, but *a proper respect for their own manhood*. If the Government wanted their services,” claimed Mr. Johnson, “let it guarantee to them all the rights of citizens and soldiers.” “Instead of one man...[I] would insure them 5,000 men in twenty days.” According to the record, Mr. [Johnson’s] remarks were received with tremendous and long-continued applause.”⁷¹

Mr. Johnson’s criticism of the government must have struck a chord with Frederick Douglass and his cohort of recruiters. It was Douglass who first expressed the sentiments of Mr. Johnson. Immediately after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Frederick Douglass insisted that “nothing short of an open recognition of the Negro’s manhood, his rights as such to have a country equally with others, would induce me to join the army in any capacity.”⁷² However, pragmatic optimism and sheer excitement over the possibility of black men in blue uniforms may have prompted Douglass to join recruitment efforts. Even so, towards the latter half of the Civil War, Douglass reconsidered his position. With the Confederacy threatening to execute black prisoners-of-war, combined with Douglass’s continual frustration with the federal government’s treatment of black soldiers, Douglass chose to temporarily suspend his recruitment efforts.⁷³

Although the Civil War afforded black men an opportunity to prove themselves men, the opportunity was nothing less than daunting. Compelled to perform their manliness on a martial

stage of adversity, black soldiers met resistance from a range of critical audience members; including rows of white officers, fellow soldiers, bystanders, and policemen. Conflict with officers often derived from divergent gender values and beliefs. Unlike former slaves, white Union officers of the USCT generally subscribed to northern, middle-class notions of manliness – a set of assumptions involving the cultural ideology of self-made manhood. Also known as the “rags-to-riches” or Horatio Alger’s myth, self-made manhood privileged individual initiative, dogged persistence, and independent achievement over traditional concerns for duty and communal cohesion.⁷⁴

The rise of self-made manhood occurred against a backdrop of significant societal shifts. Industrialization altered modes of production. Urbanization drew thousands from farming communities. Transportation and communications efficiently carried goods, people, and ideas across vast areas. With these major socio-economic shifts – collectively known as the Market Revolution – middle-class authorities championed the ideal of the self-made man – the plucky individual whose status and prosperity rose as high as his ambitions. Even so, proponents of middle-class dogma grew wary of self-made men’s unbridled ambitions. Unlike the colonial era, where traditional communal boundaries guarded against an individual’s will, men’s uncontrolled “passions” in the nineteenth century potentially caused widespread harm to the many in an attempt to satiate the individual. In a democratic society – where “virtue” was highly valued as an imperative social good – unmitigated manly passions such as greed, selfishness, envy, dominance, combativeness, gambling, drinking, and sex could undermine the basis of the American experiment. However, according to middle-class authorities such as writers, teachers, moralists, and preachers, manly passions could be harnessed through rigid self-control and self-denial. Only when under control were manly passions an asset to both men and society. Thus, it

was middle class USCT officers that interpreted black soldiers' manliness through a lens of "self-control." In doing so, white officers perceived black manly performances as less than adequate.⁷⁵

Concerns over black men's "self-control" or inadequate manly passions resulted in unflattering reports about black men donning the blue uniform. For example, a captain of the Eightieth USCI believed former slaves were beyond control and posed a constant threat of mutiny. "I do not believe we can Keep the negroes from murdering every thing they come to," wrote the captain.⁷⁶ A headquarter staff member, Theodore Lyman, expressed similar doubts. At the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864, Lyman reported his worries concerning black Union troops: "As I looked at them, my soul was troubled and I would gladly have seen them marched back to Washington.... We do not dare trust them in the line of battle," wrote Lyman. "Ah, you may make speeches at home, but here, where it is life or death, we dare not risk it."⁷⁷ Beliefs about black men's uncontrolled passions sometimes contributed to tactical decisions. At Battery Wagner, one officer believed that black men's "impetuosity" made them perfect for one wild charge, but would otherwise prove tactically weak "in long continued struggles."⁷⁸

Some officers harbored concerns for black men on more than one front. Chaplain Walter C. Yancey, for example, assumed that black soldiers' passions were rife with moral turpitude and lacked "the true dignity of manhood."⁷⁹ Other times, officers commented on black men's lack of manly passions. Abolitionist and colonel of the First South Carolina Volunteers, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, testified to the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission that former slaves were overly obsequious and should shake off their "servility and develop manhood" if they joined the Union Army.⁸⁰ White officers, such as Higginson, were concerned about black men's "cowering" submissiveness and lack of "manly and respectful obedience."⁸¹ In particular,

Higginson worried that if his black men lost “their officers[,] the effect will be worse upon them than upon white troops – not because they are timid,” said Higginson, “but because they are less accustomed to entire self-reliance.”⁸² One incident on the steamship *West Point*, supported Higginson’s concerns. While independently performing musket drills, one black soldier was killed after a musket accidentally fired. The Virginian newspaper, the *Richmond Sentinel*, exploited the accident as proof of the dangers of unsupervised black men.⁸³ Collectively, officers’ criticisms and concerns about black troops merely confirmed their own middle-class assumptions of properly prescribed manhood.

Some Union officers were unapologetically derogative and haughty. The commander of the Fifty-Ninth USCI, for example, reportedly stripped black recruits, burned their clothing, and bathed them in his attempts to make soldiers of “filthy, repulsive ‘nigger[s].’”⁸⁴ Although less severe, Henry M. Turner, a black chaplain of the First USCI, thought himself an inspiration to black troops whom he considered to be “devoid” of “manly principles.”⁸⁵ Similarly, USCT Colonel Armstrong thought himself a manly superior who sought to “impress” his own manhood on “those under him, whereas one white officer referred to his black troops as “unbleached Americans” who could not learn “any of the motions of the Manual of arms.”⁸⁶ One frustrated lieutenant went even further. During a training session on weapon fire, the lieutenant disparaged a black soldier as “a wooly headed nincompoop,” aimed his gun at the black soldier, and told him the next time he made a mistake, he would be shot.⁸⁷ Such stark hostility from Union officers severely tested black performances of manliness even before encountering a single Confederate combatant.

Once on the battlefield, black men proved their manhood to themselves and to their officers, yet failed to garner the manly respect of everyone. In the eyes of some white

Americans, long-held beliefs regarding black men's emasculation preempted their manly performances. For example, after the battle of Milliken's Bend, General Grant received word of the USCT's "gallant" performance, however, white southerner Kate Stone remained incredulous. "It is said the Negro regiments fought like demons," conceded Stone, "but we cannot believe that. We know from long experience they are cowards."⁸⁸ Time and again, black men demonstrated manly courage and skill, only to be later vilified for their inadequacies. Circumstances contributed to the perception of black deficiencies on the battlefield. Despite brave performances, many of the battles involving the USCT resulted in Union defeats. Battery Wagner, Olustee, Fort Pillow, Saltville, and the Battle of the Crater were some of the most prominent Union defeats involving the USCT, leading perennial critics to castigate black men for their ineptness. The Battle of the Crater at Petersburg epitomized this trend. After suffering terrible losses while trapped in the "Crater" – the infamous sunken cavity born of a deliberate mine explosion – a white private named Alonzo Rich exonerated those responsible for the debacle by ascribing blame upon black troops. "If it hadn't been for them," said Rich, "we should have occupied Petersburg yesterday."⁸⁹ White Northerners joined Rich in reproaching black soldiers for the Crater catastrophe. The "colored troops under General Burnside" behaved "cowardly," they said, although black chaplain, Garland White vehemently disagreed.⁹⁰ According to Chaplain White, black soldiers requested that he deliver their final words to family members back home. That is, if the Battle of Petersburg was their last, black men wanted their families to know that they "died like a man."⁹¹

It was one thing to suffer criticism based on erroneous assumptions about black manhood; it was another to endure malevolent and calculated attacks from fellow Union men. Indeed, pernicious assaults on black soldiers not only damaged USCT morale, they also had

deleterious effects on black manly performance. Consider an incident aboard the USS *Constellation* in January of 1863. With the Emancipation Proclamation still wafting in the January air, three white crewmembers assailed the thirty-three black crewmembers of the *Constellation* with a litany of verbal abuse. According to black crewmember Henry Martyn, the three white men berated their fellow black sailors with pejoratives such as “God Damn nigger,” “black dog,” and “bitches,” while intermittently offering them shoves and kicks.⁹² It was difficult for black men to prove themselves men – either on land or upon sea – when constantly parrying racial jabs from friend and foe alike. Base references such as “nigger,” “darky,” and “wooly head” may have only been spoken words, but this language directly impinged upon black men’s race *and* manhood.⁹³ I am a *colored man*, and my position as private in a white Regiment is very unpleasant,” wrote Private Charles R. Pratt of the Eleventh Ohio Infantry. “My feelings are constantly outraged by the conduct of those who have no respect for my race.”⁹⁴

Vilification by fellow Union soldiers was figuratively tantamount to “friendly fire.” And this “friendly” racial abuse took many forms. For instance, thirty-five white men of the First Regiment of Kansas Volunteers expressed their indignation when a black man enlisted in Company G. “We have no objection to endure all the privations we may be called upon to endure,” stated a petition to their commanding general, “but to have one of the company, or even one of the regiment, pointed out as a ‘nigger’ while on dress parade or guard, is more than we like to be called upon to bear.”⁹⁵ Instead of directly petitioning against black soldiers, some white soldiers requested complete sequestration from them. “We don’t want to fight side [by] side with the nigger,” wrote Felix Brannigan of the Seventy-fourth New York Regiment. “We think we are a too superior race for that.”⁹⁶ Another white Union soldier broached the topic diplomatically, but expressed his racist beliefs just as curtly. “I have a good degree of sympathy

for the slave,” he said, “but I like the Negro the farther off the better.”⁹⁷ And yet others avoided diplomacy altogether and prayed for black men’s total annihilation. I wish I could explode “one Bomb shell” over all the blacks in this country “that would Disperse the whole of them,” dreamed one white Northerner.⁹⁸ By signifying black men as an infectious disease to be either avoided or exterminated, members of the USCT struggled to garner recognition as manly subjects from those who were ostensibly on their side.

Black men’s struggles did not necessarily connote black men’s failures. In some instances, black men parlayed verbal attacks into demonstrations of their manliness. An incident with a white Floridian named Pat offers a good example. According to Sergeant Richard W. White of the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Infantry, black soldiers were “rambling about” when Pat decided to call one of them a “nigger.” Rather than seek justice by raw force, the black soldier reported the incident to Colonel Fox – a sympathetic and righteous USCT officer. Colonel Fox subsequently arrested Pat, and had black soldiers accompany Pat to the Provost guard.⁹⁹ Instead of acting impetuously, the black soldier demonstrated manly restraint and respectfully reported the incident through the chain of command. Justice was sought through manly self-control.

Many times, however, no recourse was available to redress abuse committed by fellow Union soldiers. For example, after hearing about the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, white New York sergeant John England was pleased to learn that blacks received a “dose of physical whipping.” The lash of the whip, he reasoned, would remind the “the great darkey” that “he is only a nagger.”¹⁰⁰ Such abject abhorrence of black equality could not be silenced. Even so, such figurative “friendly fire” was rather innocuous compared to the real thing. On more than a few occasions, Union soldiers purposely sought to hurt or kill fellow Union soldiers on account of race and gender. In 1863, for example, Colonel Nathan W. Daniels and his black Second

Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards were ordered to raid the town of Pascagoula, Mississippi. Supported by John P. Jackson and his crew aboard the steamship, the *General Banks*, the black Native Guards met considerable resistance from Confederate forces. During the engagement, Jackson's crew aboard the *General Banks* fired a shell towards the Native Guards which, according to Daniels, was fired "unfortunately and perhaps designedly." As a result, four black Union troops were killed, and five were wounded. What remains notable was Daniels' assessment of the day's activities. Rather than make reference to race, Daniels described the incident in terms of gender. The Louisiana Native Guards, reported Daniels, "all demonstrate[ed] to its fullest extent that the oppression which they have heretofore undergone from the hands of their foes, the obloquy that had been showered upon them by those who *should have been friends*, had not extinguished their *manhood*, or suppressed their bravery, and that they had still a hand to wield the sword, and a heart to vitalize its blow."¹⁰¹ Just as the black soldier of the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Infantry parlayed Pat's figurative friendly fire into a demonstration of manly restraint, the Louisiana Native Guards endured literal friendly fire, and proved their manly resolve in the process.

Since the Confederacy threatened white Union soldiers with death if captured on the battlefield alongside black soldiers, friendly fire was sometimes employed as strategy for white survival. At the Battle of the Crater, for instance, white Union soldiers resorted to friendly fire after being trapped alongside black Union troops.¹⁰² "It has been positively asserted that white men bayoneted blacks who fell back into the crater," reported a New York soldier. "This was in order to preserve the whites from Confederate vengeance. Men boasted in my presence that blacks had thus been disposed of, particularly when the Confederates came up."¹⁰³ Away from the battlefield, however, no strategic reason could explain friendly fire.¹⁰⁴ In Washington D.C.,

for example, policemen notoriously attacked the USCT even though both were sworn protectors of the capitol. In June of 1863, a correspondent for the black newspaper, the *Christian Recorder*, reported:

Passing along 7th Street..., I saw an excited rabble pursuing a corporal belonging to the 1st Colored Regiment, District Vols., named John Ross. Among the pursuers, was a United States police officer. Ross protested against being dragged away by these ruffians, at the same time expressing his willingness to accompany the police officer to whatever place he might designate...But, shameful to say, that officer, after he had arrested Ross, permitted a cowardly villain to violently choke and otherwise maltreat him. After the melee, the corporal received some pretty severe bruises, whether from the policeman's club or from the stones that were thrown by the mob, I will not say. He quietly walked to the central guard house with his conservator of the peace, amidst the clamoring of the mob, their yells and shouts of 'Kill the black ___ __ __.'¹⁰⁵

Not all northern policemen impeded the progress of black manhood. In Zanesville, Ohio, in 1864, another newspaper correspondent – this time from the black newspaper the *Anglo-African* – reported a mob attack against a single black Union soldier. The ruckus began when a “bully” accosted a black soldier in a barber shop, followed him down the street, and attempted to assault the black soldier amidst an angry crowd. When the black soldier defended himself by knocking the bully down, the Ohio crowd furiously hurled rocks at the soldier, and spewed invectives such as “kill the nigger.” Policemen finally arrived and escorted the soldier to safety.¹⁰⁶ Not only did the single black soldier put up a manly fight against ridiculous odds, white policemen confirmed that a single black man was worth saving by arriving at the scene and escorting the soldier to safety.

Figurative and literal friendly fire by white officers, fellow soldiers, civilian bystanders, and northern policemen constrained black men's ability to prove their manly stature, self-control, competence, independence, and courage. As if these obstructions were not enough, black men strived to be manly soldiers under unique and formidable situations – peculiar to their gender and

race. One example was the poor condition of their weaponry. The issuance of inferior firearms exacerbated black soldiers' purported reputation for incompetence with weaponry. At the Battle of Milliken's Bend, for example, Colonel Herman Lieb reported that the USCT fought bravely despite being issued "Austrian rifles" that "failed to fire."¹⁰⁷ General Edward Wild's "African Brigade" fared no better. Upon inspection in August of 1863, Major Edward Cameron deemed the African Brigade's firearms "unserviceable" and suggested replacing them with the same failed Austrian model used at Milliken's Bend. Cameron's reasoning was clear. "Colored troops as far as I have seen are not equal to white ones," claimed Cameron. "[I]t is not intended I presume to put first class arms into their hands."¹⁰⁸ Four months later, General Daniel Ullman of the Corps d'Afrique summarized the condition of their equipment to Senator Henry Wilson – Chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee. "I have been forced to put in their hands arms almost entirely unserviceable," complained Ullman, "and in other respects their equipments have been of the poorest kind...I assure you that these poor fellows...are deeply sensible to this gross injustice. It breaks down their 'morale.'"¹⁰⁹ Brigadier General William Birney expressed the matter bluntly: "All this is very stupid. Is the Government to keep whole regiments under pay with arms that won't go off?" "To put men into the field with poor weapons," wrote Birney, "...is little short of murder."¹¹⁰ Despite such protestations, black troops continued to fight with inferior firearms such as the Smoothbore Musket – a firearm with a range 350 yards less than the standard Springfield Rifle – while others trained with no weapons at all.¹¹¹ As late as March, 1864, black North Carolina soldiers still attempted to perform their manhood without firearms of any kind.¹¹² Thus, generations of free and enslaved black men were legally denied firearms until the Civil War, whereupon they were denied functional ones.

Another formidable situation unique to black soldiers was their precarious wartime

relationship with their families. Unlike white men in the Union Army, many black troops not only left family members enslaved or destitute, members of the USCT also endured specific financial inequities that affected their families' survival. Since black men only received seven dollars a month (ten dollars minus three dollars for clothing) as stipulated under the Militia Act of 1862, black men found it nearly impossible to contribute to their families' dire economic needs.¹¹³ Sergeant John H. Morgan of the Fourteenth Corps d'Afrique knew the situation all too well. "We have the same feelings for our wives and children at home and we study the welfare of them as much as do the white soldiers," wrote Morgan to President Lincoln in January of 1864. Our "familys in New Orleans" tell us of their "starving condition," and "we cant seport them on seven dollars per month."¹¹⁴ A soldier stationed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, mirrored Morgan's concerns. According to his report, soldiers of the Sixteenth, Eighteenth, and Forty-Fourth USCI Regiments had family members who were "threadless and shoeless without food and no home to go to." Some families, he explained, had "their masters run them off."¹¹⁵ Even families of northern black soldiers suffered considerable deprivation; especially regiments from Massachusetts who, upon learning of their unequal pay, forfeited their entire pay for the sake of principle. "There are men in this regiment who have respectable families that have been torn to pieces and driven to beggary," reported Sergeant Samuel A. Valentine of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry. "It is hard to bear," he admitted, "but...I hope the time will come soon that we shall have justice done to us all."¹¹⁶

The rigors of war tested the mettle of all soldiers. But with little to no recompense, and with impoverished black women and children at home, the Civil War nearly broke the manly resolve of black troops. Many black families were relegated to the poorhouse, while others were denied entrance altogether. "The wives of the men are...often refused [at] the almshouse for

their color,” wrote one USCT officer, “and are reduced to degradation that drives the husbands almost crazy.”¹¹⁷ In Louisiana, authorities questioned black families for “passes” and “free papers” that permitted their movement or residency. When found wanting, wives and children were sent to jail or the parish prison for “safe keeping,” while their dejected husbands of the First Regiment Louisiana Native Guards remained steadfast at their post.¹¹⁸ A member of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment described the situation starkly. “There is Sergeant Swails, a man who has fairly won promotion on the field of battle. While he was doing the work of government in the field, his wife and children were placed in the poorhouse.”¹¹⁹ Writing to the black newspaper *Christian Recorder* from Jacksonville, Florida, a member of the Eighth USCT described black men’s anguish as dutiful husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. “With all this, they want us to be patriotic and good soldiers; but how can we when we see, in our minds, the agonies of our families?” he wrote. “When we lie down to sleep, the pictures of our families are before us, asking for relief from their sufferings. How can men do their duty, with such agony in their minds?”¹²⁰ Also writing from Jacksonville, Sergeant A.S. Fisher of the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Volunteers described his utter distress over the “horrible sufferings of dear sufferin familys.” It was “more than manhood can beare,” he wrote.¹²¹

The history of black manhood during the Civil War was one of trials and tribulations. However, the many challenges confronting black manliness did not constitute the totality of its meaning. Although important, it wasn’t just officers’ patronization and hostility towards black manhood that informed its history. Nor were instances of aversion and discouragement the primary contributors to black manly construction. Rather, the litany of stifling constraints imposed upon the USCT was a testament to the severe conditions that circumscribed black men during the Civil War, as well as a critical delineation of the terrain on which black soldiers

performed their gendered selves. In other words, constraints imposed upon black manhood – such as friendly fire and inferior guns – may have sometimes impeded black men’s performances as gendered subjects, but these same constraints provided black men with opportunities to express their manhood against impossible odds. By successfully performing their manliness in spite of these challenging conditions, black men irrefutably underscored their collective desire to prove their manly potential.

During the siege of Petersburg, for example, Chaplain Garland White reported that his men stood undaunted in rifle pits filled with water. “Although in this situation for more than a week,” wrote the chaplain, not one complaint or “single murmur” could be heard. Such spartan perseverance was remarkable, and yet common amongst members of the USCT. According to the chaplain, black soldiers stood their post under the most trying circumstances because they knew that in doing so, their “manhood [was] thoroughly vindicated.”¹²² Thus, it was extreme difficulty that sometimes afforded black men their greatest opportunities for manly performance, thus enabling them to *thoroughly* vindicate themselves as gendered subjects. Consider the racial adversities that many black soldiers experienced with white civilians. Although such contestations were unwarranted and unwelcomed, they did function as platforms upon which black manhood could be proven. For example, according to Robert Cowden of the Fifty-Ninth USCI, “several fights” broke out in a single week “between colored soldiers and white rowdies,” however, as Cowden proudly proclaimed, “Mr. Colored Soldier has come out triumphant every time.”¹²³

Likewise, unequal pay afforded black soldiers an ideal stage for gender performance. Since white manhood was rewarded \$6.50 per month more than black manhood, such blatant inequity was not only a clear and quantifiable injustice, it also functioned as a glaring spotlight

that highlighted black manly performance. A declaration by one soldier from the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment offers a prime example. Although denied the same pay as white soldiers, “we have fought like men,” he maintained. “All we ask is the rights of other soldiers - the liberty of other free men.”¹²⁴ Another soldier from the Fifty-Fourth handled the injustice by forgoing payment and asserting himself like a man. “They say we are not United States Soldiers. They want to come around and say we are laborers. If we are laborers,” he asked, “how is it then we...stand guard, and do picket duty and form a line of battle when the long roll is beat? No, because we are men of color,” he pronounced, “they are trying to impose upon us.”¹²⁵ When demands for equal pay failed to alter Union policy, one black soldier responded with a gender-laden rebuke. “A great deal has been said of the ungratefulness of the 55th,” he wrote. “We would like to know if we must sacrifice our principle and *manhood* to keep our name from being slandered....We did not come to fight for money,” he proclaimed, rather “we came not only to *make men of ourselves*, but of other colored brothers at home...It is not the money of 1863 that we are looking at! It is the principle: the one *that made us men* when we enlisted.”¹²⁶ By denying black soldiers their dues, Union policy compelled black men to respond with assertions that emphasized their fighting prowess, military duties, and battle readiness. In other words, the struggle for equal pay became a discussion about gender.¹²⁷

Although sometimes salutary, constraints imposed upon black manhood were not blessings-in-disguise. Racial oppression functioned as a debilitating barrier that, *unless successfully challenged*, limited black men’s abilities. It was the active construction of black manhood – rather than impediments to its construction – that is ultimately worth noting. In other words, black men did not require racial oppression to construct a manly identity. Although oppressive conditions such as unequal pay sometimes provided black soldiers with opportunities

for manly expression, the trying conditions of the warfare, by themselves, offered plenty of opportunities for black soldiers to prove that they were more than genderless chattel.¹²⁸

Even the most prosaic military duties could empower black manly expression. In fact, relative to the halcyon days of antebellum America, armed black manhood during the Civil War was nothing less than radical. Even the monotony of sentry duty could bolster black manliness. For example, in 1863, a young black soldier named Ben was ordered to guard the Sixteenth Virginia Infantry's surplus rations, empowering him with legal authority to mete out justice. When a white soldier resisted Ben's commands to yield, Ben employed physical force to fulfill his duties as a sentry guard, mortally wounding the white perpetrator in the process. Although the white perpetrator's friends demanded Ben's lynching, General William Mahone intervened, and reaffirmed Ben's manly actions. Since all soldiers, regardless of rank, were subject to the discretion of the sentry, a black guard such as Ben could realistically "shoot his own Captain if he interfere[d] with his duty as a guard."¹²⁹ The same, of course, applied to irreverent civilians who refused to acknowledge black manly authority. For example, when a white Virginian civilian shoved a black sentry guard off the sidewalk and continued on his way, the black soldier cocked the hammer of his rifle and stopped the white civilian in his tracks. "Dis nigger is of no particular account," announced the black soldier, "but you must [respect] dis uniform; white man go on."¹³⁰

It wasn't just the uniform that commanded respect. The force of black men's firearms was the true source of power. When the sentry guard, Ben, stopped the white perpetrator from raiding the rations, it was Ben's use of the rifle butt that proved the final arbiter. And when the white civilian pushed the black soldier off the sidewalk, it was the click of the rifle hammer that demanded attention. Even so, uniforms and firearms did not matter as much as what black men

did with them. In other words, manly actions on the battlefield mattered. During a raid into North Carolina, for example, members of the Fifth USCI proved themselves men and garnered the respect of Sergeant Milton M. Holland, by standing resolutely against Confederate fire. “The regiment though young...stood nobly and faced the cowardly foe when they were hid in the swamp firing upon them. They stood like men,” reported Holland, “and when ordered to charge, went in with a yell, and came out victorious, losing four killed and several wounded. The rebel loss is large, as compared with ours.”¹³¹ Indomitable action combined with military attire and weaponry served as an effective prescription for black manly success. During a Sunday church service in Colonel Higginson’s regiment, Corporal Thomas Long articulated the merits of the USCT’s actions:

If we hadn’t become sojers, all might have gone back as it was before; our freedom might have slipped through de two houses of Congress & President Linkum’s four years might have passed by & notin been done for we. But now tings can never go back, because we *have showed our energy & our courage & our [natural] manhood*...Anoder ting is, suppose you had kept your freedom widout enlisting in dis army; your chilen might have grown up free...but it would have been always flung in dere faces – “Your fader never fought for he own freedom” – and what could dey answer? Neber can say that to dis African race any more,...because we first *showed dem we could fight* by dere side.¹³²

On land, as well as on sea, a black soldier’s actions underscored his manly badge of courage. On Christmas day, 1863, Virginia runaway slave Robert Blake participated in a naval assault on John’s Island, South Carolina aboard the Union ship *Marblehead*. According to the commander’s report, Blake “excited my admiration by the cool and brave manner in which he served.”¹³³ Moreover, in the following year, Rear Admiral David Farragut received word of Blake’s “conspicuous [reputation] for bravely performing [his] duty” – a manly reputation that ultimately contributed to the destruction of Fort Morgan and the capture of a Confederate ironclad.¹³⁴

The construction of black manliness didn't always require such prodigious acts of fortitude and heroism. Sometimes black manly performance could be as simple as participating in public rituals that promoted dignity, self-discipline, and military pageantry. Ceremonial demonstrations of manliness took many forms. Military parades were not only common, they also allowed black soldiers to literally perform their manliness in front of cheering audiences. The Union march into Charleston, South Carolina, offered one such opportunity. As glowing embers still smoldered in the recently abandoned capitol, the first Union troops to enter the city were the Twenty-First USCT and two companies of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment, followed by soldiers of the Third and Fourth South Carolina Regiments – some of whom were formerly enslaved in Charleston. Passing the slave auction block, the parade of black soldiers marched proudly in front of cheering black crowds. According to one historian, a black soldier riding a mule waved a “banner with the word ‘Liberty’ inscribed” on it, whereupon “a Negro woman rushed up with outstretch[ed] arms, and unable to reach him in the saddle, hugged the mule, shouting, ‘Thank God.’”¹³⁵ Such earnest sentimentality was indicative of the stark difference between the recently enslaved chattel and the proud manly soldier standing before her. Just as powerful was a Broadway parade of the Twentieth USCT in 1864. With fresh memories of the brutality directed at black citizens during the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, black men of the Twentieth USCT marched peacefully amongst thousands of cheering bystanders. According to the *Christian Recorder*, the scene was breathtaking and monumental. “A new era has been ushered in,” wrote the columnist, “colored soldiers gloriously welcomed...and protected by the whole force of police; their columns headed,...by some one hundred of the most influential merchants and business men of the city; also upwards of twelve hundred of the most prominent colored men of the country, in the wake, and with the two best brass bands of music

the state could afford.” In addition to the pomp and pageantry, the columnist noted that, as the black soldiers “passed along...the white and colored ladies wave[d] their handkerchiefs” and “the wealthy merchant [left] his desk...to behold the scene.” Filled with pride and exuberance, the *Christian Recorder* columnist concluded, “Ain’t that a victory?”¹³⁶

Combined with the manly pageantry of military parades, ceremonial rituals contributed to black soldiers’ manly constructions. For example, prior to the Union attack on Petersburg, black soldiers gathered together and collectively participated in a ceremonial ritual of song and cadence. As both a participatory expression and a declarative statement of their manhood, black soldiers joined in unison and sang: “We-e looks li-ike me-en a-a-marchin’ on/We looks li-ike men-er-war.”¹³⁷ Whereas ceremonial song contributed to manly construction at Petersburg, ceremonial celebration augmented the expression of black manhood at New Orleans. In June of 1864, black soldiers and civilians congregated in a white “aristocratic” area known as Congo Square to celebrate the joys of emancipation, prompting Sergeant John Cajay to record his impressions. “Only think of it,” wrote Cajay, “colored people marching through the streets of New Orleans on their own holiday with fire-arms.”¹³⁸

Ceremonial dress contributed to black manly expression as well. Similar to their performances during parades, songs, and celebrations, black soldiers demonstrated their manliness via military dress. According to Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, for example, the manly appearance of black soldiers at a wedding in 1863 spoke to their manly esteem and moral discipline. Observing “white soldiers with coats unbuttoned and black [soldiers] with them buttoned,” Higginson reasoned that the white soldiers exhibited “bad practices” that were indicative of their moral character. “If a man begins with swearing and stealing,” explained Higginson, “bad practices grow and you always find him at last with coat unbuttoned.”¹³⁹ If

ceremonial displays of song, guns, and buttoned uniforms contributed to black men's performances as gendered subjects, then it was partly true that clothes made the man. A middle-aged USCT sergeant, for example, attested to the importance of military attire when reflecting upon the significance of his uniform. "I has been a-thinkin' I was [an] old man," he admitted, "for, on de plantation, I was put down wid de old hands, and I quisiscontly feeled myself dat I was a old man. But since I has come here to de Yankees, and been made a soldier for de United States, an' got dese beautiful clothes on, I feels like one young man; and I doesn't call myself a old man nebber no more."¹⁴⁰

Whether festive or somber, ceremonial rituals allowed black soldiers to prove that manliness was not a white man's prerogative. During a funeral for a fallen black soldier, Colonel Samuel Armstrong of the USCT was struck by the formal pageantry of the event. Armstrong was not only impressed with the "procession of comrades" followed by the "brass band playing a funeral dirge;" he was also pensive about the dramatic homage paid to one who, only months before, was considered something akin to an animal. According to Armstrong, "it was a strange thing to see a man who had been born a slave and lived the life of a slave, under the lash like a dog, carried to the grave with the Stars and Stripes shrouding his coffin."¹⁴¹ Armstrong's reflections spoke to the transformational opportunity afforded to thousands of slaves who, prior to the Civil War, were never allowed to earn such ceremonial reverence. In the parlance of Armstrong, the ceremonial pageantry of the funeral compelled him to reflect upon the fallen soldier's journey from lashed dog to heroic man.

Whereas ceremonial rituals such as marching, celebrating, and mourning did much to change the perception of black manliness, it was black men's capabilities as manly combatants that won the hearts and minds of many white troops. After the Battle of Nashville, for example,

Colonel Thomas Morgan was pleased to see black men earn the respect of their fellow white brethren. According to Morgan, white men's respect for black men was born of common struggle, hardship, and manliness. "Colored soldiers had fought side by side with white troops," reported Morgan. "They had mingled together in the charge. They had supported each other. They had assisted each other from the field when wounded, and they lay side by side in death. The survivors rejoiced together over a hard-fought field, won by common valor...coolness, bravery, *manliness*, never to be unmade...It had been shown that marching under the flag of freedom, animated by a love of liberty, *even the slave becomes a man* and a hero."¹⁴² Chaplain Henry M. Turner of the First USCT also noted the camaraderie shared between black and white soldiers. The "brilliant achievements of our boys in front of Petersburg," wrote Turner, "[did] more to conquer the prejudice of the army of the Potomac than a thousand newspaper puffs."¹⁴³ After the battle was over, Turner witnessed black and white soldiers sharing meals, conversation, and jokes "with a friendly regard not surpassed by any previous occasion."¹⁴⁴ Months later, Turner was surprised to see a similar scene – this time, with the USCT and Confederate soldiers. "Rebels and the soldiers of my regiment [were] talking, laughing, exchanging papers, tin cups, tobacco & c.," noted Turner with "great surprise."¹⁴⁵ While ceremonies with guns mattered, camaraderie with guns mattered as well. It wasn't merely participation in ritualistic ceremonies that allowed black men to *appear* soldierly; rather, it was in combination with actual combat with other men that demonstrated black manhood.

If gender performance required an audience, fellow white soldiers were intimate spectators of black manly construction on the battlefield. Specifically, white soldiers were an imbedded, participatory audience that gauged black manhood from close range. After coming into close contact with the USCT, for example, white private J.G. Nind noticed the earnestness

of its members and concluded, “negroes [were] anxious to...show themselves men.”¹⁴⁶ As Nind’s response indicates, it was black men’s earnest desire to prove their gendered identity that contributed to white soldiers’ newfound respect for them. In South Carolina, a USCT sergeant noted that white soldiers treated black soldiers “as men...fighting for the same common cause;” while the white commander of the Eighty-Second USCT professed confidence in his troops’ manly abilities.¹⁴⁷ “You have Officers who have faith in your manhood,” he proclaimed.¹⁴⁸ Although it was critical for members of the USCT to prove their manliness to themselves, it was equally rewarding to hear gendered praise from those least expected to give it.

Manly acts during sentry duty, military engagements, ceremonial rituals, and moments of camaraderie with white soldiers contributed to black soldiers’ self-worth as gendered subjects. By performing these actions both on and off the battlefield, black men constructed manly identities as brave soldiers who were worthy of dignified respect. Nowhere was this more true than when black men performed the manly roles of liberator and protector. It was their performance as both messenger of freedom and protector of loved ones that directly signified their manliness.

The symbolic power of black liberators should not go unnoticed. The orchestration of armed black men entering Southern cities and liberating enslaved men and women resonated with tones of religious euphoria. Henry M. Turner of the First USCT, for instance, described a scene of spiritual liberation. Upon seeing the arrival of black soldiers, cries of “Yankees have come! Yankees have come!” filled the air, followed by a “pathetic” wail: “Oh Jesus, you have answered my prayer at last! Thankee, Thankee, Jesus.”¹⁴⁹ Likewise, during the campaign of Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor, Sergeant John C. Brock of the Forty-Third USCT reported a similar scene. After freeing “some five hundred of our sisters and brothers...several of them

remarked to me...[that] it seemed to them like heaven...The slaves tell us that they have been praying for these blessed days for a long time, but now their eyes witness their salvation from that dreadful calamity, slavery, and, what was more than they expected, by their own brethren in arms.”¹⁵⁰ Whether liberating enslaved men and women from the slave pens of Richmond or the confines of Charleston, black soldiers were met with cries of spiritual ecstasy, heartfelt prayer, and unyielding declarations of gratitude.¹⁵¹

If the role of liberator fulfilled black men’s desire to bring freedom to thousands of their own race, the role of protector enabled black men to perform the manly role of family defender. As contraband camps sprang up wherever Union lines held, some black soldiers provided for and administered justice to nearby black women and children in need. Elijah Marrs of the USCT, for example, was assigned the role of supervisor of the contraband camp, Bowling Green. Constituents “looked to me as if I were their Saviour,” wrote Marrs. “Whatever happened in camp to disturb or annoy them, the story [was] as at once detailed to me, and I was expected to remedy every evil.”¹⁵² Such considerable power to protect and defend black women and children played right into the manly role of family protector. Even so, the role of protector was an unenviable position. While stationed at Port Hudson, Louisiana, for example, a white captain named William H. Daly attempted to “violate the person of a colored woman” who was “the reputed wife of a colored man named George.” Upon hearing of this attempted rape, black soldiers of the Third Infantry Corps d’ Afrique responded as armed protectors of black womanhood, resulting in a full-blown riot.¹⁵³ Near Memphis and New Orleans, similar incidents occurred. Black soldiers of the Third U.S. Colored Cavalry, for instance, came to the defense of the wife of black Sergeant James Dixon after a white lieutenant named James S. Matthews entered her “sleeping department”¹⁵⁴ Likewise, members of the Seventy-Sixth USCT stationed

at Fort Jackson, Louisiana ran to the quarters of several black laundresses after three white officers sexually accosted them.¹⁵⁵ After generations of sexual abuse by white slave-owners, black Civil War soldiers constructed an identity as manly protector by defending black women from further abuse.

Although military life often separated Civil War soldiers from loved ones, some black men thought it their manly duty to protect family members in distress. In a contraband camp near Natchez, Mississippi, for example, black soldiers stationed nearby learned of an abusive edict imposed by the chief health officer, A.W. Kelly, and the city's military commander, J.W. Tuttle. According to the edict, black civilians ostensibly posed a "serious danger" to public health, resulting in the banishment of all blacks except those employed by "some responsible white person in some legitimate business." As a result, evicted black wives fled to their husbands' camp for protection." Upon implementation of Kelly's edict, white missionaries stationed in Natchez reported hearing "colored soldiers...in their madness swear desperately that they would have revenge." Leaving their military posts as deserters, members of the USCT claimed that "they could no longer endure the trail of seeing their wives and children driven into the streets and if [their commanding officers] would not at once interfere and *protect them* they should positively do it themselves." However, after such assertions of revenge and mass desertion by black soldiers, Kelly and Tuttle were relieved of command.¹⁵⁶

Performing the roles of liberator and protector must have been a gratifying experience for many black men who donned the Union uniform. Acts of liberation and protection were impressive constructions of gender – actions that proved just as noteworthy as withstanding criticism and friendly fire; just as performative as standing guard or parading; just as courageous as braving enemy fire; and just as touching as establishing manly bonds with white soldiers.

Collectively, at the heart of these manly performances was a change in gender status commensurate with a change in power relations. It was black men's ability to hold positions of power that lent credence to their manly credentials. This change in power was most evident in black soldiers' interactions with white Southerners during the war – a racial relationship which spoke to the relational dynamic of gender construction. By holding positions of power in relation to those previously in power, black men simultaneously elevated their manliness while diminishing the hubris of their former superiors.

Prior to the Civil War, Southern culture dictated that black southerners show deference to white superiority. Giving the sidewalk to white Southerners or removing one's hat before conversing with them were symbolic acknowledgements of power. By challenging white superiority, black men restructured normative racial practices, thereby upsetting the cultural logic that conflated blackness with inferiority. For example, in South Carolina, the relationships between white Southerners and black men were flipped on their heads. According to Charles Coffin of the USCT, whites were subject to the discretion of black provost guards who examined their papers and granted them permission to enter the provost headquarters. As a result, white South Carolinian Mrs. Frances J. Porcher expressed her indignation. "Nicely dressed black sentinels turn back white citizens," complained Porcher in disbelief, "reprimanding them for their passes not being correct."¹⁵⁷ Similarly, in February of 1865, Chaplain Henry M. Turner described Southern belles who "frowned," "poked faces" at him, and denied him access to the sidewalk in Smithsville, North Carolina.¹⁵⁸ However, in April of the same year, Turner depicted a radically different situation. While administering government rations in Raleigh, North Carolina, Turner was pleased to see southern belles and "slave oligarchs" waiting in line for their

share. “I know it was all fudge,” admitted Turner, “but it satisfied me to see them crouching before me, and I am a negro.”¹⁵⁹

Henry M. Turner retold of another symbolic incident that demonstrated black men’s newfound power. According to the *Christian Recorder*, when Turner visited Smithville, North Carolina, he stumbled upon a vociferous argument between a prominent black woman and some local whites. Apparently, several white women entered the black woman’s yard and accused her of stealing firewood. Upon hearing their heated exchange of words, Turner entered the fray and yelled, “‘Halt!’ Said they, ‘Who are you?’ ‘A United States Officer,’ was my reply. ‘Well, are you going to allow that negro to give us impudence?’ ‘You gave her impudence first,’ was my reply. ‘What, we give a negro impudence! We want you to know we are white, and are your superiors. You are our inferior, much less she.’ ‘Well,’ said I, ‘all of you put together would not make the equal of my wife, and I have yet to hear her claim superiority over me.’”¹⁶⁰ Upon hearing Turner’s reply, the white ladies stormed off to complain to his superior who subsequently ushered the white ladies away. Only afterwards did Turner learn “that they were some of the Southern aristocracy.”¹⁶¹ Thus, as a federal soldier, Turner simultaneously defined himself as manly protector of black womanhood and manly authoritarian over white womanhood.

While thousands of black men like Turner proved their manliness as Civil War soldiers, not all black men strove to construct their manliness via the USCT. Rather than freely join the Union cause out of manly pride, some black men were victims of forced impressment. For example, while returning home from church, one black man in Nashville was impressed by a Union “recruiter.” Although he, along with other local black men, possessed legitimate papers, the Union guard allegedly burned the paperwork and passed the men off as recruits.¹⁶² John

Banks also testified to his forced “recruitment.” While cutting firewood, Banks reported that members of the USCT kidnapped him and forced him to enlist upon threat of death.¹⁶³ And in York County, Virginia, Jane Walls testified that her husband was kidnapped and impressed into the Union Army, leaving her three children fatherless.¹⁶⁴

Such methods of “recruitment” were notoriously practiced throughout the South. According to Treasury Department official, Edward L. Pierce, impressment was tacitly approved by Major General David Hunter in the Department of the South. According to Pierce, black men “were taken from the fields without being allowed to go to their houses even to get a jacket.” In response, “sometimes whole plantations, learning what was going on, ran off to the woods for refuge.”¹⁶⁵ Although this unofficial “shotgun policy” never failed to get the “recruit,” forced impressment demonstrated the limits of black manly aspirations as members of the USCT.

Despite the chicanery of Union recruiters, many black soldiers parlayed their military roles into demonstrations of their manly identities. Volunteering “made us men when we enlisted,” wrote one black soldier. By laying “the foundation of our liberty,” we are able to “sho forth our manhood.”¹⁶⁶ Another USCT recruit expressed his eagerness “to go to the front” and prove “that we be men,” while Corporal James Henry Gooding of the USCT declared, “We did our duty as men should” after an engagement near Charleston Harbor.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, USCT Sergeant John Collins fervently declared that “we went to our post like men” even though being “dragged from post to pillow” from one South Carolina Island to another.¹⁶⁸ And a soldier belonging to the Fourth USCT wrote that he had “left his home a slave, but he returned in the garb of a union soldier, free, a man.”¹⁶⁹ The most cogent statement of black manliness, however, came from a USCT soldier who simply said: “I felt like a man with a uniform and gun in my hand.”¹⁷⁰

Just as the outbreak of war opened possibilities for black men to renegotiate the meaning of their gendered identity, for the overwhelming majority of black men, the cessation of war began the slow process of closing those same possibilities. Although opportunities for armed black manhood did not diminish entirely, at no other time in the nineteenth century did black men perform their armed manliness on such a demonstrative scale. And yet, the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Courthouse did not signify a sudden end of black manly performance with firearms; rather, the postwar offered black men a limited number of constrained opportunities to engage in armed gender performance.

Although Confederate General Robert E. Lee formally surrendered in April, 1865, the United States military still retained the services of black men in the immediate postwar. Relative to the apex of the war – when 185,000 black men constituted nearly 150 regiments – by July of 1865 the number of black men in the Union Army still numbered a respectable 123,000 black volunteers.¹⁷¹ However, by October of 1866, only 13,000 black soldiers remained, and by the Fall of 1867, all black volunteer troops were mustered out of duty.¹⁷² For the remainder of the nineteenth century, the United States Regular Army granted six black regiments – four infantry and two cavalry – until reductions in military funding lowered the Regular Army to only two black infantry units.¹⁷³

Most black troops were stationed on the frontier. Several strategic reasons prompted their frontier placement. Black frontier troops functioned as a show of force against French-controlled Mexico, as a deterrent against Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith's army, as an active force against Native Americans, as a ploy to muster white Union troops out-of-service before black troops, and as a convenient excuse to remove black soldiers from Southern Occupation. The latter excuse was successful in North and South Carolina, where only one

black regiment occupied each state; whereas in Virginia, the excuse was fully implemented, leaving Virginia the only Confederate state with a total absence of black men participating in her occupation.¹⁷⁴

With limited numbers of black soldiers relegated to distant regions of the frontier, black men not only found such service unrewarding relative to their Civil War experiences, they also had very little opportunity for manly performance on the frontier, let alone an audience to perform for. Regiments such as the Thirty-Sixth USCT served at the lonely station of Brazos Santiago near the Rio Grande, devoid of performative gender construction and displaced from helping friends, family, and members of the black community.¹⁷⁵ At times, the only type of construction being performed was the physical restoration of previously abandoned military sites. The Ninth Cavalry, for example, was in charge of restoring Fort Davis, Texas – an uninhabited fort two hundred miles southeast of El Paso.¹⁷⁶ Most of the time, black frontier soldiers spent their days guarding the construction of railroads, laying telegraph wire, escorting mail service, and mapping out unexplored territory.¹⁷⁷

At times, frontier service could be challenging. While at Fort Davis, for example, two horses ran over Private Andrew Emery, severely injuring his back in the process. By incurring such an injury while on duty, Emery received praise for “his faithfulness as a soldier and his worth as a man.”¹⁷⁸ Henry Walker of the Tenth Cavalry blinded one eye in an accident while working as a blacksmith; while George France of the Tenth Cavalry suffered back and leg injuries after being kicked by an unruly mule.¹⁷⁹ And Benjamin Bard of the Tenth Cavalry suffered severe frostbite while on guard duty for a wagon train, leaving him in the hospital for over three months.¹⁸⁰ These injuries were serious and spoke to the arduous life of a frontier

soldier. And yet, they were hardly robust examples of manly performance – at least, when compared to the USCT’s manly charge at Battery Wagner.

There was significant warfare on the frontier. With 300,000 Native Americans living in the United States, and 100,000 of them deemed officially “hostile” by the Department of the Interior, black regulars were ordered to subdue them in an effort to secure Anglo-American hegemony. In the summer of 1867, black soldiers engaged with various Native American tribes across the Great Plains such as the Cheyenne, the Kickapoo, and the Apache, resulting in the death of William Christy – the first combat death of the Tenth Cavalry. In the mid-1870s, members of the Tenth Cavalry also participated in engagements with a collection of Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors in what came to be known as the Red River War. Consisting of twenty battles from the summer of 1874 to the spring of 1875, the Red River War offered black men opportunities to test their manly capabilities in the field, although the intense cold and lack of food proved more formidable than combat with Natives. Collectively, combat with Native Americans was sporadic and short-lived – offering small numbers of black men limited opportunities to perform their gender in front of a viewing audience.¹⁸¹

Although black soldiers stationed in the South still performed their service within public view, most black men witnessed the curtailment of their manly duties. Concerns over Southern “unrest” in major urban centers resulted in re-assignments of black regiments to forts along the coast or the frontier. And while black soldiers still held power to enforce the law, including authority to support the Freedmen’s Bureau, their power was often contested by Southerners who were unwilling to accept armed black manhood.¹⁸² “The rebs here seem to die very hard at the idea of having black troops to guard them,” reported William B. Johnson of the Third USCT.¹⁸³

An ex-Confederate confirmed Johnson's assessment of the South. "It is very hard...to see a white man taken under guard by one of those black scoundrels," he explained.¹⁸⁴

If it was hard for ex-Confederates to witness the USCT during Southern Occupation, members of the USCT found it equally difficult to perform their duties. In July of 1865, for example, when a USCT provost guard ordered an ex-Confederate to remove his Confederate jacket and brass buttons, another ex-Confederate grappled with the black soldier and physically accosted him.¹⁸⁵ Likewise, Sergeant Elijah Marrs of the USCT was attacked by three Kentucky whites wielding knives; while in a separate incident, a white gang in Raymond, Mississippi shot at three black soldiers for wearing their Union uniforms.¹⁸⁶ And in Virginia, a white resident attempted to kill multiple black soldiers by poisoning their camp well.¹⁸⁷ In short, black soldiers still had their uniforms and guns, but in an occupied land of defeated ex-combatants, black military performance was aggressively under attack.

Even demonstrations of black military pageantry were circumscribed during the postwar. Although black veterans participated in militia rituals and parades, their safety was only ensured when performed in areas heavily-populated by freedpeople.¹⁸⁸ For example, on July 4, 1866, three to four hundred freedmen gathered in Pitt County, North Carolina for a day of festivities and military pageantry. According to one observer, "target practice with Springfield rifles, and ball cartridges elicited spirited competition, in which exercise the two best shots were made by colored men. An extempore organization of infantry and of cavalry (mule-mounted) drilled, fired, charged, and marched, to their own intense delight."¹⁸⁹ However, exactly ten years later, black military pageantry elicited a violent response by local white residents of Hamburg, South Carolina. During a July 4th celebration, two white residents "ordered" black militiamen "to move aside for their carriage" since giving way to black militia parades was considered a racial

“insult [such] as no white people upon earth had ever to put up with before.”¹⁹⁰ After “harsh words were exchanged,” the black militia commander “eventually opened his company’s ranks” allowing the white “pair [to proceed] on their way.” Even so, the matter was brought to court. With a crowd of armed black and white men surrounding the court proceedings, violence erupted. Not only were six black residents killed during the melee – including Hamburg’s black marshal – white residents turned their anger towards black shops and homes which were subsequently plundered and destroyed. With such vicious consequences of death and destruction, the Hamburg Massacre demonstrated the danger of black military pageantry during the postwar era.¹⁹¹

Postwar racial violence derived from entrenched beliefs regarding white superiority and black emasculation. Although enslaved black men may have earned the fruits of manhood, many Southern whites continued to believe that freedmen were never entitled to their “manhood rights” – that is, the right to vote, hold political office, serve on juries, or carry firearms.¹⁹² After racial violence erupted in Kingstree, South Carolina, for example, a federal investigating officer concluded that unreasonable fears of white planters were to blame. According to his investigation, postwar conflict “[sprang] from dread on the part of the planters” concerning “the freed people asserting their rights of manhood.”¹⁹³ The same conclusion found its clearest expression in a letter written by South Carolina planters to the Commander of the Northern District of the Department of the South on June 20th, 1865. Laced with a tone of incredulity, planters wondered if “negroes [had] the right to be walking about our plantations with guns or pistols in their hands, claiming a right, because they have been pronounced free, to the stock of their former owners.”¹⁹⁴ Even though tens of thousands of black men donned the blue uniform

and successfully demonstrated their martial capabilities, white southerners still considered the notion of armed black men anathema during the postwar.

Although USCT troops handed in their weapons upon mustering out of service, black veterans earnestly acquired firearms during the postwar.¹⁹⁵ Shotguns and pistols were the most common forms of firearms acquired by black veterans, although they were no match for Winchester rifles and six-shooters commonly employed by Klan members.¹⁹⁶ Regardless of the quality of their firearms, former members of the USCT were just as eager to own guns as Southern whites were to punish those that did. In postwar Virginia, a black veteran was beaten for declaring his military pride. “As one of the disfranchised race,” explained a Louisiana freedman, “I would say to every colored soldier ‘Bring your gun home.’”¹⁹⁷ Even with such sage advice in mind, carrying firearms did not preclude determined whites from taking guns away from black men. After mustering out of service in December of 1865, for instance, North Carolina black veterans returned to Hertford County only to have state militiamen confiscate their pistols and shotguns.¹⁹⁸ In March of the following year, one black veteran from Maryland reported vicious attacks being perpetrated on former members of the USCT. “The returned colored Soldiers are in Many cases beten, and their guns taken from them,” he wrote. “We darcent walk out of an evening [but] if we do, and we are Met by Some of these roudies [...] that were in the rebbel army[,] they beat us badly.”¹⁹⁹ It wasn’t just “roudies” that accosted black veterans. White urban police officers and militiamen often patrolled black residential areas in order to, as one Mississippian explained, “keep good order, and discipline amongst the negro population.”²⁰⁰ And as Republican state power increasingly lost control to racial conservatives, some Southern states once again outlawed blacks from owning weapons, imposed taxes on black-owned guns, or outlawed hunting on Sundays in counties with large black populations.²⁰¹ Just as enslaved

Americans experienced a “peculiar institution” prior to the Civil War, the proscription of armed black manhood during the postwar constituted a postwar peculiarity of its own. By giving life and limb as an armed soldier during the war, black veterans earned a peace that ultimately robbed them of the very weapon they employed to insure Union victory.

Postwar Memphis, Tennessee provided a prime example of the contestation over armed black men. During September of 1865, a Memphis policeman approached a black USCT sergeant and shared his feelings about black soldiers. “I wish I could get a chance to kill all the Damned Nigger Soldiers,” he said – that is, prior to beating the black man with the help of another Memphis police officer.²⁰² The following April, violence erupted again when black veterans stationed at nearby Fort Pickering entered the downtown area of Memphis. Although two days prior, the Fort Pickering soldiers relinquished their firearms while being mustered out of service, local whites and police officers used the opportunity to attack the unarmed veterans, resulting in forty-six black murders, seventy black injuries, and five sexual assaults.²⁰³ During the first day of the riot, black veterans “beg[ged] to have their arms [so] that they might defend their women and children,” but to no avail.²⁰⁴ While there were reports of black men using “old shot guns they got out of the houses,” it wasn’t enough to stop white rioters from raping freedwoman Rebecca Ann Bloom by knifepoint while her husband Peter Bloom was forced to listen.²⁰⁵ “Almost all Southern people felt hard” against black Union soldiers, noted Tennessee lawyer Barbour Lewis, and more than a few white Southerners were willing to kill black men to prove it.²⁰⁶

Although armed black manhood was severely contested, freedmen continued to employ guns as part of their gender construction. During the postwar, armed black men still performed their duties as liberators and protectors against the continued indignities imposed upon their

communities. For example, one postwar captain referred to USCT firearms as liberating beacons of progress – “reflecting...moral light” into the country.²⁰⁷ Another USCT soldier considered it “our duty to let the colored people know that they are free...and to protect them as such.”²⁰⁸ Chaplain Henry M. Turner expressed similar sentiments. “The fact is,” wrote Turner, “when colored Soldiers are about [whites] are afraid to kick colored women and abuse colored people on the Streets, as they usually do.”²⁰⁹ Protection against the Ku Klux Klan provided the most conspicuous examples of armed postwar security. Armed black men guarded the streets of Bennettsville, South Carolina in order to thwart Klan violence, while in Arkansas and Texas, governors Powell Clayton and Edmund J. Davis employed black militia to mitigate the terror of Klan activity, resulting in thousands of arrests and three executions.²¹⁰ Even so, such manly acts of communal protection were met with fierce resistance. In York County, South Carolina, the Klan left a trail of violent horror, including a tree lynching of a black militia leader with a note that read: “Jim Williams on his big muster.”²¹¹ And though black militias were successfully employed in Arkansas and Texas, governors in other Southern states were either reluctant to use black militiamen or disbanded black units altogether.²¹² Armed black men in the postwar may have been – in the words of the *New York World* – “apostles of black equality,” but just like the twelve apostles of the New Testament, postwar black apostles suffered for their service.²¹³

On the Sea Islands dotting the Carolina and Georgia coasts, it was thieving sailors rather than the Ku Klu Klan that prompted former male slaves to take up arms. According to a Freedmen’s Bureau report dated August 17th, 1865, the superintendent of St. Helena Island reported plundering sailors who ravaged the crops of black farms. Freedmen “were not disposed to submit to having their melons stolen, their corn pulled green, and their sweet potatoes dug up and carried away,” read the report; and in two specific instances, an armed black “posse” drove

away marauders who “drew bowie knives, and refused to go.”²¹⁴ During less ominous times, the same report indicated the formation of a black police force that most likely was comprised of USCT veterans. According to the Freedmen’s Bureau document, the black police purchased their firearms in “Beaufort, Charleston, or Savannah,” while others retained guns “given to them in the early days of our occupation of these islands.” “These guns they prize as their most valued possessions next to their land,” read the report, “and to take them away would leave a lasting and bitter resentment, and sense of injustice.”²¹⁵

Similar to the manly attire of the USCT, postwar police work afforded black men with opportunities to engage in gender performance with the official trappings of uniforms and firearms. For former black soldiers-turned-police officers – such as the three former members of the Thirty-Seventh USCT who joined the Wilmington police force – performing their manliness with gun and regalia was a familiar practice.²¹⁶ Whether veterans or civilian recruits, police work attracted large numbers of black men. In southern urban centers such as Montgomery, Mobile, Petersburg, and Vicksburg, black men constituted up to fifty percent of some forces.²¹⁷ In New Orleans, 182 black policemen out of a total of 647 officers joined the force; with some black officers given the honor of guarding the state legislature’s doors, “armed with clubs and revolvers,” according to one New Orleans visitor.²¹⁸ Some black men in the South even attained prominent positions such as police captain and police chief, granting armed black men the ability to give orders to armed white officers.²¹⁹

And yet, just as frontier troops, militiamen, and occupation soldiers performed their gender under severe postwar constraints, so too did black police officers. Even with official authority to protect and defend Southern cities, black police officers’ powers were far from inviolable. Some select cities segregated black police officers from white communities,

reminding armed black men that their guns and badges did not guarantee power over all citizens.²²⁰ Other cities infantilized black men by mandating that black officers work in pairs out of purported safety concerns.²²¹ While it may have been safer to work collectively, the mandate established a special precedent that did not apply to white officers. And amidst the waning power of Republican Reconstruction, Democrats who regained control of Southern state politics engaged in wholesale purges of black policemen.²²² Thus, postwar police work did offer opportunities for black manly expression, but after Republican state governments fell to Democratic control, those same opportunities were drowned out by the high tide of white supremacy.

Regardless of its untimely demise, the revolutionary construction of armed black manliness should not be discounted for its short lifespan. From 1862 to the late 1870s, thousands of former male slaves put on uniforms, carried firearms, and developed what one USCT lieutenant referred to as a “consciousness of manhood” that was previously denied them.²²³ Moreover, when one USCT observer noted that former pieces of chattel were “transformed into men,” it wasn’t just hyperbolic rhetoric.²²⁴ A veritable transformation did take place during the Civil War, and black men were its primary catalysts. Moreover, armed black manhood was performed in the midst of millions of disparate audience members, including those who spewed unrelenting criticism and fierce opposition. That is why General Rufus Saxton told his black soldiers that “you must look a white man straight in the face and let him know that you are a man,” since Saxton understood that it wasn’t enough for black men to prove their manliness in the eyes of black men alone.²²⁵ Rather, armed black manhood had to be demonstratively proven to supportive allies as well as to those less concerned about its construction. Armed black men accomplished this with manly doggedness and aplomb. Time and again, ambivalent observers

were struck by the manly vigor of black soldiers and were convinced that a transformation was, indeed, taking place. As a result, the years immediately following emancipation witnessed a stark elevation in black men's confidence and self-respect. "Our own exertions and our own muscle must make us men, wrote captain William D. Mathews of the First Kansas Colored Volunteer in 1863. "If we fight we shall be respected."²²⁶ Black men did fight. Black men did flex their muscle. And just as Mathews proclaimed, black men gained the respect of many.

Robert Smalls, the famous pilot of the *Planter*, garnered the respect of many with his heroic escape from Charleston Harbor in 1862. Looking back on the incident several years later, Congressman William Kelley of Pennsylvania remembered the time when "there was nothing at all to show that the Negro could do without a white leader." "But there came the *Planter*," said Congressman Kelley. There came Robert Smalls, "*the black man*" who seized the *Planter* "from the armed state of South Carolina."²²⁷ Of course, not everyone recognized the manliness of Robert Smalls. But the performance of armed black manhood during the Civil War challenged the gendered assumption that black manhood and dependent boyhood were one and the same.

One year after his famous escape, Smalls was summoned to see the Admiral aboard the Union vessel, the *Wabash*. When the accompanying commander, General Seymour, hailed the *Wabash*, Seymour referred to Smalls in gendered terms. "This *boy* wants to see the Admiral. Will you please let him know that the *boy* is waiting?" "Here *boy*, you can go aboard." Also accompanying Smalls was *Harper's Monthly* reporter Charles Nordhoff. In an article printed in several Northern papers, Nordhoff chastised Seymour for his choice of words. "I blushed for general Seymour when I heard him use the old cant of the slave master," wrote Nordhoff. "Now, Smalls is not a boy...He is a man and wears a beard sufficient to show it."²²⁸ But it was more than just facial hair that proved his manly identity. It was his ability to negotiate the heavily-

armed *Planter* through Charleston Harbor's gauntlet of Confederate cannon that sufficiently demonstrated that Robert Smalls was anything but a boy. It was his initial heroic feat with firearms that allowed Robert Smalls to claim, "I stand here today a man, as good as any other man."²²⁹ However, for Robert Smalls and the thousands of armed freedmen who had their day in the spotlight, the night of white supremacy left them with a fragile hope – that their breakout performance of black manliness would not be their last.

CHAPTER THREE

Violent Dramas of Bodily Trauma

Tracing the Physical Residues of Enslavement and Civil War

I was broken in body, soul and spirit.

- Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)¹

Lydia Polite was not abused. Although enslaved to the McKee family for nearly her entire life, Lydia spent her days in Beaufort County, South Carolina in relative privilege and comfort; wearing the clothes of her white enslavers and traveling to her mother's plantation for weekend visits. And yet, Lydia found her "favored" treatment troubling.² As a mother of a young boy, Robert Smalls, Lydia wanted to raise her son responsibly, with full awareness of the stark realities of slavery. One day, Lydia took young Robert on a walk to the local slave auction block. As the auctioneer presented a black boy to the eager white crowd, Lydia whispered in Robert's ear, "could be you."³ Continuing on their walk, Lydia led her son to the Beaufort jail where Robert witnessed the merciless whipping of his friend Susan. For the first time, Robert Smalls saw slavery in its harshest perspective – as a system that rendered his body mere chattel; as an economy that relegated him to be auctioned as a thing; and as a cage that consigned him to the whippings of a brute. With sudden awareness of his corporeal enslavement, Robert cried the entire way home.⁴

The corporeality of enslaved men and women has not escaped the purview of historians. Topics such as slave diets, health, and whippings are familiar terrain for historians who either harbor a curiosity for slave life or for those who seek to measure the severity of the slave system.⁵ However, studies that connect the topic of slave bodies to the analytical concept of

gender are less ubiquitous. The reason for such disconnect may result from a long-held Western tradition that divides subjects into separate entities – namely the mind and the body. This theoretical dualism could be traced back to ancient Platonic philosophy, and more famously to philosopher Rene Descartes; however, Karl Marx’s consciousness-oriented thesis did much in the modern world to privilege ideology over corporeality.⁶ When historians have included the slave body into their analyses of gender, they have done the important work of studying the female slave’s body. Such work has uncovered the sensualized trope of the “Jezebel,” patterns of female labor and pregnancy, and sexual assaults on the female body.⁷ However, gender studies that incorporate the corporeality of black men during slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction are not just sparse, they are nonexistent. This dearth of research speaks to the common practice of eliding the male body when examining the construction of manly identity. While previous scholars have examined black men’s performative gender roles, military exploits, and postwar occupations, black men’s bodies were somehow excised from their analyses. It’s as if gender performance occurred without bodies to perform with.⁸

But a male slave such as Lydia’s son, Robert Smalls, did have a body to perform his gender with. It was the body of Robert Smalls that heroically piloted the Confederate vessel, the *Planter*, out of Charleston Harbor. It was his eye-sight that deftly guided the steamship toward the Union blockade. It was the hand of Robert Smalls that steadily steered his crew to freedom; that waved to enthusiastic onlookers; and that later shook the hand of President Abraham Lincoln at the White House. And it was the voice of Robert Smalls that successfully goaded his constituents to vote for him for political office time and again. Like thousands of male slaves, Robert Smalls constructed his manly identity with gender performances that required a capable body. And that body has a history worth examining.

The history of the black male corporeality is as multitudinous as the millions of black males – both free and enslaved – that resided in the United States. While one should be wary of reducing millions of black corporeal experiences into a single narrative, there are commonalities worth delineating that inform the boundaries of what many African Americans were subjected to. Although in no way are these commonalities universal, they do speak to a majority of collective bodies that were enslaved, bodies that fought in black regiments, bodies that belonged to a marginalized community, and bodies that were rendered inferior in light of their darkness. While exceptions and intra-racial differences do populate the outer boundaries of this category, a collective understanding of black male corporeality is worth analytical attention.⁹

One commonality that is a vital site of historical inquiry is the corporeal health of black men. Enslaved men suffered a litany of dramatic traumas that were unique to their enslaved status and their subsequent freedom. It is a history of black men's health that informs their performative capabilities and constraints, which in turn, outlines the boundaries of their potential gender construction. And that history occurred under the incredible weight of slavery and utter violence of Civil Warfare. Amidst the onerous trials of enslavement and deadly tribulations of warfare, those who survived such trials and tribulations possessed varying degrees of health, and it was the health of their bodies that affected black men's abilities to construct their gender with manly performances. Thus, based on the vitality of their bodies, freedmen attempted to perform manly roles such as postwar soldier, economic contributor, husband and father, and communal citizen – topics that I will explore fully in the chapters that follow. It is here, in this chapter, that I examine the corporeal lives of black men under enslavement and under fire.¹⁰

Moreover, the Civil War often connotes a stark break with the past. And while it is irrefutable that Civil Warfare, emancipation, and Union victory were watershed moments in

United States history, in respect to the bodies of black men, the Civil War was merely an extension of toil and punishment. Just as African Americans exerted themselves while cultivating cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar fields; former slaves exerted themselves as laboring “soldiers” on the battlefield. Munitions needed carrying. Breastworks required building. And trenches demanded digging. With white commanders preferring white men on the battlefield, black men were left with the all-too-aptly-named fatigue duty. And when military punishments were meted out, a disproportionate number of black men received their share of martial justice. Thus, in respect to the history of black male corporeality, the outbreak of Civil Warfare did not relieve black men of hazardous toil and punishment. Rather, the Civil War was an extension of them.

* * *

Although the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment freed Americans from enslavement, no presidential edict or legislative act could undo the physical damage inflicted upon enslaved bodies. The many years of enervating toil rendered many bodies unfit for manly performance. When former slave Peter Clifton described a typical workday as one long shift under the sun – that is, beginning “when [we] can see, and quit[ting] work when [we] can’t see” – he testified to an antebellum slave’s average workweek of 57 to 60 daylight hours during the summer and 40 daylight hours in the winter.¹¹ While Saturdays were considered half days and Sundays as well as holidays full days off, these practices were not codified in law.¹² Sometimes, enslavers only relieved female slaves on half Saturdays, leaving male bodies to continue working their sixth day in a row.¹³ Even more, during the busiest days

of the season, enslaved men and women were called upon to “shuck corn ’till eleven and twelve o’clock at night;” while on sugar plantations, the fickle crop demanded as much as an eighteen-hour workday, including Sundays.¹⁴ Although such arduous workloads were throwbacks to the Colonial Era – when slave workloads were codified at 98 to 112 hours per week – some antebellum enslavers continued such practices when the crop demanded it.¹⁵

Often times, antebellum labor calculations only included official labor schedules; not off-duty workloads. When Maryland slave Charles Coles noted that slaves’ “time was their own” after 6:00 p.m., he wasn’t referring to evenings of leisure.¹⁶ Twelve-hour workdays were followed by evenings of chores, odd jobs, and additional fieldwork on gardens or on personal field plots.¹⁷ Virginia slave George White remembered “do[ing] a little job after our wuk,” followed by a quota of carding nine ounces of cotton at night. During his time off, White would help his brothers plow land. “Two would get in front of de plow,” noted White, “one on each en’ of de single tree an’ pull while de others would get behind to hold de plow. We would break up all de land around de house this way, while dey had de ox in de field.”¹⁸ Enslaved black men such as George White may have had the stamina to work incredible hours, but they did so at the risk of bodily harm. Working like an ox had serious repercussions, especially when a man worked on his supposed day off.

Comparisons with workers from the North, as well as with workers from Europe and Latin American, have often been cited to either support the benign nature of American slavery or to contextualize the harshness of slavery. These comparisons often conceal as much as they instruct. Comparisons between enslaved workers and those laboring in “free markets” tell us who had it the worst – at least, in terms of total work hours – or how laborers suffered collectively. What escapes our attention is the bodily harm done to all workers who are required

to strenuously toil for long hours. Whether plowing and picking, bending and lifting, plucking and molding, kneeling and reaching – all laborious acts exact a toll on the human body and shouldn't be qualified or excused for their comparative pervasiveness. Just as accidental amputations in the workplace were common in many areas of the world doesn't negate the seriousness of losing an appendage, nor does it diminish the effects such loss has on constructing one's gender. Maybe another fruitful comparison should be made – one between the total hours worked by the wealthy planter class relative to their slaves. Comparisons such as these can reveal the inverse relationship between the toil and damage of one racialized body relative to another.¹⁹

Just as slave George White worked his body like an ox during slavery, onerous workloads continued into the Civil War. For the 185,000 members of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), black Civil War soldiers complained of being worked “like horses or mules” while on fatigue duty. They make us “haul big guns for a distance of four or five miles, through the hot sun,” explained one member of the USCT; while another complained of excessive labor at “coaling steamers, unloading and loading ships, [and] moving stores.”²⁰ The Commissioner for the Organization of Colored Troops reported similar conditions. “The colored men here are treated like brutes,” wrote the commissioner to Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton. “Any officer who wants them, I am told, impresses [them].”²¹ Barbaric treatment of black soldiers mirrored crude beliefs about the animalistic baseness of black men. When a white Union soldier reasoned that “a Negro has rights as a dog has rights,” he was testifying to the supposed inferiority of African Americans and their propensity for obeying work orders.²² Such beliefs persisted throughout the duration of the war. As late as July of 1864, an inspection of Morganzia, Louisiana, revealed an inordinate amount of fatigue duty performed by black troops. “Several

regiments of white Infantry [had] not been required to work a day,” wrote the inspector, “while colored troops had been required to work 8 hours a day[;] hardly allowing them time to police their ground or prepare for Inspection.”²³ With such constant fatigue duty performed by black soldiers, even white USCT officers grew weary of watching them.²⁴

Working like an animal during the Civil War was commensurate with the grueling work of slavery. Only the nomenclature had changed. Whereas slaves were legally defined as “chattel” during enslavement, it was General Benjamin Butler who wryly re-named runaway slaves as “contraband” while commanding the Department of Virginia in 1861.²⁵ Although one could argue the merits and tradeoffs associated with the title, Butler’s “contraband” term did little to reconstitute black men as human, let alone manly. Just like chattel, the term contraband connoted a propertied thing that a white man ordered and owned as he wished. And this definition of black men logically lent itself to associations with manual labor. “Instead of the musket[,] It is the spad[e] and the Wheelbarrow and the Axe,” wrote one disheartened private; while another wrote with dismay, “we are slaves to fatigue work and bone labor.”²⁶ When one member of the USCT refused to behave like property and perform fatigue duty as ordered, a court martial imprisoned him for two years of hard labor.²⁷

If notions of propertied labor continued into the Civil War, so too did assumptions of African Americans’ *natural* propensity for manual labor. Gender theorist Todd Reeser, for example, addresses this practice of rendering meaning *into* the human body in his work, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (2010). Reeser smartly recognizes that “power and discourse” are not just imposed upon bodies, but rather, are “inscribed in gender constructs” that take place “through the medium of the body.”²⁸ In other words, the “power and discourse” of race and slavery was corporeally inscribed into the bodies of African Americans as subjects

naturally prone to manual labor, brutish direction, authoritarian discipline. With Reeser's distinction in mind, members of the USCT found themselves little more than glorified laborers – a fact that prompted some white officers to balk.²⁹ “They have been slaves and are just learning to be men,” complained Colonel James Beecher in anger. “When they are set to menial work...it simply throws them back where they were before and reduces them to the positions of slaves again.”³⁰ On more than a few occasions, beliefs about African Americans' natural propensity for labor went hand in hand with assumptions about their supposed immunity to harsh climates and unhealthy environments. Just as in the antebellum era when, according to slave Henry Banner, African Americans were thought to withstand “the climate better,” General Benjamin Butler correctly predicted that “colored troops” would be “used to garrison unhealthy positions;” or “will be called on for...making roads, building bridges and draining marshes.”³¹ Often times, these unhealthy conditions contributed to countless sufferings perpetrated on the black male body. For example, whereas white Union soldiers refused to perform fatigue duty in the “stinking” swamps of Louisiana, black Union soldiers were ordered to do so. As a result, many black men died.³²

The conflation of black men with fatigue duty was an assumption shared by more than a few USCT officers. The propensity to link black men with labor permeated all quarters of the army, and was systemically codified in official military plans and orders. In fact, seven USCT regiments were officially sanctioned as “fatigue regiments” to be “composed of all classes of colored men capable of performing the ordinary duties of a military depot.”³³ In April of 1863, the War Department further conflated the USCT with fatigue duty by issuing Special Order No.13. Directed at members of the USCT in the Mississippi Valley, the order returned black males bodies to the cotton fields. “One of the duties to be required of Regiments of African

descent, will be to secure abandoned Cotton,” stated the order, “and have it conveyed to the Levee for shipment to the Quartermaster at Memphis, Tennessee.”³⁴ For many black male bodies, the war years must have felt like slavery in a blue uniform.

But it was more than hard feelings that troubled the black male body. Excessive fatigue duty contributed to excessive corporeal injuries. For example, it was heavy artilleryman Isaac Bryant’s stevedore duties that prostrated him after a fallen artillery box “rupture[ed]” his sides “laying him two or three weeks at a time.” “His guts came down so that he is not able to do anything like work,” read the report, and he is forced to “wear truses [sic] to keep up.”³⁵ Bryant’s comrade, Allen Smith, suffered a similar injury while lifting “heavy T iron” and unloading boats at Morehead City, North Carolina. After being hospitalized for two months, Smith was described as “feeble” upon his discharge, and was required to wear a truss for the rest of his life.³⁶ And after Colonel James Montgomery’s men were ordered to excessive fatigue duty – including digging trenches, building batteries, mounting guns, and hauling cannon – Montgomery reported the corporeal consequences. “As might be expected,” he wrote, “this kind of service soon filled our hospital with broken down men.”³⁷

It is worth noting that during the Civil War, the Sixty-Fifth USCT suffered the second highest number of deaths in the entire Union Army. Even more telling, black soldiers of the Sixty-Fifth USCT never served in battle. Rather than bullet wounds or imbedded shrapnel, it was a litany of “frozen extremities,” amputations, and disease that plagued black soldiers of the Sixty-Fifth USCT, indicating that fatigue duty alone could not explain the more than one hundred deaths suffered in Missouri in less than two months.³⁸ Rather, a combination of fatigue duty, inclement weather, and inadequate clothing contributed to their suffering and demise. Sergeant Collins of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment confirmed these insufferable

conditions. “As I write it rains quite hard, and has done so for four days,” reported Collins. “The mud is quite deep, and our shelter very poor, and it is very hard living at this time. We are all destitute of clothes, and some have not as much as a shoe upon their feet.”³⁹ Some black soldiers were able to acquire adequate clothing via purchases from a sutler – including sewing kits (referred to as “housewives”) and “two-fingered mittens” which allowed soldiers to fire their weapons while keeping their hands warm – but such supplies were sparse.⁴⁰ Sometimes, black soldiers relied on the graces of good-hearted white officers to acquire needed clothing. “Do you think that any sewing society in Newburyport would be abolitionists enough to make 50 to 100 pairs [of mittens] for colored soldiers[?]” asked a white USCT lieutenant.⁴¹ However, with few funds to spare and even fewer philanthropic “abolitionists” to provide clothing, black men in the Civil War often succumbed to the elements. Oliver Blount of the Thirty-Seventh USCT, for example, could not protect his body from mother nature’s bitter cold. As his “toes rotted from his feet” from frostbite, Blount attempted to make his way home to see his wife. Blount never made it.⁴²

Of course, inclement weather and sparse clothing during the Civil War was nothing new to black Civil War soldiers, nor to most African Americans of the nineteenth century for that matter. Just as weather conditions tried the constitutions of black soldiers during the Civil War, inclement weather during slavery exacerbated their arduous hours of toil. “We worked from sun to sun,” reported Andrew Boone; and “if we had a fire in cold weather where we was workin’ Marster or de overseer would come and put it out.”⁴³ Although this example seems gratuitous, more than a few observers noted the strain imposed upon slaves who were forced to work during inclement weather. According to one contemporary, a sugar planter ordered his slaves to cut the crop during a “dreadful stormy day,” even though his slaves “could scarcely

stay in the field” amidst such cold conditions.⁴⁴ Another observer witnessed slaves “constantly in the water” for six weeks at a time in an effort to drain and repair levees. The slaves “fail very fast from sore feet and swelled legs,” reported the disapproving observer.⁴⁵ Economic needs, sheer meanness, or the combination of the two accounted for the inhumane treatment of slave labor. A Louisiana slave named Rosa Washington credited a mean overseer for ordering slaves to work in harsh weather; however, the peripatetic Frederick Law Olmsted reported that such treatment was widely practiced. While in the lower Mississippi Valley, Olmsted noted that “only once did I see a gang which had been allowed to discontinue its work on account of the rain.”⁴⁶

If inclement weather afflicted the enslaved body, then inadequate clothing also compounded the problem. Although nineteenth-century prescriptive literature implored enslavers to clothe their slaves for self-serving economic or paternalistic reasons, some enslavers provided only meager clothing made of inferior fabrics.⁴⁷ Reverend C.F. Sturgis of South Carolina castigated these practices in his “Prize Essay on the Duties of Masters to Servants.” It is a “miserable policy of allowing servants to go to their labor in rags, for want of comfortable clothing,” wrote Sturgis.⁴⁸ Even so, there were many enslavers who ignored calls for sentimentalism and paternalistic care. North Carolina slave W.L. Bost remembered the chilling conditions of slave auctions on the first day of January. “The poor critters nearly froze to death,” reported Bost. “They never had enough clothes on to keep a cat warm.”⁴⁹ Virginia slave Robert Williams observed similar conditions.

I done see groups of slaves, women, men and children walking down the road, some of the women wid babies in dey arms and some on ox-carts wid babies all on dey way to de cotton country. Some of dem would hardly have on any clo'es. De white folks would come up from de cotton country and buy slaves and carry dem back in droves. This was fo' de War 'cause I was a little boy wukin' 'round de house, and sometimes dese slaves would stop 'cause dey would git sick. Some of dem had on shoes and some didn't. Dey was just like cattle in a herd.⁵⁰

When enslavers provided clothing, slaves typically received only four suits of clothing per year – two shirts and pants for male slaves during the spring, and two in the fall.⁵¹ Although this allowance provided a modicum of protection against the elements, it did little under extreme working conditions, long hours of toil, and inclement weather. “Many negroes had died from exposure,” wrote Virginian congressman T.T. Bouldin, “as a consequence of flimsy fabric that will turn neither wind nor weather.”⁵² Frederick Douglass confirmed the congressman’s claim. “[I] was kept almost in a state of nudity [as a child];” wrote Douglass, “no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers; nothing but coarse sack-cloth or two-linen, made into a sort of shirt, reaching down to my knees. This I wore night and day, changing it once a week.”⁵³ Memories of wearing “course sack-cloth” or “Negro cloth” went hand in hand with memories of discomfort, illness, and bodily duress.⁵⁴

Just as Civil War Private Oliver Blount died from frostbite while making his way home to see his wife, damage to the feet was the cause for considerable concern amongst African Americans during slavery. Whether provided with poorly tailored shoes or denied shoes altogether, slaves shared vivid memories of podiatric discomfort and pain. Maryland slave Dennis Simms recalled wearing ill-fitting “ox-hide shoes” that were “stuffed with paper to keep out the cold.”⁵⁵ “We called them ‘program’ shoes,” remembered Marylander Rezin Williams, “because the paper used for stuffing [them], consisted of discarded programs.”⁵⁶ At least program shoes provided some protection. Some slaves were forced to go barefoot. Richard Toler’s enslaver, for example, never provided shoes for his slaves, resulting in black, frost-bitten feet. “We just greased them with tallow,” and continued working, remembered another slave, Peter Randolph.⁵⁷ Likewise, Virginian slave George Jackson, remembered frigid mornings when his feet would “ ’most freeze,” while another Virginian slave, W.P. Jacobs, retold how his father

went “barefooted the year round until he was seventeen.”⁵⁸ Inadequate footwear was such a fundamental concern for slaves that Louisiana slave Mary Reynolds considered it one of the primary indicators of enslavement. “We prays for the end of tribulation” proclaimed Reynolds, “and the end of beatings and for shoes that fit our feet.”⁵⁹

As Mary Reynolds’ prayer indicates, onerous work hours, inclement weather, inadequate clothing, and inferior shoes affected the enslaved bodies of both enslaved men *and* women. In fact, female slaves had the burdensome double-duty of working in domestic quarters and in the field. When Julia King remembered evenings when “mamma did the washing and ironing and cook[ing],” she was listing domestic duties performed in addition to her mom’s field work conducted during the day.⁶⁰ “I learned to do a little bit of eberthin’,” explained a typical female slave, Catherine Slim. “I worked on de farm and I worked in de house... On de farm I did eberthin’ cept plow.”⁶¹ Despite Catherine Slim’s experience, even the manly operation of the plow was sometimes assigned to female slaves.⁶² “I had to work hard, plow and go and split wood,” remembered Nancy Bouday, “jus’ like a man.”⁶³ Furthermore, enslaved women also received scant clothing consisting of six yards of wool and cotton in the fall, and six yards of cotton “shirting” and pants cloth in the spring – an amount less than ideal to buffer the body against extreme work and weather.⁶⁴ In fact, relative to the white, middle-class ideal of “separate spheres” – where cultural ideology bifurcated white men and women into two distinct worlds – enslaved men and women’s lives were, for the most part, remarkably similar.

Even so, similar experiences do not translate into similar meanings of gender. Enslaved men and women may have shared similar corporeal deprivations, but they should not be conflated with similar gender identities.⁶⁵ The difference is one of cultural “meaning.” Just as the perception of reality – rather than reality itself – is paramount to those interested in culture;

the meaning of an event – rather the event itself – informs gender analysis. For example, when a laceration scarred an enslaved man’s face, it may have augmented a man’s manly appearance; however, the same laceration may have meant something entirely different for an enslaved woman. In fact, the same scar that enhanced manliness may have detracted from a woman’s construction of feminine beauty.⁶⁶ Similarly, when enslaved men and women suffered from loss of limb, the meaning of this loss could also have differed. Whereas a crippled black man suffered an attenuation of his manly identity as a strong plowman, carpenter, or boxer; the same loss could be irreparable to an enslaved woman’s ability to thread a needle, tend to a child, or prepare the family meal. In other words, male and female slaves may have engaged in similar forms of fieldwork, but their gendered meanings were nonetheless distinct.⁶⁷

Consider the gendered effects of food deprivation.⁶⁸ While poor nutrition challenged the health of women in specific ways – particularly as seamstresses, cooks, laundresses, as well as expectant and nursing mothers – nutritional deprivation affected black men’s ability to perform manly work.⁶⁹ Men who predominantly engaged in heavier workloads – including “splitting rails, bushing, plowing” – demanded a commensurate level of nutrition, hydration, and caloric intake; however, limited access to any of these three dietary components challenged the integrity of the male body.⁷⁰ Regardless of a slave’s specific needs, however, the main point was not difficult to grasp. As the enslaver of Cornelius Garner tersely stated: “Niggers can’t do much wuk wid an empty belly.”⁷¹ Antebellum doctors concurred. In 1859, Georgian Dr. John H. Wilson published an essay on slave feeding, proposing that slaves should be “liberally supplied with garden vegetables,” as well as “milk and molasses” to prevent “scurvy and other diseases.”⁷² And yet, some enslavers failed to comprehend such basic logic. “Dey use to gib de slaves bout 6 pounds meat an’ 5 pounds o’ flour a week,” reported William Brooks – an amount

that “ain’ ’nough [to] lasten a dog a day.”⁷³ Andrew Boone shared similar memories of “rough rations,” including “frozn meat and bread” during cold weather.⁷⁴ For others, slave diets consisted of a wider variety of foods including rabbits, ash-cake, peas, greens, “possum stew, vegetables, persimmon pie and tato bread.”⁷⁵ Still, under the regime of enslavement, sustenance was contingent upon the whim of enslavers.

In some instances, contemporary observers commented on slaves’ lack of nutrition and caloric-intake, usually manifested by their malnourished appearances. In August of 1865, a Freedmen’s Bureau agent reported his observations of 23 slaves at a North Carolina farm who appeared diminutive in physical stature and strength:

They all bore most unmistakable evidence of the way they had been worked – very much undersized, rarely exceeding, man or woman, 4ft 6 or 7 inches – men and women of 30 or 40 yrs of age looking in size like mere girls and boys. It has been his habit for yrs to work them *always* from sun rise to sun set and often long after – only stopping an hour for dinner – food always cooked for them to save time.⁷⁶

When the war broke, nourishment for African Americans did not improve. In fact, for many black male (and female) bodies who remained enslaved during the war, as well as for the male bodies serving in the Union Army, nutritional and caloric intake declined. Disrupted commercial trade accounted for some of the decline in food. Raiding and pillaging armies were also to blame. In Gloucester County, Virginia, for example, slaves no longer enjoyed the benefits of meat after Union soldiers raided the local livestock.⁷⁷ When food was available, white southerners betrayed all pretensions of paternalism by privileging their bodies first, leaving slave bodies with white leftovers such as chicken necks, gizzards, and feet.⁷⁸ In the Union Army, food usually found its way into the mouths of white soldiers as well. “We don’t get our rations as we ought to,” reported one soldier of the USCT. “All the rations that are condemned by the white troops are sent to our regiment.”⁷⁹ Although official policy denounced unequal food

rations in Union Armies, time and again, complaints followed by investigations revealed inequities in the commissary. In Louisiana, for example, a Union major general reportedly ordered three weekly servings of vegetables for his white soldiers, while black male bodies were subjected to a diet of cornmeal and molasses.⁸⁰ Consequences of such deprivation during slavery and the war were predictable: scurvy, cholera, tuberculosis, smallpox, and pellagra.⁸¹

Some black soldiers were more fortunate. Just as a few black soldiers purchased clothing items from peddling sutlers, some black soldiers supplemented their diets with vegetables, fruits, and local foodstuffs as well. After payday, for example, a white USCT officer noted that his men spent the following days “feasting on fresh peaches, strawberries, fruits etc.”⁸² Members of the USCT who had the rare opportunity and the means to support their bodies with fresh produce during the war were just as fortunate as slaves with plentiful food prior to the war. Virginia slave Charles Crawley recalled meals consisting of corn bread, buttermilk, biscuits, and cornbread; while Bailey Cunningham chronicled a litany of foodstuffs including cabbage soup, potatoes, corn, flour, meat, bread, milk, coffee, and white folks’ “crumbs from the table.”⁸³ However, plentiful food was nothing less than a privilege – that is, enslaved Americans who could sufficiently nourish their bodies were conscious of their fortunate circumstances, and conversely aware of “other poor niggers...[who] had such bad masters.”⁸⁴

Many hapless slaves who suffered from meager rations usually took matters into their own hands – literally. Pilfering vegetables from nearby farms, running away into “de woods,” or furtively slaughtering pigs and chickens were common tactics used to sustain a viable constitution.⁸⁵ The phrase – “You didn’t eat if you didn’t steal” – was a logical refrain shared by many slaves.⁸⁶ “That ain’t stealin’, is it?” rationalized Texas slave Richard Carruthers. “You has to keep right on workin’ in the field, if you ain’t allowanced ’nough, and no nigger like to

work with his belly groanin’.”⁸⁷ Whatever the rationale, attempting to nourish the body without permission subjected enslaved men to violent abuse. In these cases, eating often resulted in beatings. Although slaves, such as Booker T. Washington, considered the theft of food a necessary form of survival, enslavers perceived such actions worthy of punishment.⁸⁸ One slave, William Brooks, spelled out the process in formulaic prose: “So dem niggers steal an’ cose when dey steal dey git caught, an’ when you git caught you git beat.”⁸⁹ Enslavers commonly punished enslaved bodies using technologies such as the whipping pole, the bullwhip, the strap, the cat-o’-nine-tails, and salt water.⁹⁰ Other enslavers preferred paddles with holes drilled into them which proved ideal for blistering the skin.⁹¹ Charles Grandy detailed the process:

White folks sho would whup yo in dem days. Dey lay you flat on de gron’ on yo’ face. Den dey stake you so es you couldn’ git thew de gron’ much lessen git up an’ fly. Take ev’y rag off’n you an’ leave you plumb naked. Den dey whup you ’till de blood come. Dey whup you straight lak dis, see, straight up an’ down. Den dey check you er, in other words dey beat you cross wise so’s yo’ flesh was cut up in squa’es. Understan’? Didn’t give you no lessees five hundred licks. Den a man would go over dere an’ git a bucket o’ pickle an’ pickle you f’om haid to yo’ foot jes lak you paint a house er somepin’.⁹²

Peter Clifton witnessed a more precise method of technological discipline. According to Clifton, enslavers placed a slave’s feet in “a stock and clamp[ed] them together. Then they bound the hands of a slave on “a crosspiece” that was positioned “right across de breast [as] high as de shoulder.”⁹³ This sophisticated mode of punishment paralleled the physical pain inflicted on an auction block in Petersburg, Virginia, where enslavers handcuffed and beat enslaved bodies as they fought, kicked, and cried “lord! Lord!”⁹⁴ Slave Lucretia Alexander recalled the same punitive technique employed on runaway slaves. “The stocks was a big piece of timber with hinges in it,” explained Alexander. “It had a hole in it for your head. They would lift it up and put your head in it...and they would lay that whip on you and you couldn’t do nothin’ but wiggle and holler, ‘Pray, master, pray!’”⁹⁵ Sometimes, a lack of sophistication proved equally

jarring. When an enslaved man named Anthony lashed out at his manager for attempting to work him on Sundays, the manager hit Anthony's head with a rock.⁹⁶

Although these testimonies reveal vivid examples of physical abuse during antebellum enslavement, they fail to match the severity of violence perpetrated on enslaved bodies during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁹⁷ Common colonial methods of discipline included such draconian tactics as burning the skin with a branding iron; burning the entire body at the stake; cutting the body by “slitting” the nose; extracting teeth; or severing entire body parts including ears, toes, fingers, hands, feet, and sexual organs. In 1736, a visiting minister named Charles Wesley recorded a South Carolina “gentleman” prescribing a creative method of discipline. “First [one should] nail up a negro by the ears,” the gentleman instructed. “Then order him to be whipped in the severest manner,” followed by having “scalding water thrown over him, so that the poor creature could not stir for four months after.”⁹⁸ Despite the unpopularity of draconian discipline as the Colonial Era came to a close, severe attacks on the enslaved body continued well into the nineteenth century. Mississippi slave Samuel Scamp, for instance, told of a forced trek across the state of Alabama resulting in “frosted” feet and the death of a slave as a result of “frequent and cruel beatings.”⁹⁹ Likewise, former slave W.L. Bost remembered an American enslaver who “cut all to pieces” the back of an enslaved man. “The cuts [were] about half inch apart,” said Bost. “Then after they whip him they tie him down and put salt on him. Then after he lie in the sun awhile they whip him agin. But when they finish with [him], he was dead.”¹⁰⁰

And just as nineteenth-century prescriptive literature implored enslavers to clothe their slaves responsibly; authors, clergymen, and political leaders called on white Southerners to treat their slaves as human beings.¹⁰¹ However, such calls for paternalistic treatment were not always

heeded. As late as 1860, Dr. John Stainback Wilson called on slave-owners “who are interested either directly, or indirectly, in the perpetuation of the institution, to disclose its abuses...with a design of correcting those abuses and thus disarming our enemies.”¹⁰² But some enslavers turned a deaf ear to Wilson’s shrewd advice. Just three years after Dr. Wilson’s plea to “correct” the abuses of slavery, a South Carolinian enslaver punished his runaway slave, Jack Frowers, by setting dogs on him. “The scars on my legs and arms are what [the dogs] did with their teeth,” noted Frowers in an 1864 interview. Then “after [my master] got tired of that fun, he took me to a blacksmith, who put a ring around my ankle, bending the ends in when it was red hot...And then a heavy timber chain was wound twice around my waist, and locked.” Finally, after a month of being fettered and flogged, Frowers’ body “was too lame and sick to do anything.”¹⁰³

Like Frower’s enslaver, nineteenth-century slave-owners continued to rely on crude technologies of discipline despite paternalistic calls for their abolishment. Although increasingly uncommon, neck collars, manacles, pillories, gags, and clubs were still employed in the nineteenth century to teach slaves lessons in obeisance.¹⁰⁴ One Georgia slave named Harry McMillan, for instance, reported to the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission that a suffocating tactic – known as the “dungeon” – was employed to punish slave bodies for weeks at a time. According to McMillan, Georgia enslavers would “[dig] a hole like a well with a door on top;” and since “this hole was just big enough to receive the body,” enslavers would force their slaves into the dungeon with their “hands down by the sides.”¹⁰⁵ Forcing slaves into cramped “Nigger boxes” or barrels were additional disciplinary devices used to correct the troublesome “runaway” who, more often than not, was a black male.¹⁰⁶ When these devices proved ineffective, enslavers relied on trained dogs to sniff out and bite black male bodies. According to Maryland slave, Page Harris, his master’s blood hounds were sought throughout the area to

apprehend runaways and bite them upon contact “to make [the dogs] anxious to hunt human beings.”¹⁰⁷ When Civil War surgeon Humphrey Hood examined a young black soldier of the Third United States Colored Heavy Artillery (USCHA), Hood noted multiple scars on the man’s “arms, legs, breasts, [and] back.” When Hood asked where the scars came from, the soldier simply replied, “Nigger dogs.”¹⁰⁸

But it was the reliable lash that enslavers continually favored during the paternalistic era of the nineteenth century. Extending as much as nine feet, consisting of “tough cowhide,” and capable of lacerating “the skin of the toughest horse or ox,” the lash committed untold damage to African Americans.¹⁰⁹ Virginia slave William Johnson, Jr. remembered witnessing a neighboring enslaver tie the hands and feet of his slaves and whip them “’til the blood would run out of their backs,” or “’till they could hardly stand up,” whereupon he would “cut the ropes loose and [make] them go back to work.”¹¹⁰ Another Virginia slave, Arthur Green, reported a different procedure:

[My master] had overseers to whup his niggers...Dat old devil sometimes would take us slaves to de woods an’ make us cut brush switches, birches an’ old tough hickory sticks...After we got dese brush switches ’fo’ he get ready to whup us he made us make fire an’ run’em in de hot ashes so as to git’em pisin red hot fer dat beatin...I’ve seen dat ar overseer whup dem slaves tel de blood fly an’ bust dey skin open. Yes, yes! Blood run down lak water. Den dey wash you down in salt an’ pepper.¹¹¹

Whether lashed with a nine-foot cowhide or a burning switch; whether whipped by a paternalistic master or a vicious overseer – such details made little difference to slaves. The blood ran down just the same. As Frederick Douglas once eloquently stated in the abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*: “The cowskin makes as deep a gash in my flesh, when wielded by a professed saint, as it does when wielded by an open sinner.”¹¹²

Some slave-owners abused their slaves so egregiously as to render paternalism an empty

political sham.¹¹³ Paternalistic euphemisms for whippings such as “paddling,” “flopping,” and “nigger desserts” were made untenable when slaves were beaten while being tied to the ground, strapped across barrels, or hooked upon tree branches.¹¹⁴ Nineteenth-century Virginia laws attempted to codify whippings to thirty-nine lashes at a time, or “increments of ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, or fifty blows over a period of several days by court order,” but such laws were unenforceable and did little to prevent even a free black man from being whipped 561 times in Richmond, Virginia in 1862.¹¹⁵ According to Marylander Rezin Williams, it was the “nine ninety-nine” – or 99 lashes with a rawhide whip – that “slaves feared most,” but regardless of the number, it was the consequences of enduring injuries that affected black men’s ability to perform gender construction in the postwar era.¹¹⁶ When slave-owners beat their slaves “until they couldn’t work,” when they grabbed logs and struck their slaves over the head, or when they branded runaway slaves with the letter “R” on their cheeks, surviving slaves entered the postwar era with compromised health.¹¹⁷ Former slave Perry Sid Jamison, for example, was able to get around quite well after slavery in spite of a “slight limp, caused by a broken bone that did not heal.”¹¹⁸

Historians of slavery have notoriously argued over the frequency of whippings, and implicitly, the severity of enslavement. The overlying assumption that pervades the discussion, however, is a simplistic deduction that equates the frequency of whippings with the extent of slave suffering. Cliometricians Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman’s *Time on the Cross* (1974), for example, infamously posited that the average slave was “only” whipped 0.7 times a year; thus concluding that enslavement was not only efficient, but also benign.¹¹⁹ Historian Herbert Gutman responded to Fogel and Engerman with evidence from Louisiana enslaver Bennet H. Barrow’s plantation’s record book, arguing that “general Whipping frolick[s]”

resulted in a whipping every 4.56 days for the “average” slave (or 80 times a year).¹²⁰ Responses to Fogel, Engerman, and Gutman’s assertions have been less than enthusiastic. Historian Harry N. Scheiber, for example, has not only criticized all parties for failing to recognize “the human dimensions and psychological impact of coercive power;” Scheiber’s critique obliquely questions the methodological wisdom of quantifying every human experience into a lifeless number.¹²¹

As Scheiber’s response indicates, the *Time on the Cross* debate has left much to be desired. First, the *Time on the Cross* debate restricts analyses to the antebellum period, as if African Americans did not continue to suffer during and after the Civil War. While one can argue that Fogel and Engerman sought to address questions about the economic institution of slavery, such analysis arbitrarily dissects the slave’s corporeal experience into a myopic framework that militates against understanding the entire corporeal lifespan of slaves. Second, the *Time on the Cross* debate privileges the number of punishments over the injuries that slaves incurred from being punished. A permanent injury of daily agony or an ephemeral moment of acute despair are descriptive indicators of slave experience that speaks to the meaning of whipping, whether that experience occurred sparingly, intermittently, or habitually. Rather than counting the average number of whippings per year, it is paramount that we recognize how punishments injured African Americans during slavery, the Civil War, and into the postwar; and in terms of this study, how such injuries impinged upon one’s gender construction.¹²² And finally, those who attempt to measure the pain of being enslaved in a land of freedom miss the point. The pain of even a few slaves being starved, whipped, mutilated, raped, or sold cannot be measured when the mere knowledge of its possibility reifies its horror.

Historian Charles S. Sydnor’s analysis of Mississippi runaway advertisements presents

one sample of slave injuries. From the years 1823 to 1848, Sydnor identified slaves with various corporeal markings including facial brandings, chest brandings, and permanent scars from whippings. Sydnor also found evidence of a runaway slave with an iron collar still wrapped around his neck, and six runaways with iron bands around their legs.¹²³ And then there were instances of self-imposed injuries. Slaves who shrewdly understood their bodies as sites of resistance – or what theorist Todd Reeser terms “resistant bodies” – deliberately injured themselves in order to achieve some level of victory over their oppressors.¹²⁴ For example, after one Virginia master threatened to sell six brothers for protecting their mother from the lash, one of the brothers defied his master by cutting off his own right hand.¹²⁵ Whether inflicted or self-inflicted, by the 1860s Union medical examiners continued to find evidence of damaged bodies when ex-slaves enlisted for the USCT. “One man’s back was nearly all one scar,” recorded an Illinois lieutenant, “as if the skin had been chopped up and left to heal in ridges. Another had [a] great solid mass of ridges, from his shoulders to his hips.”¹²⁶

Evidence of unyielding violence exacted on the bodies of slaves suggests probable damage to tissue, ligaments, joints, and even organs; while literally opening the bodies of African Americans to inflammation and infection. Although the nature of these injuries remains conjecture, some slaves deliberately commented on the legacies of similar slave punishments. Virginia slave Arthur Green remembered a fellow slave named Hal Lewis who was shot by a white patroller for secretly attending a religious slave meeting. “Doctor practice on [Lewis] somehow ’nother an’ got de shot outa his shoulder, but he always had a – er failure in dat shoulder even after he got well.”¹²⁷ Virginia slave Robert Williams also connected slave punishments to a legacy of failing black health. After two male slaves were caught by dogs while making their way North, their enslaver greeted their return with a reception of brutal

beatings. “De boss beat dem until one of de fellows was never no mo’ good,” recalled Williams. “Body died soon after an’ maybe from de whippin’.”¹²⁸

The Civil War brought more of the same. From the din of the Fort Sumter bombardment to the signature of surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, punishments committed against the black male body continued unabated. Right from the start, black men who attempted to join Union forces had their ears cut, their backs whipped, and their bodies shot by those who were determined to prevent black recruitment.¹²⁹ When three male slaves from Missouri attempted to join the Union army, for example, two of them received a beating, while the other was shot and killed.¹³⁰ Black men who averted these dangers and successfully joined the USCT discovered that they had unsuccessfully fled from corporeal abuse. Although donned in a blue uniform, the black male body was subjected to an array of official and unofficial martial punishments, including attacks from pro-southern civilians. When black recruit Nicholas Biddle marched towards Washington, D.C. during the first week of the war, Baltimore civilians pelted Biddle with invectives and stones, hitting him in the face and drawing blood in the process.¹³¹

Official military punishments were just as damaging. Official beatings, gaggings, and hanging by the thumbs, often resulted in bloody injuries and dislocated thumbs.¹³² Some methods of punishments harked back to the punitive technologies of slavery, such as the “sweat box” – a wooden “crate five feet in height, two feet in width, and two feet deep, with a one-inch hole bored in the top for air” – which African Americans were housed in for hours at a time.¹³³ Other technologies – such as balancing for hours on the “wooden horse” – were unique to military culture.¹³⁴ While white Union soldiers were no strangers to military discipline and punishment, black men received a heavy dose of martial abuse, including such creative punishments as being stripped naked and “staked out” for an entire 24 hours with molasses

poured over their bodies.¹³⁵

Officers' frustration with drill instruction often spilled into violent reactions against new recruits. One petulant lieutenant did not hesitate to strike a black private with his revolver and fist during "battalion drill." Other USCT drill officers reportedly used their swords to "punch" black recruits "in the sides."¹³⁶ Some white officers pointed to the tough constitutions of the formerly enslaved body as rationale for their abusive tactics. "If a [black] man does not obey me I am at liberty to punish him as severe as I may think fit," stated one hardened officer, "and as they have been used to very severe treatment, why any light punishment is of no account whatever."¹³⁷ Another USCT officer candidly admitted his lack of humanity towards black soldiers. "I no longer wonder [why] slave drivers were cruel. I am," wrote the officer. "I no longer have any bowels of mercy."¹³⁸

Just as references to African Americans as chattel or contraband property lent themselves to inhumane treatment during fatigue duty, the same references paved the way for black men to suffer maltreatment at the hands of their superiors. Some white USCT officers, such as Captain Clark, treated their black troops with such disdain that they faced martial justice themselves. Captain Clark, for example, was arrested for "outrage perpetuated against his troops" after marching his black soldiers "almost to death." Even Clark's fellow white officers balked. Captain Clark "ought to have been with the Greys instead of the Blues," reported Sergeant Alexander Newton, since he "had so little use for Colored troops."¹³⁹

Other white USCT officers treated black men with reckless abandon by assigning their men to frontal assaults. In poignant battles such as Battery Wagner, Port Hudson, Paducah, and Olustee, black men of the USCT were the first to meet Confederate fire. Although these strategic decisions cannot be entirely attributed to prejudice against black men, they do give

credence to one white officer who admitted feeling “less regret over the slain [USCT] than if my troops are white.”¹⁴⁰ Union General Truman Seymour expressed similar sentiments, albeit with even less tact. During preparation for the assault on Battery Wagner, General Seymour stated the matter bluntly. “Well, I guess we will...put those damned niggers from Massachusetts in advance,” said the general. “We may as well get rid of them one time as another.”¹⁴¹ Seymour’s remorseless strategy produced morose results. The Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts suffered a forty-two percent casualty rate during the failed assault.¹⁴²

If granted permission, General Ambrose Burnside would also have positioned black troops in the lead during the infamous blunder known as the Battle of the Crater. Believing that yet another failed black frontal assault would have dire political repercussions in the North, Major General George G. Meade forbade Burnside from employing the USCT as a spearhead.¹⁴³ Regardless of their military position, however, participating members of the USCT suffered a devastating casualty rate of thirty percent – that is, 1,327 black men were killed or injured out of roughly 4,500 participating black soldiers.¹⁴⁴ The reason for such high casualty rates involved much more than Burnside’s ineptitude. The Confederacy’s proclamation of December 1862 – which stated that “all Negro slaves captured in arms [were]...to be dealt with according to the laws of said States” – contributed to the violence inflicted on black men.¹⁴⁵ After all, the penalty for participating in the Union Army – or what Southerners referred to as armed “slave rebellion” – was death. Consequently, only seven captured black soldiers survived the Battle of the Crater, even though 180 members of the USCT were taken prisoner.¹⁴⁶ According to the *Richmond Enquirer*, the seven surviving black prisoners were seven prisoners too many. “We regret to learn [that] some negroes were captured instead of being shot,” lamented the editorial. “Butcher every negro that Grant hurls against [our] brave troops, and permit them not to soil their hands

with the capture of one negro.”¹⁴⁷

Ghastly details of the Battle of the Crater exposed the unmitigated hell executed on the black male body. “Many a dusky warrior had his brains knocked out with the butt of a musket, or was run thru with a bayonet while vainly imploring for mercy,” wrote Lieutenant Colonel Bates of the Thirtieth USCT.¹⁴⁸ Private Isaac Gaskin of the Twenty-Ninth USCT shared his lurid experience as well. “After I was made a prisoner,” recalled Gaskin, “I was shot at by a rebel guard...and my hip severely injured. Just before firing at me he, with an oath, called me a damn nigger, and said...that I would never get back to my brother Yankees alive.”¹⁴⁹ Even a Confederate soldier testified to the gruesomeness of what he saw. After witnessing two Confederate soldiers beating and shooting a black sergeant who was begging for his life:

The man with the gun fired it at the negro, but did not seem to seriously injure him, as he only clapped his hand to his hip where he appeared to have been shot, and continued to beg for his life. The man with the ramrod continued to strike the negro therewith, whilst the fellow with the gun deliberately reloaded it, placing its muzzle closer against the stomach of the poor negro, fired, at which the latter fell limp and lifeless at the feet of the two Confederates.¹⁵⁰

With rows of lifeless bodies strewn across the crater, General Ulysses S. Grant’s despondent reaction to the battle was a fitting one: “It was the saddest effort I have ever witnessed in the war.”¹⁵¹

The murder of black men at the Crater mirrored other horrid executions. The Fort Pillow Massacre remains the most infamous of examples, however, by no means was Nathan Bedford Forrest’s murderous actions perpetrated against black federal troops an anomaly.¹⁵² Sometimes, official Confederate records made no mention of black P.O.W. deaths, or the records included creative phrases such as “officially unaccounted for” to feign ignorance on the matter. Despite the employment of literary chicanery, executions of black prisoners occurred in all theaters of the war. In March of 1862, the black pilot of the Union vessel, *Henry Andrew*, was captured and

hung after attempting to land near New Smyrna, Florida.¹⁵³ George Brismaid met the same fate in the following year. After Confederates captured Brismaid at Magnolia Beach, South Carolina, Brismaid was officially hung at Murrell's Inlet on December 5, 1863.¹⁵⁴ In most instances, Confederates didn't bother with the rope. At the battle of Plymouth, North Carolina, black soldiers were either shot along the riverbank or had "their brains beaten out by the butt end" of Confederate muskets.¹⁵⁵ And when black prisoners of war survived the initial onslaught of warfare, Confederate guards still found ways to kill them. For example, at Jackson, Louisiana, a "stampede" of black prisoners were "immediately fired into by the guard" after allegedly attempting to escape.¹⁵⁶ Afterwards, Confederate Colonel John L. Logan found the alleged pretense of escape a dubious one. "My own opinion," wrote Logan, "is that the negroes were summarily disposed of; by whom I cannot say....The whole transaction was contrary to my wishes, and against my own consent."¹⁵⁷

The Confederate policy and practice of murdering black soldiers had a concomitant effect upon their bodies. The threat of death fomented a desperate attitude amongst the USCT resulting in bold – and sometimes brazen – actions. At the Battle of Nashville, for example, black troops of the Thirteenth USCT breached an abatis situated merely forty feet away from the Confederate line, and proceeded to charge forward amidst an unyielding barrage of fire. Within a half an hour, the regiment lost a quarter of its men, with its right wing "melting away like snow falling into a stream," according to one observer.¹⁵⁸ Confederate General James T. Holtzclaw described the audacious – albeit hopeless – charge. Black Union troops "dashed up the abates...and were killed by the hundreds," reported Holtzclaw. "I have seen most of the battlefields of the West, but never saw dead men thicker than in front of my two regiments."¹⁵⁹ Union General Daniel Ullman explained the motivations behind such fanatical efforts. Black

troops “are far more in earnest than we... They know the deep stake they have in the issue... They also have a settled conviction that if they are taken, they will be tortured or hung. These impressions will make them daring and desperate fighters.”¹⁶⁰

The Confederate policy of murder compounded the violence imposed upon black men at the hands of apoplectic civilians, abusive drill instructors, sadistic officers, and apathetic generals. This panoply of fatal factors contributed to the 2,870 black male bodies that died due to “combat-related fatalities” – a significant number of deaths relative to the total number of black males in the United States; not to mention their late entry into the war.¹⁶¹ Even so, when posited in juxtaposition to the number of black male deaths due to disease, the number of black combat-related fatalities appears prosaic. Black men of the USCT suffered a startling 29,756 deaths due to disease – that is, one death in every twenty-nine cases of illness.¹⁶²

Black men’s horrific rate of disease-related death was spawned by similar factors that contributed to combat-related deaths – that is, the deleterious effects of racial assumptions and careless commanders. It wasn’t just the onerous workload of “throwing up entrenchments... erecting batteries, [and] building forts” that *injured* the bodies of black men; it was the strenuous use of black soldiers in noxious locales that *killed* them.¹⁶³ Whether the orders originated from commanders on the ground or from the aloof office of Major-General Henry Halleck, black soldiers were ordered to construct or defend military sites “during the sickly season” as a means of relieving “our [white] armies.”¹⁶⁴ In other words, it wasn’t just the bullet and bayonet, but also pneumonia, dysentery, typhoid fever, and malaria that wreaked havoc on the viability of black corporeality.¹⁶⁵

Inadequate USCT medical resources did not help matters. Qualified surgeons either opted for white regiments, or were solicited during the start of the war, leaving the USCT to fend

for their own medical personnel.¹⁶⁶ During the mid-nineteenth century, a handful of black men had entered the medical profession, however, only eight black men in the United States attained appointments as surgeons – six of whom remained in Washington hospitals while two others had stints with USCT regiments.¹⁶⁷ Major General Nathaniel P. Banks bleakly assessed the situation while stationed in the Department of the Gulf. “In very many cases,” reported Banks, “Hospital Stewards of low order of qualification were appointed to the office of Assistant Surgeon and Surgeon. Well grounded objections were made from every quarter against the inhumanity of subjecting the colored soldiers to medical treatment and surgical operations from such men.”¹⁶⁸ Still, surgeons were needed, even if some titular “surgeons” were merely former patients themselves.¹⁶⁹ Military doctors admitted the sad state of affairs. Regardless of their medical competency, “very few surgeons will do precisely the same for blacks as they would for white,” reported a candid USCT doctor.¹⁷⁰ Another surgeon expressed his utter dismay about the quality of USCT doctors. “You speak about the rank of surgeon,” wrote the doctor in a letter to his wife, but “I have seen more confounded fools in the service with that rank that I care but little about it.”¹⁷¹ In fact, one assistant surgeon treated every patient with the same prescription, regardless of the diagnoses – that is, a dose of “Dover’s Powder[,] frequently repeated till death or recovery ensues.”¹⁷²

Not that medical treatment of black men was ideal prior to the war. Just as enslaved bodies were subject to the vagaries of a master’s whip, so too were they at the mercy of a master’s willingness to procure the services of a physician. Although on average, enslavers spent three dollars per year on a single enslaved body, some enslavers chose to forgo formal medical treatment all together.¹⁷³ “I have generally attended the Sick...with as good Success as I could Expect,” reported an overseer to his penurious boss, “and have been so fortunate as to keep

clear of the Doctors bills.”¹⁷⁴ Maryland slave Menellis Gassay told of similar conditions. “So far as being sick,” remembered Gassay, “we did not have any doctors.” “The colored doctored themselves with herbs, teas and salves made by themselves.”¹⁷⁵ In other cases, doctors were sent for depending on the slave in question. According to Maryland slave Silas Jackson, only when a “value hand took sick” did the overseers travel to “Upperville for a doctor.”¹⁷⁶ With dangerous epidemics – such as Asiatic cholera from the Mississippi delta – ravaging the health of African Americans, a doctor’s help may have been the difference between life and death.¹⁷⁷

From Maryland to Missouri, African Americans succumbed to variety of diseases. A Mississippi enslaver recorded “many *deaths* among the *negroes*,” throughout January of 1852 due to “cold weather” and “a great deal of Typhoid Nemonia.”¹⁷⁸ In the fall of 1833, an enslaver in eastern Texas reported “little” work being done “since the middle of June as the Blacks were all sick as well as ourselves.”¹⁷⁹ And in the port towns of Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans, African Americans were consistently struck with malaria and yellow fever.¹⁸⁰ Even slaves in central Tennessee, the Kentucky bluegrass, and the piedmont of Virginia suffered from the pernicious effects of ill-health; giving credence to an 1836 report that hyperbolically stated, “all the country as far as I hear is little else than a hospital.”¹⁸¹ As these testimonies indicate, African Americans died at a substantial rate. According to the 1850 census, African Americans died at an average of 21.4 years of age, with a death rate of 1.8 percent in 1860.¹⁸²

The rice fields and waterlogged areas of the lowlands proved the most deleterious for slaves. The bite of the mosquito from the environs of stagnant water was mostly to blame. Although the swampy lowlands offered fecund lands and fertile profits, potential buyers remained ambivalent about exposing their black workers to the perils of disease. One South Carolina buyer, for example, demurred when offered a low price for two hundred acres of prime tideland along the Savannah River. There was a “great mortality” there, explained the cautious buyer, and “it was never expected by the Planters on

that river that the number of their people should increase. If they could keep up the force – which in very many cases they could not do – it was all they hoped.”¹⁸³ This shrewd buyer knew his business well and avoided what enslaver James H. Hammond could not. Writing from his Silver Bluff Plantation on the Savannah River, Hammond bludgeoned his diary with a pen of regret.

Great God what have I done. Never was a man so cursed! Never has death been so busy in any spot of earth...All the plagues [of] Egypt still infest these Negroes. I don't believe there is a disease to which the human family is subject that is not to be seen here in the run of the year.¹⁸⁴

Death during enslavement and civil warfare was a tragic residue that stained the heart of black postwar manhood. Indeed, black men who ceased to breathe, ceased to acquire capital, ceased to form families, and ceased to participate in black postwar communities. With the addition of thousands of men (and women) who died in contraband camps, labor gangs, and shantytowns, the unspeakable loss of all black male bodies constituted a mass denial of their postwar expression of manhood – a time when black men were able to perform their gender like never before.¹⁸⁵ This was especially true in respect to their participatory absence in postwar black communities. As Reconstruction historian Eric Foner has keenly noted, black “local leaders played such a variety of roles in schools, churches, and fraternal organizations that the killing...of one man affected many institutions at once.”¹⁸⁶ With so much death, some black men never had the opportunity to demonstrate their communal manliness in the first place.

For surviving black male bodies, the corporeal repercussions of enslavement and warfare should not be understated. Intensive forced labor enervated arms and legs. Pangs of hunger disrupted the nutritional integrity of vital organs. Punitive assaults damaged nerves, tissue, and muscle. And the debilitating effects of violence and disease deprived black men of a hopeful future. Collectively, the physical legacies of slavery and civil warfare left black men with residues of strained, enfeebled, and sometimes broken bodies, making postwar life – and gender performance in particular – a veritable challenge. Not only did the performance of black manly

identity require vast amounts strength and endurance when working in labor-intensive postwar occupations; the construction of gender identity also demanded energy when performing the manly roles of husband, father, and citizen. In other words, the very notion of black manly performance demanded a viable and capable body to perform with. Still, many black men approached these daunting postwar performances with eagerness and conviction despite entering the era with compromised health. Even so, black men's tenacious wills were often mitigated by their unwilling bodies.

Consider the physical legacies of Virginia slave "Uncle" Jeff Stanfield and Kentucky slave Mr. Burris. Born in 1837, Uncle Jeff was a 28-year-old black male when the Confederacy crumbled. If Jeff was in a similar position as most of his enslaved brethren, his economic possessions would have been modest.¹⁸⁷ Consequently, with very little capital to rely upon, Uncle Jeff's strongest asset was his corporeal potential as a laborer. And yet, the physical legacies of Jeff's enslavement continued to impinge upon his postwar freedom. After working as a teamster during his enslavement, Jeff's damaged body prevented him from sitting down without the aid of a pillow.¹⁸⁸ The body of former slave Mr. Burris also affected his postwar labor. According to the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interview of his wife Charlotte, "my husband is as badly afflicted as I am, but he still does tolerably smart. He doesn't get no great things for wages. He has no regular work, only jobs."¹⁸⁹ Although Burris had the will and ambition to work, his unnamed affliction prevented him from achieving his full earning potential. Thus, when former slaves described their postwar labor, contingencies and caveats usually accompanied their descriptions. "The *able-bodied* men cultivate," explained one former slave from Georgia; whereas slave Harry McMillan reported that "every *able bodied* man can take care of himself *if* he has a mind to."¹⁹⁰

Or consider slaves in other locales who accidentally cut themselves with a sickle, who suffered hernias while lifting heavy objects, who contracted lung diseases while working in “dust-laden” factories, or who were permanently “crippled or maimed” in agricultural or industrial accidents.¹⁹¹ Virginia freedman Charles Grandy, for example, could trace his life history in terms of the many injuries he sustained. “When Ise down in Mississippi,” recalled Grandy, “I...’member well how I wuked in de cawnfiel, case I cut my big toe hawin’ de cawn. Biger I growed de mo’ I wuked. See dis arm here, dis big slice outa my arm was cut out by cuttin’ tops off’n de cawn. Dishere big scar f’om my elbow to my wris’ was made by cotton gin. My arm got caught in dat machine an’ tore it somepin’ awful.”¹⁹² For freedman like Grandy, their bodies may have been officially “free” from enslavement, however, their postwar lives still remained physically enslaved to their injuries. As Virginia slave Simon Stokes explained after being whipped by his overseer, “dem lashes done last a pow’full long time.”¹⁹³

The physical legacies of the Civil War lasted a long time as well. USCT private John Mixon, for example, survived the war with terrible arthritic pain. Although Mixon participated in the manly theater of war, his physical ailments hindered his ability to perform his postwar role as a manly husband. “I was ordered to leave the house” by my wife, explained Mixon. “[I] was Called all Sort of names Called a Cripple and a Dam Son of a Bich and Was Told to go to the Dam Soldiers Home and Stay There.”¹⁹⁴ Postwar pain came in many forms. After a bale of hay fell on Private Edward Hall’s back, his injured body undoubtedly hindered his manly identity in the postwar. Although treated in a USCT hospital, Hall was forever ridden with “extreme pain” when he bent down, stood up, or carried weight of “any kind.”¹⁹⁵ For some, battle wounds afflicted their postwar lives. William Blanchard, for instance, sustained four wounds during the Civil War and was unable to “work regularly;” whereas Major Frank Holsinger suffered a

“severe wound to his arm,” rendering his limb “practically useless.”¹⁹⁶ Others escaped the dangers of war only to suffer from loss of teeth due to scurvy, or recurring bouts of bronchial infections, malaria, and diarrhea.¹⁹⁷ Just as the physical legacies of slavery did not end with emancipation, the corporeal afflictions of the Civil War continued to affect black gender construction into the postwar era. By the end of official hostilities, the bodies of surviving black men were not just black. They were black-and-blue.¹⁹⁸

Writing from Morris Island, South Carolina on October 23, 1863, USCT Corporal Henry S. Harmon reflected on the injured black patients populating the hospital. “If our friends of the city of Philadelphia could but look into our hospital,” lamented Harmon, they would “see the wasted frame[s] of those who were but yesterday *noble specimens of manhood*.”¹⁹⁹ Harmon’s words resonated with gendered meaning. By bifurcating black men’s bodies into a dichotomy of manly “specimens” of war and emasculated “wasted frames,” Harmon spoke to the relationship between corporeality and manliness. Manliness required a capable body. It was the capable black man that plowed the fields, built the levees, and engaged in skilled labor. And it was the capable black man that later donned the blue uniform, performed the manly role of “soldier,” and subjected itself to loss of limb. While some black men survived the war with their health intact and subsequently parlayed their wartime heroics into successful roles as postwar businessmen, statesmen, or community leaders; other black men were less fortunate. After years of toil and violence, some were left with incapable bodies that disabled their postwar abilities as manly workers, contributing husbands, active fathers, and men of the community. The irony could not have been more piercing. Just as the dawn of Reconstruction afforded black men with greater opportunities to construct their manliness, some black men were symbolically castrated by their black-and-blue bodies.²⁰⁰

Even for those who survived the tribulations of enslavement and civil warfare, black men in the postwar were not immune to injury and violence. For many former slaves residing throughout the war-torn landscape, the demise of the Confederacy not only spawned a new birth of socio-economic freedoms; it also elicited widespread reactionary violence. One year after the surrender at Appomatox, for example, former slave Charles Brown reported to the Freedmen's Bureau a terrifying encounter with a white neighbor, D.B. Whitesides, near West Liberty, Texas. According to Brown's official statement, Mr. Whitesides "accosted" Brown while he was working in the fields. "Well Brown they say your free...but...little good it will do you," taunted Whitesides. "I want you to start for those woods, and when I count 10 I intend to Shoot you." "I then Started to run," explained Brown, "but before I made 6 steps, I fell shot through the breast."²⁰¹

A former slave working for John B. Glymph of South Carolina was the victim of a similar incident. According to his own statement, Glymph reported that one of his former slaves wanted to speak with a federal official to ensure his work contract was "correct." In response, Glymph, "seized a shot gun and deliberately fired" into the "arm and back of the negro."²⁰² Similarly, in South Carolina, when a light-complexioned former slave Burrell Mayes asked a white hotel clerk to watch his bag, the clerk willingly obliged, believing that Mayes was a white man. However, after discovering that Mayes was "tainted with African blood," the clerk became "enraged" that "a negro should ask him to do any service" and "commenced beating" Mayes.²⁰³ Thus, for the black victims of white reactionary violence, the physical legacies of slavery and the Civil War wove seamlessly into the postwar fabric of further racial conflict and bloodshed; and just like black men's previous injuries, the repercussions of their postwar scars affected their manly performances. In the case of Charles Brown – the former slave who was shot by his

neighbor while working in the fields – the effects of his corporeal injuries were devastating. According to the Freedmen’s Bureau report, “the ball passed in near the Spine & out through the right breast” of Charles Brown, which “renderd [him] unable to labor by the inhumanity of Mr Whiteside.”²⁰⁴

Unlike Charles Brown, Lydia Polite’s boy was one of the fortunate ones. Robert Smalls not only escaped from slavery, he did so relatively unharmed. His road to freedom, however, was a harrowing one. As pilot of the Confederate steamship the *Planter*, Robert evaded his enslavers and heroically navigated the vessel past the heavily fortified waters of Charleston Harbor.²⁰⁵ However, just as his mother taught Robert about the dangerous realities of enslavement, Robert understood that his subsequent participation in the Union Navy was far from a safe haven.

As a Union navy pilot, Robert engaged in seventeen naval battles, including an attack on Charleston Harbor – the very harbor where he made his heroic escape. During this ignominious Union attack, Robert’s vessel, the *Keokuk*, came under intense fire from Confederate forces; not only damaging the vessel’s hull, but also irreparably injuring Robert’s eyes.²⁰⁶ As the *Keokuk* sank to the sandy ocean floor, the failed attack left twenty-two of her crewmembers wounded, and one dead. Robert’s survival was, indeed, remarkable since the wheelman sitting next to him was “struck flush in the face” by Confederate fire, spattering Robert with blood. Had Robert sustained such a menacing wound or crippling injury, it would most likely have constrained his postwar manly construction. However, just as Lydia Polite underscored her son’s exceptionality as a favored slave, it was his capable body in the postwar that afforded him the means to build an exceptional manly identity as an engaging political orator, family contributor, and community participant.²⁰⁷ Even so, for those with bruised, beleaguered, or prostrate bodies, it was as if black

male performers were cut from their manly postwar roles even before being cast.

CHAPTER FOUR

More Than a Single Man

Black Cooperative Manhood in the Post-Civil War Economy

When Abe Lincoln first freed'em, they all stood together. If this one was ill the others went over and sit up with him. If he needed something they'd carry it to him.

- Arkansas slave Samuel S. Taylor¹

The streets bustled with economic clatter. Barbers cut and snipped. Blacksmiths hammered hot steel. Bakers fired the oven. And stevedores unloaded sea-worn boxes onto the splintered planks of the harbor docks. This was the manufacturing center known as Charleston, South Carolina. And situated on the street corner of Church and Queen stood the Planters Hotel, where the footsteps of a young slave named Robert Smalls could be heard scurrying from table to table, earning five dollars a month for his services. The ambitious young man had arrived in Charleston merely two weeks prior; and though his enslaver Henry McKee appropriated his wages, it did not assuage Robert from participating in the southern economy. After six months as a waiter, Smalls acquired the job of lamplighter – illuminating the streets of Charleston with ladder and taper in hand. Within a handful of years, Robert landed several waterfront positions – beginning as a dockworker, and then working his way up to supervisor, rigger, and wheelman, before finally becoming a pilot of a Confederate steamship known as the *Planter*. From his days at the *Planters Hotel* to his famous escape from slavery onboard the *Planter*, it was the clamor of Charleston that afforded Robert a solid fiscal education. Although inhibited from reading and writing, and legally proscribed from engaging in economic transactions, Robert nonetheless

gained indispensable insights into the workings of the economy, the nature of economic inequality, and the boundaries that delimited self-made manhood.²

Charleston was not the only manufacturing city in the South. Manufacturing centers such as New Orleans and Richmond also exposed enslaved Americans to invaluable economic insights.³ Even so, manufacturing cities were not the only sites for economic instruction. The matrix of the Southern economy stretched across the entire southern landscape, interconnecting thousands of farms to interstices of commerce and trade. Moreover, large-scale plantations, town stores, and the domestic slave trade offered economic lessons of their own, providing enslaved men in rural areas with an understanding of capital, value, investment, and trade. Whether situated in a boisterous port city, a tidewater plantation, or a bucolic tobacco farm, black men were no strangers to the southern economy.

And yet, from a slave's perspective, engagement with the economy spawned distinct lessons. These lessons, in turn, greatly informed black men's relationship to the economy. For many black men in the postwar era, a desire for economic superiority, competitive dominance, and individual achievement – that is, the central tenets of self-made manhood – failed to take hold over freedmen's construction of manly identity. As their recollections indicate, slaves believed that the accumulation of capital was not a solitary affair. Rather, according to the perceptions of former slaves, most white southerners – including their masters – failed to approach their economic pursuits in a self-made manner. Although black men pursued their economic lives via hope and hard work, freedmen rarely perceived an individual-oriented, “self-made” approach to the economy an attractive or functional one.⁴

Moreover, after generations of cooperative behavior during slavery, combined with the vicissitudes of the postwar economy, most freedmen preferred a cooperative approach to the

economy as a means of maximizing their economic survival. Thus, freedmen's gender beliefs were governed by the practice of collective survival rather than self-made "achievement," interdependent brotherhood rather than individual "dominance," and familial cooperation rather than worldly "competition." Although an individualistic, self-made approach to the economy held hegemonic sway over most men throughout the nineteenth century, freedmen's gender constructions were as distinct as the historical conditions that informed them.

* * *

As the jubilant news of Emancipation reverberated throughout the United States of America, millions of enslaved Americans owned very little except their "new birth of freedom." Despite generations of labor in lucrative economies – including the southern staple crops of tobacco, rice, sugar, and cotton – emancipated slaves left the slave era as materially impoverished as their progenitors first entered it some two centuries prior. When former Georgia slave W.J. Gaines reported having "absolutely nothing to begin with," he was accurately describing the material conditions of most freedmen after lifetimes of agricultural toil.⁵ According to analysis of Georgia tax records, the average freedman owned less than one dollar upon emancipation, while Virginia Freedmen's Bureau records indicate that the majority of freedmen registrants were unskilled laborers and farm hands.⁶ Both sources of evidence bolster W.E.B. Du Bois's assertion that "the slave was practically penniless when freed."⁷ In fact, freedmen's material destitution was even more profound considering that each successive generation's progeny yielded millions of additional laborers – populating the South with profitable procreations for enslavers and slave traders alike. And yet, despite their meager foodstuffs and spartan possessions, freedmen possessed a wealth of economic experience and

knowledge. Although impoverished materially, freedmen's pockets were filled with economic perceptions and beliefs that informed their postwar construction of manly identity.

Freedmen's intellectual wealth took several forms. A lesson in the economic profitability of slavery constituted one form of freedman's fiscal knowledge. When Virginia freedman George White recalled that his mistress "would sell a slave" when "she wanted [to buy] a dress," George posited slavery as little more than an economic system that fulfilled his enslaver's consumer desires.⁸ George was not alone. A Norfolk slave recalled that her daughter was sold "to buy my Missus' daughter a piano." "I used to stop my ears when I heard her play it;" she remembered, since "I thought I heard my child crying out that *it was bought with her blood.*"⁹ Similarly, free black Thomas Hedgebeth recalled that "the conversation among the slaves" was filled with a savvy awareness of the slave economy. Slaves discussed how "they worked hard and got no benefit," reported Thomas, and when it came to the slave system's profitability, "the masters got it all."¹⁰ Escaped slave William Brown concurred. In a pithy statement, Brown shared his succinct assessment of the slave system: "The slaves work, and the planter gets the benefit of it."¹¹ Another runaway slave, Joseph Smith, agreed. I "[ran] away because I was working & getting nothing for it."¹² Thus, after generations of generating profits for their masters, black men fully appreciated that slavery was a lucrative system that did not reward its laborers.

The point is worth belaboring. When Frederick Douglass stated that his grandmother "had served [his] old master faithfully from youth to old age" and "had been the source of all his [master's] wealth," Douglass was not only acknowledging the fiscal value of his grandmother's labor; he was also refuting the antebellum claim that economics had little to do with slavery.¹³ Apologists such as Reverend John H. Witherspoon, for example, notoriously professed that non-

economic values guided the motives of slave-owners. “I have nothing to gain from” slavery, wrote Reverend Witherspoon. “I never willingly and heartily *bought* or *sold* a human being.” However, when Witherspoon did buy and sell slaves, he professed a commitment to paternalism: “I have [bought and sold slaves] for the accommodation of the slave, and my own domestic peace and comfort,” claimed Witherspoon, “but *never* for *gain*, from the ‘love of filthy lucre.’”¹⁴ Slaves thought otherwise. Mississippi slave Nancy Anderson, for instance, recalled the economic worth of damaged slave bodies standing on the auction block. When whippings left a slave with bloody “gashes,” recalled Anderson, “they didn’t bring a good price.”¹⁵ While defenders of the system may have characterized slavery as an unremunerative institution of paternalism, slaves saw the system as one of profitability.¹⁶

It wasn’t simply the profitability of the slave system that informed freedmen’s economic knowledge. It was freedmen’s understanding that their enslavers depended on the fruits of their slave labor that directly undercut the credibility of self-made manhood. After all, if successful male enslavers constructed their manhood upon the backs of slave labor, then where would freedman have observed viable models of self-made manliness? Indeed, for most freed slaves, an individual approach to the economy did not resonate with their lived experience during the antebellum Era; rather, black men and women fully appreciated that slavery was an economic system whose profitability was the product of more than one individual. In other words, for most black men and women, individual economic success did not correspond with their lived reality.¹⁷

In an 1866 interview, for example, former Virginia slave Richard H. Parker revealed to a newspaper reporter his understanding of the slave economy. According to the interviewer, Richard “was hired out for many years, and has handed over to his masters three thousand dollars of his own earnings.” The interviewer also noted that Richard had “buried five

masters.”¹⁸ Richard’s postwar interview is not only a testament to his diligent work ethic; it also demonstrates his belief that the value of his labor – three thousand dollars of it – should have belonged to him alone. Moreover, in respect to his perception of the slave economy, Richard implicitly recognized that his five masters depended on the profits of his labor, thus rendering self-made manhood an impotent model in the eyes of enslaved men. Thus, for Richard and his fellow enslaved brethren, their masters’ economic lives were hardly evidentiary examples of self-made success.¹⁹

A letter written by freedman Jourdan Anderson excoriated the notion of self-made manliness. Writing from Dayton, Ohio in 1865, Anderson wryly ridiculed his former master for asking him to return to his former Tennessee plantation.

To My Old Master, Colonel P.H. Anderson
Big Spring, Tennessee

...I am doing tolerably well here; I get \$25 a month...[and] have a comfortable home here for Mandy (the folks here call her Mrs. Anderson), and the children....Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again....we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. At \$25 a monthly for me, and \$2 a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to \$11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back...Please send the money by Adams Express....We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense....Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.....

From your old servant,
Jourdan Anderson²⁰

As Jourdan Anderson’s letter to his master indicates, self-made manhood rarely resonated with slave life. For most former slaves, economic observations yielded examples of southern manliness that extracted the value of other people’s labor. This was not a model of self-made

manhood.

During the previous January in Savannah, for example, twenty black leaders attended a meeting convened by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. In attendance was Garrison Frazier – a Baptist minister who purchased his freedom in 1857. When asked to define the meaning of enslavement, Garrison framed his definition of the slave system in terms of an oblique critique of self-made manliness. Slavery, according to Garrison, meant a man “receiving...the work of another man, and not by his consent.” Concomitantly, Garrison defined the concept of freedom as “reap[ing] the fruit of our own labor.”²¹ In both instances, Garrison underscored his belief that enslavers did not compete, dominate, or achieve economic success via an individual approach to the economy. By relying on the profits of other men, slaves perceived their owners’ dependent gender identities as antithetical to self-made success.

The apparent weakness of southern self-made manliness could be found in freedmen’s vociferous criticism of their former enslavers. One former Virginia slave, for example, reportedly felt “entitled to a part of the farm after all the work *he had done* on it.” In fact, the Virginia freedman told his former master that “the kitchen belonged to him because he had helped cut the timber to build it.”²² Minister Willis Hodges shared similar sentiments. “We have built up their houses and cultivated their lands,” exhorted the black minister, and “if they were to pay us but twenty-five cents on the dollar, they would all be very poor.”²³ Although less specific in his demands, freedman Emmett Beal’s criticism of southern slaveholders was powerful nonetheless. “Seem like the owners ought to give the slaves something,” reasoned Beal, “but seem like they was mad ’cause they set us free.”²⁴ A verbal exchange between a freedman and his former master proved equally revealing. When the former master scolded the freedman for

laziness by claiming, “I am losing a whole day’s labor by you,” the freedman responded by criticizing his master’s lifetime of economic dependence. “Massa,” asked the freedman, “how many day’s labor have I lost by you?”²⁵

As the exchange directly above indicates, accusations of freedmen’s laziness sometimes elicited rhetorical counterattacks. Indeed, there was much to respond to since freedmen’s work ethic was the subject of heated concern throughout the nation. “If the [Emancipation] Proclamation makes the slaves actually free,” wrote a concerned *New York Times* contributor, “there will come the further duty of making them work.”²⁶ A complaint sent to the Freedmen’s Bureau mirrored the *Times* editorial: “Many of [the freedman] are so Ignorant that they do not understand why they...have to work for a living” – an assumption that even the Freedmen’s Bureau seemed to adopt.²⁷ According to a circular sent by the Freedmen’s Bureau of Virginia in 1865, freedmen were reminded of their manly duty to labor. “You are *Men* now,” declared the circular, “and by the Laws of God, and of men, you must *work for a living*.” “A *free people*...do their duty manfully...and are thankfull that they have received so great a blessing, and through His Grace are able to work and enjoy it.”²⁸ Often times, former slaves responded by flipping the argument on its head. According to one Virginia freedman, those who “say we will not work” were simply wrongheaded. “We have been working all our lives, not only supporting ourselves, but we have [been] support[ing] our masters...in idleness.”²⁹ “We used to support ourselves and our masters too,” proclaimed yet another freedman, “and I reckon we can take care of ourselves now.”³⁰ One former slave from South Carolina reasoned that “white folks couldn’ work...like de colored people [could]” because “dey ain’ been cut out to do” work for themselves, while one Tennessee slave stated the matter simply: “We’se *made* the white people.”³¹

As if their biting criticism wasn’t enough, freedmen’s immediate postwar behavior spoke

with an intensity of its own. Evidence of freedmen taking what they believed was rightfully theirs or destroying what their labor had produced was a common consequence of emancipation. According to enslaver Charles Manigault, immediately upon emancipation his former slaves “broke into our well furnished residences on each plantation and stole or destroyed everything therein.” At one of Manigault’s residences, in particular, freedmen took paintings from the walls and “hung [them] up in their Negro houses” while leaving the Manigault family portraits outside to rot in “the open air.” Although he complained of his slaves’ “recklessness and ingratitude,” the ransacking of Manigault’s property proved that – in the eyes of his slaves – he could not rightfully claim what he did not work for.³²

On one Tennessee plantation, freedmen behaved as “joint heirs” to their master’s property by leaving the slave quarters for the comfort of the big house. According to their former master:

My foreman Sidney, having a wife and several children, ...has brought them into my parlour. He claims the land from the lane to the river embracing all the houses and was so assured of his rights, that he dug up a nursery of young apple trees on my son’s farm, and planted him an orchard. Randal, a boy I gave Mrs. Williams by his own consent, joined the Yankey army early in the war, has now returned, removed his wife and children...into my dining room. Jo and Andy two impudent whelps who rode boldly off from my home at Anderson with Stoneman’s raiders...have gone to my farm and are in my private bed room.³³

Retribution surely played a part in freedmen’s attitudes towards planters’ property. But the common framework in which freedmen engaged in their retributory actions was telling. Pure vengeance was one thing. Claiming property that freedman believed was theirs all along was another thing entirely. In 1862, for example, a recently freed Virginia coachmen reportedly “went straight to his master’s chamber, dressed himself in his best clothes, put on his best watch and chain...and insolently informed [his former master] that he might for the future drive his own coach.”³⁴ Rather than commit any number of vengeful and violent acts without the burden

of logic or rationale, freedmen deliberately took property that they believed should not be claimed by their idle former masters. After all, as one freedman reasoned: “we made what our Masters had.”³⁵

Even the most favored slaves believed their masters were far from self-made men. Well-treated slaves from Davis Bend – the so-called “model” plantation known for the paternal treatment of its slaves and run by Confederate president Jefferson Davis and his brother Joseph – challenged the Davis brothers’ property rights as soon as they obtained their freedom in 1862. With Jefferson Davis in Richmond and Joseph Davis fleeing from the encroachment of Union forces, the Davis Bend freedmen did not hesitate from breaking into the Davis big house and co-opting clothing and furniture.³⁶ Whether favored or ill-treated, freedmen behaved – in the words of one black preacher – as if “it was no harm to steal from white people.” After all, it “would only be getting back what belonged to them.”³⁷

Freedmen’s political calls for power and land clearly exposed the limits of self-made manhood as a viable model for black gender identity. By recognizing that their former enslavers were not self-made, freedmen vocalized their entitlement to the political fruits of their labor. At Jacksonville, Florida, for example, a black speaker claimed that the city had been built by “the bone and sinew of the colored man.” “Thus,” declared the speaker to an energized black crowd, “we have an equal title to enjoy and govern it.”³⁸ Some freedmen even extended their criticism of self-made manhood to those in the North who benefited from the economy of slave crops. After being evicted from land they had previously been given in Yorktown, Virginia, freedman Bayley Wyat gave an impassioned speech that railed against northern and southern claims to self-made manliness.

We has a right to the land where we are located. For why? I tell you. Our wives, our children, our husbands, has been sold over and over again to purchase the

lands we now locates upon; for that reason we have a divine right to the land....And den didn't we clear the land, and raise de crops ob corn, ob cotton, ob rice, ob sugar, ob everything. And den didn't dem large cities in de North grow up on de cotton and de sugars and de rice dat we made?...I say dey has grown rich, and my people is poor.³⁹

Therefore, freedmen entered the postwar with a dubious perception of self-made manhood. Whether their perceptions manifested themselves as critiques of their masters, responses to their supposed laziness, co-optation of planters' property, or calls for political power, freedmen expressed an understanding of economic manhood – both in word and deed – that did not include an individual, self-made approach to the economy. While slaves recognized the profitability of the slave economy, a desire for economic superiority, competitive dominance, and individual achievement was not part of their slave experience. This was an enduring economic lesson that former slaves carried with them into the postwar era.

If the nineteenth-century model of self-made manhood failed to make significant inroads with freedmen, then what form of economic gender construction did freedmen perform in the postwar era? The answer could also be found in the economic lessons that freedmen carried with them from slavery. Although freedmen's slave experiences may have weakened their receptivity to self-made manhood, those same experiences promoted a pragmatic approach to life based on the twin values of mutuality and cooperation. These values not only proved useful in shielding slaves from the most abusive aspects of slavery; they also functioned as a vital foundation for freedmen's postwar gender construction. Slavery may have attenuated freedmen's espousal of self-made manliness, but it also promoted a concept of manhood rooted in economic cooperation.

Whatever their unique experiences under slavery – whether situated within a small or large slave population, whether engaged in skilled trades or agrarian labor, or whether enslaved

in rural or urban locales – freedmen understood the value of cooperation as a technique for their collective survival. This value of cooperation, or “ethos of mutuality,” took many forms.⁴⁰ Often times, slaves relied upon cooperation as a protective measure from the punitive and invasive reach of white authorities. South Carolina slave, M.E. Abrams, for example, remembered hosting furtive Sunday barbecues with his fellow brethren at the expense of their master’s swine. When pressed on the meaning of their collective absence, the slaves “would tell some lie bout gwine to a church ‘siety meetin’.”⁴¹ Collective dissemblance was not a limited affair. House servants – who sometimes prided themselves as higher “quality” slaves relative to enslaved field hands – also performed a cooperative ethos of mistruths. Field-hands “would steal the pigs, [and] I would help them out, too,” admitted a male servant from the “Big House.” “I never would steal, but if they tell me to say some certain thing, I would always do it.”⁴²

The seriousness to which slaves helped one another should not be understated. As generations of slaves looked to one another for succor and fellowship, a culture of protectiveness permeated many aspects of slave life. This protective performance was something akin to a tacit creed. Although “people in my day didn’t know book learning,” stated Missouri slave Susan Davis, slaves were educated nonetheless by “stud[ying] how to protect each other.” According to Davis, the reason for such study was simple. Learning to protect one another would “save’em from such misery as dey could.”⁴³ A narrative written by slave John Brown indicated a similar practice. “Any one of us who would have thought of stealing,” wrote Brown, “would have allowed himself to be cut to pieces rather than betray the confidence of his fellow slave.”⁴⁴ Recollections by Frederick Douglass spoke to the same creed of cooperation. My slave community was a cohesive “unit” as “true as steel,” wrote Douglass – a community where each member “moved together.”⁴⁵

This potent force of slave cohesion was not lost upon white observers. Although slaves admittedly “never carried tales to the white folks,” attentive white enslavers fully acknowledged their slaves’ commitment to collective silence.⁴⁶ In 1842, Georgia Planter, Charles C. Jones, described the ethos of mutuality that pervaded his plantation:

The Negroes are scrupulous on one point; they make common cause, as servants, in concealing their faults from their owners. Inquiry elicits no information; no one feels at liberty to disclose the transgressor; all are profoundly ignorant; the matter assumes the sacredness of a ‘professional secret’: for they remember that they may hereafter require the same concealment of their own transgressions from their fellow servants, and if they tell upon them *now*, they may have the like favor returned *them*; besides, in the meanwhile, having their names cast out as evil from among their brethren, and being subjected to scorn, and perhaps personal violence or pecuniary injury.⁴⁷

“The Negroes are a distinct class in community,” continued Charles Jones. “They are one thing before the whites, and another before their own color...It is habit – a long established custom which descends from generation to generation.”⁴⁸ Another antebellum observer, Whitemarsh Seabrook, shared similar recollections. “There is a deep sympathy of feeling” amongst slaves, noted Seabrook, “which binds them so closely together that a crime committed by one of their number is seldom discovered through their instrumentality.”⁴⁹

An ethos of cooperation extended to other facets of slave life, including instances of collective work and resistance. The renowned agricultural chemist, Edmund Ruffin, for example, recorded that North Carolina slaves intentionally set fire to pinewoods when instructed to collect turpentine. Since the work was far from laborious, Ruffin reasoned that the solitary nature of the work may have contributed to slave arson. “A negro,” explained Ruffin, “cannot abide being alone and will prefer work of much exposure and severe toil, in company, to any lighter work, without any company.”⁵⁰ The same preference for collective action sometimes applied to slave resistance. According to the peripatetic observer, Frederick Law Olmsted,

slaves did not shy away from responding – in mass – to unfair conditions. With sudden provocations such as increased workloads or the arrival of a brutal overseer, slaves sometimes deserted collectively into nearby woods as a performative means of acquiring bargaining leverage while temporarily escaping iniquity.⁵¹ In other instances, runaways who hid nearby their plantations collaborated with slaves who stayed behind. After Louisiana slave Octave Johnson joined a group of local runaways, Johnson explained that his group would obtain resources such as “matches from our friends on the plantation.” Moreover, reported Johnson, “we furnished meat to our fellow-servants in the field,” who in turn, would provide Johnson’s runaways with corn meal.⁵² Whether engaging in collective work or collectively working to resist slave-owners, black men valued an ethos of cooperation.

Religious worship was a collective performance as well. Although religious slave meetings were forbidden in many locales, religious practice was not a solitary affair. Particularly in response to slave insurrections that included elements of religiosity – specifically the Gabriel Prosser Plot (1800) and the Nat Turner Revolt (1831) – white authorities sought to limit the influence of black preachers, independent black worship, and congregations at slave funerals.⁵³ Still, enslavers who “didn’t like for [slaves] to get religion” failed to prevent slaves from congregating in large numbers and worshipping independently of white supervision.⁵⁴ Slave Richard Carruthers, for instance, remembered sneaking off with fellow slaves under the cover of night to a secret “prayin ground down in the hollow” – illuminated by “grease in a snuff pan” or a “pine torch;” while another slave, W.L. Bost, recalled meeting “down in the woods [in] back of the barn.”⁵⁵ Andrew Moss recalled “colored folks” collectively building “prayer grounds” by clearing out “knee spots in de [sugar] cane breaks,” while Charles Crawley remembered furtive group meetings in more domesticated settings.⁵⁶ If the white patrollers “caught you dey’d whip

you sho,” reported Crawley, “so marster’s slaves met an’ worshipped from house to house, an’ honey, we talked to God all us wanted.”⁵⁷ A cooperative religious ethos extended to visiting black preachers as well. When possible, slaves offered preachers a place to stay and what little money they had; and in return, black preachers underscored the importance of communal strength and love.⁵⁸ Whether slaves engaged in dissemblance, resistance, or religious service, their performances were far from individual ones which spoke to their espousal of group-oriented values.

As slaves made the transition from bondsmen to freedmen, their commitment to collective action continued to inform their values and beliefs. In turn, their values and beliefs informed their postwar gender constructions. For black women, a group-oriented value system aligned well with the white hegemonic ideal of middle-class womanhood. It was this hegemonic prescription, after all, that projected a model of feminine dependence and interdependent sisterhood. Women, according to didactic authors, were naturally endowed with the feminine sensibilities of “grace, tenderness, imagination, compliance [and] the qualities of ‘the heart’” – a set of gentle refinements best suited for interdependent sisterly love.⁵⁹ Letters of the nineteenth century often revealed the depth of female affection and interdependence. “I do not believe that men can ever feel so pure an enthusiasm for women as we can feel for one another,” wrote one white middle-class woman to another. “Ours is nearest to the love of angels.”⁶⁰ This affectionate sisterhood not only bonded women together on an emotional level, it also manifested as female participation in reform movements centering on temperance, health, motherhood, and abolitionism.⁶¹ When considered in relation to black womanhood, an ethos of mutual cooperation amongst freedwomen did not militate against the ideal of Victorian femininity. Rather, an ethos of sisterly interdependence was the ideal.⁶²

For black men, a cooperative ethos complemented their regimental service in the Civil War, but after the war – specifically for the overwhelming majority of United States Colored Troops (USCT) who were mustered out of service – the same cooperative ethos conflicted with the gender ideal of the economic “self.” Unlike the ideal of sisterly womanhood, the hegemonic tenets of self-made manhood prescribed an economic model of manliness that centered on the individual rather than the group. According to this prescriptive ideal, the individual man strived within the sphere of economic competition in search of “dominance,” “superiority, and “achievement” rather than womanly affection and “affiliation” in the domestic sphere.⁶³ It was the manly “self” that constructed an identity of manhood, via independent action, ambition, and achievement, while strategically practicing the elements of self-control – namely frugality, self-discipline, and sobriety.⁶⁴ Economic dependence played no role in self-made manliness. In fact, reliance on others was a supposed liability – a weakness if you will – that signified unmanly dependence – a characteristic commensurate with women and children.⁶⁵ Still, despite such conflict with the hegemonic ideal of self-made manhood, freedmen did not abandon their cooperative spirit as they performed their postwar economic manliness. Although freedmen sought to be economic contributors to their families, they did not approach the economy independently in search of dominance and superiority.⁶⁶ Thus, when Rev. Joseph Warren – the superintendent of black schools for the Department of Tennessee – noted that men in the USCT do “more for one another,” and “often find assistance from their comrades,” he was observing a performance of cooperation that extended well beyond the days of slavery.⁶⁷

Freedmen’s commitment to cooperation was not an ethereal one. Just as hardships under slavery spawned techniques for collective survival, it was economic necessity that also compelled freedmen to continue performing strategies of mutual cooperation.⁶⁸ The expense of

landownership – even at deflated postwar prices – was one impetus for economic cooperation. With little capital to speak of, some freedmen pooled their meager resources together to achieve their dream of land proprietorship.⁶⁹ In 1863, for example, black men of the Thirty-Third USCT established an association for the collective purchase of land since their paltry pay of seven dollars per month severely hampered their individual purchasing power.⁷⁰ Likewise, a USCT regiment in Louisiana pooled their resources together for the purpose of buying land, saving an impressive \$50,000 in the process.⁷¹ Black soldiers also pursued landownership by collectively pooling their backpay. With the federal government’s restitution of unequal pay by the end of the war, some black men – including the commander of the Fifty-Eighth USCT – proposed investing their back pay collectively to buy land in Mississippi.⁷² Although not every member of the USCT participated in land associations and cooperative arrangements, those that invested economically as a group behaved with the same spirit of cooperation that bounded them together during slavery.

Moreover, prior to their wartime roles, a slave’s prospect of acquiring money was a daunting one. While most slaves labored without pay, some masters defied the law and hired out their slaves as wage-earning laborers.⁷³ Depending on a slave’s skillset and the length of his/her hiring-out period, slaves earned anywhere from \$25 to \$100 annually, including room, board, and medical attention.⁷⁴ Others made what little they could on their free time. Maryland slave Silas Jackson recalled earning up to 50 cents on his days off which, according to Jackson, slaves used to buy “cakes, candies, or clothes.”⁷⁵ Those under better conditions could potentially make more. Slave John Washington spent the year 1860 with Alexander & Gibbs Tobacco Manufacturers, where he kept all additional pay over his daily preparatory task of “twisting” 100 lbs. of tobacco per day.⁷⁶ Slaves like Washington were the exceptions.⁷⁷ Just as Robert Smalls

earned wages in Charleston as a waiter, lamplighter, and pilot, Smalls – like most hired-out slaves – surrendered the brunt of his pay to his master back in Beaufort, South Carolina. For instance, North Carolina slave David Hall was hired out as a waiter and dishwasher in Goldsboro, but his wages – along with his mother’s wages – were taken by their master.⁷⁸ Similarly, the enslaved husband of Lavinia Bell, was hired out as a hotel cook, however, according to Lavinia, “his folks never give him anything but a five dollar note once or twice a year.”⁷⁹ During the war, the practice of hiring out slaves continued unabated. The famous Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond employed 1,200 slaves and free blacks to shape “plate iron, nails, cannon, boilers, and locomotives;” and though slaves were paid up to \$4 a day by 1864, their wages were the prerogative of their enslavers.⁸⁰

With little capital to speak of, freedmen who did not participate in the USCT also found a collective approach to land proprietorship a worthy pursuit. Freedmen from Hampton, Virginia, for example, established the “Lincoln’s Land Association.” With a Baptist minister as its director, the association purchased hundreds of acres of land, with black families working the land as a collective unit.⁸¹ In Texas, two freedmen approached landownership as an associative endeavor as well. By obtaining credit, the two enterprising freedmen successfully purchased 4,000 acres of land, however, unlike the Lincoln’s Land Association, they sought to capitalize on their investment by acting as boosters.⁸² Just as members of the USCT pooled their capital together to achieve their economic goals, non-veteran freedmen found it strategically useful to collectively pursue their economic interests.⁸³

Exorbitant rates for livestock were additional catalysts for freedmen’s economic cooperation. With a modicum of money to begin their agrarian lives, freedmen often purchased one or two specific animals on an individual basis, and borrowed livestock from one another as

necessity dictated. This practice – known as “cooperative accumulation” – went hand in hand with freedmen’s “ethos of cooperation.”⁸⁴ With ownership of small parcels of land, the sharing of expensive livestock – particularly costly draft animals valued at ten to upwards of forty dollars – made economic sense.⁸⁵ A father and son in postwar North Carolina, for example, employed this strategy to mutually benefit one another. Freedman Henderson Cogwell and his son Rufus, owned nine acres and seven-and-a-half acres, respectively. Since Henderson owned draft animals – namely a horse and a mule – Rufus most likely borrowed his father’s horse or mule for plowing purposes, and in return, Rufus provided his father with milk from his stock of cows.⁸⁶ North Carolina freedmen Peter and Robert practiced “cooperative accumulation” as well. As neighboring farm owners with a single cow and mule between them, Peter and Robert had little choice but to share livestock in a mutually beneficial way. With Peter’s need for a draft animal, and Robert’s need for milk for his family, both freedmen practiced an economic “ethos of mutuality” that most likely resonated with their previous experiences under slavery.⁸⁷

Freedmen’s cooperative approach to their economic lives did not go unchallenged. A panoply of postwar interests bombarded freedmen with lessons about the dangers of economic dependence and the fruits of individualism. From northern speculators and investors to southern capitalists and entrepreneurs; from white USCT officers to the incipient black middle class; freedmen could not escape from didactic proponents of economic individualism. According to their urgent harangues, proponents of middle-class culture encouraged freedmen to obey the central tenets of self-made manhood – imploring them to be economically self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-improving, and self-reliant.⁸⁸ Individual self-improvement via “*Education, Temperance and Economy*, are best calculated to promote the elevation of mankind to a proper rank and standing among men,” read a report by free black members of the first national black

convention of 1831.⁸⁹ Self-reliance and economic independence “promotes their *manhood*,” echoed Horace James – USCT commander of the black refugee camp on Roanoke Island – whereas dependence “invit[es] them to be mendicants.”⁹⁰ Northern black members of the National Equal Rights League agreed. The Pennsylvania auxiliary of the black National Equal Rights League, for instance, showed little reticence about instructing their brethren to embrace “the self.” At a convention at Harrisburg in 1865, the black Pennsylvania league haughtily declared: “Colored people should adopt the motto that self-reliance is the sure road to independence.”⁹¹

Others emphasized “the self” in terms of manly self-control in the marketplace. A USCT commander, for example, implored his black troops to “cultivate [the] habits of industry, frugality, and temperance,” – a set of middle-class traits that promoted self-control as the key to self-made manly success.⁹² Lieutenant Colonel James Brisbin of the Sixth United States Colored Cavalry (USCC) expressed a similar message to his men. “Save your money,” advised Brisbin, “and become orderly, sober[,] and industrious citizens.”⁹³ Despite the many lectures on manly individualism and self-reliance, however, such pleading only went so far when freedmen understood firsthand the fruits of cooperation and the limits of individualism. Indeed, freedmen who worked as individual laborers found the benefits less than rewarding. “We have tried [plantation labor] three years,” complained an Alabama freedman in 1867, “and are worse off than when we started.... We cannot accumulate enough to get a home.”⁹⁴

Where didactic lessons in self-made manliness failed, black cooperative manhood flourished. Indeed, freedmen performed cooperative manliness in many ways. In addition to a collective approach to owning land and livestock, freedmen performed cooperative manhood by giving and receiving help from neighbors and kin. Sometimes, freedmen provided a helping

hand when a neighboring farm suffered labor shortages; while at other times, freedmen solicited help from friends and family when their own labor needs exceeded their individual capabilities. Freedman William Yager, for example, “worked real hard” alongside his oldest siblings in an effort “to look after the rest of the family” while the brother of Susan Bledsoe relied on Susan’s help after purchasing a farm from his former master.⁹⁵ Likewise, Mississippi slave Silas Abott “drove two mules” along with his brother while collectively running their parents’ gin.⁹⁶ In other instances, freedmen invited neighbors and relatives into their homes as long-term residents or adopted children who were headed to forced apprenticeships or Freedmen’s Bureau orphanages.⁹⁷ Just as in slavery, when the elderly, orphans, and fictive kin were housed amongst families in the slave quarters, freedmen continued to give and receive help reciprocally with other members of the black community.⁹⁸

Of course, just as cooperation under slavery was largely a furtive performance practiced amongst fellow slaves, cooperative manhood was a performance that was usually appreciated by the sympathetic eyes of fellow freedmen. In contrast, when viewed by middle-class observers, cooperative manhood provoked their ire. Freedmen Bureau agent John De Forest, for example, dismissed freedmen’s cooperative living conditions as nothing more than a wasteful drain on a man’s individual resources. Freedmen defy individual advancement by looking after “a horde of lazy relatives,” complained De Forest. After all, in De Forest’s eyes, cooperative manhood was nothing less than antithetical to the manly benefits of individual initiative, ambition, and achievement.⁹⁹

Regardless of their critics, freedmen continued to perform cooperative manhood. Freedmen’s postwar organizations, for example, were further expressions of their cooperative gender construction. Just as some freedmen purchased land by collectively pooling their

resources together, freedmen established a litany of postwar organizations to meet their financial needs. In the years immediately following the Civil War, freedmen across the South established economic organizations – including “orphanages, soup kitchens, employment agencies, poor relief funds,” benevolent societies, missionary societies, and young men’s associations, as well as mechanic, draymen, steamboat and firemen’s associations – as a means of providing economic security, comfort, and aid to one another.¹⁰⁰ Freedmen’s burial societies, for example, offset the costly financial burden of a family member’s death, while members of political “Union Leagues” vowed to “to stick to one another” and act as “guardians” against duplicitous employers.¹⁰¹ As early as 1863, for example, slave Washington Spradling reported to the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission that “a pony purse is made up among the colored people to bury the dead who leave no property.”¹⁰² And according to a superintendent of the Freedmen’s Bureau, freedmen in his jurisdiction formed a “Society” as a “means of improvement among themselves,” including raising a “fund for emergencies,” health, and the “cleanliness in their streets.”¹⁰³ From church societies to lyceums, the postwar period witnessed black organizations numbering in the thousands. By the 1870s, Memphis alone had over 200 freedmen organizations, while Richmond boasted of 400 freedmen organizations.¹⁰⁴ In addition, black veterans’ membership in regimental societies or in local branches of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) provided a broad spectrum of collective relief.¹⁰⁵ With a respectable four-dollar muster fee in addition to a one- or two-dollar annual fee, the GAR provided an array of financial support including assistance for veterans’ burial costs, support for widows and surviving dependents, and medical aid for ailing family members.¹⁰⁶

Economic organizations were not unique to freedmen. Participation in socio-economic organizations was a familiar activity commonly shared by both genders of various racial and

socio-economic backgrounds. Indeed, organizations from fraternal clubs, masonic lodges, political “leagues,” and reform movements inundated America throughout the nineteenth century – including burial societies, women’s GAR auxiliaries, temperance unions, and suffragist parties. Free blacks in the antebellum period, for instance, participated in literary societies, debate clubs, and public lectures as substitutes for college educations, whereas Japanese, Chinese, and Italian immigrants of the postbellum Period established “mutual-assistance organizations” to accumulate and distribute relief funds.¹⁰⁷ Even so, an important distinction in the gendered and racialized meaning of these organizations should be noted. Unlike aspiring self-made men, freedmen’s participation in organizational societies was not the exception to the rule of their manly identity, but rather the rule itself. Whereas self-made men could not logically parlay their organizational participation into a performance of individual success, freedmen’s collective membership in economic societies posed no ideological hurdles for cooperative manhood. Organizations and cooperation went hand in hand.

It is important to recognize the postwar context in which cooperative manhood was performed since the material conditions of the 1860s and 1870s directly informed freedmen’s values and beliefs. Indeed, the examples of cooperative manhood delineated above were as varied as the many obstacles that impeded freedmen’s economic progress. With economic challenges seemingly at every turn, freedmen’s cooperative approach to the economy was more than a historical product of slave culture; it was a postwar imperative that provided freedmen with a strategy for addressing their most basic needs. Just as slaves depended on one another as a buffer against the harshness of slavery, so too were freedmen compelled to perform cooperatively as a means of dealing with arduous and uncertain economic conditions.

Postwar agricultural production, in particular, posed serious challenges for freedmen,

owing not just to the fickle extremes of mother nature, but also to the badly battered southern infrastructure. During 1866 and 1867 alone, erratic weather patterns – in the form of extreme precipitation and droughts – as well as infestations by the destructive army worm, collectively took their toll on southern crops.¹⁰⁸ Combined with calamitous floods of the Mississippi, Red, and Arkansas rivers – which war-torn levees could not contain – both cotton and cattle suffered major losses, resulting in what one South Carolinian referred to as the “worst crop season” within the last thirty years.¹⁰⁹ For freedman, the consequences were disastrous. According to the Freedmen’s Bureau, less than ten percent of South Carolina freedman “realized enough to support their families;” and on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, “the negroes soon were almost starving.”¹¹⁰ While the first two years of the postwar economy were anything but ideal for most Southerners, they were serious setbacks for black men who rarely had a penny to their names.

As if two successive crop disasters were not damaging enough, declining cotton prices and poor wages further impeded freedmen’s economic prospects. “When cotton falls from \$1.25 per lb. to 20 cents or less,” noted financier Jay Cooke, “somebody must be bitten thereby.” And the “bite” was painfully felt by the impoverished former slave who had little to fall back on.¹¹¹ Postwar wages were equally dispiriting. Since most freedmen received a meager salary of \$10 per month, wages could not address the needs of freedmen and their families; nor did it compare to the \$50 monthly pay that poor unskilled workers received in the north.¹¹² As one Freedmen Bureau agent observed, even at a higher rate of “fifteen dollars a month, it is one endless struggle to beat back poverty.”¹¹³

Detrimental policies under Presidential Reconstruction did not help matters. Under President Andrew Johnson’s tenure, both lien laws and tax policies favored those with capital and property which inversely affected freedmen’s economic prospects. Creditors, for instance,

were given first lien on the entire crop which, in good times, did not impinge upon freedmen's wages. However, with poor crop yields and declining prices during 1866 and 1867, freedmen were often left with reduced wages or no wages at all.¹¹⁴ "We didn't get no half," reported freedwoman Ella Wilson, "We didn't git nothing."¹¹⁵ Unfavorable tax policies added further weight to the scale of inequality. Under the aegis of Presidential Reconstruction, poll taxes were levied at exorbitant rates, reaching as high as \$15 per adult male in some southern locales, whereas property taxes were set extremely low – sometimes dropping to a rate of one-tenth of 1 percent. As one contemporary observer noted, "the man with his two thousand acres paid less tax than any one of the scores of hands he may have had in his employ who owned not a dollar's worth of property."¹¹⁶ Virginia freedman Thomas Bayne agreed. "The poor people have to bear all the burdens of taxation in this State," decried Bayne, while "vacant lots worth thousands of dollars were taxed but fifty cents."¹¹⁷

By the early 1870s, however, the struggling Southern economy climbed its way to a modest recovery, albeit temporarily. During the state Constitutional Conventions of 1867-1869 under Congressional Reconstruction, delegates overturned most of the inequities of President Johnson's policies with the inclusion of a property tax on "land, personal possessions, stocks and bonds" while reducing the rates of poll taxes.¹¹⁸ Moreover, cotton production and wages increased relative to the dismal years of the late 1860s, deposits accrued in the Freedman's Savings Bank, and many freedmen were able to rent land instead of sharing the crop. According to one Mississippi Republican newspaper, "the colored people were never so well off as at present. They have money to spend in the stores."¹¹⁹

Unfortunately, the South's incipient recovery did not last long. In September of 1873, the entire United States credit system suffered a major collapse after the Jay Cooke and

Company failed to market millions of dollars of Northern Pacific Railroad bonds. Like a wildfire of panic, economic uncertainty burned the banking industry, scorched railroad construction, and incinerated related iron industries. After sixty-five consecutive months of economic downturn, the “Panic of 1873” finally bottomed out, but not before dropping the prices of tobacco, rice, and sugar. The price of cotton alone dropped 50 percent by 1877.¹²⁰

For freedpeople who overwhelmingly relied on the production of cotton, the Panic of 1873 effaced whatever meager gains they had made – including ownership of tools and property – and solidified sharecropping as the principal agricultural system in the south.¹²¹ With little or no assets to speak of, freedmen were thus forced to obtain credit from local merchants, who not only took first lien on the following year’s cotton crop rather than mortgage depreciated real estate, but charged usurious interest rates as well – sometimes reaching levels of 50 percent or more. As cotton prices continued to drop, and as debt from the previous seasons stacked one upon the next, freedmen took on even more credit to feed their families and prepare for the next season’s cotton crop. So the vicious cycle went. And so too did freedmen’s perpetual indebtedness.¹²²

Thus, cooperative manhood was more than a legacy of slavery. Although a historical “ethos of cooperation” rooted in slavery was the historical foundation for freedmen’s manly performances, it was the ongoing economic struggles of the postwar that compelled freedmen to continually rely on each other for aid and support.¹²³ Had the promising conditions of the early 1870s continued throughout the decade – that is, had increased production of cotton and wage rates continued unabated – freedmen may have had less impetus to continually construct their manliness based on mutuality and interdependence. However, the disastrous effects of Presidential Reconstruction and the Panic of 1873 all-but-ensured that economic hardship would

characterize freedpeople's postwar lives.¹²⁴ Within the context of such grand fiscal misfortunes, cooperative manhood was not just a residual component of slave culture. Cooperative manhood was a practical means of surviving the postwar economy.

Collective pursuits of landownership, sharing of livestock, and participation in economic organizations constituted three significant forms of cooperative manhood. And yet, the clearest expression of cooperative manhood was freedmen's economic relationships with their wives and children. Unlike the middle-class model of self-made manhood whose dominant individualism competitively "won" the "bread," freedmen pursued a partnered approach to their household economy – one that defied a strict model of a manly "breadwinner" and concomitant feminine "homemaker."¹²⁵ Once again, it was a historical "ethos of cooperation" in combination with postwar economic necessity that promoted a collective approach to the economy. Just as their enslaved mothers, sisters, and daughters arduously worked the fields of rice, sugar, cotton, and tobacco – not to mention accomplishing a myriad of household chores including tending the garden, mending the clothes, and preparing meals – women contributed to the economic survival of the postwar family in tandem with their husbands. Since the dispiriting postwar economy along with the harsh socio-political conditions directed towards freedmen further constrained black men's earning potential; familial interdependence was not simply a cultural preference for freedmen. It was an economic imperative.¹²⁶

Consider the economic relationship of the Bryant family. While Mr. Bryant spent his days farming the North Carolina soil, his wife Maud worked alongside him, "chopping" cotton, wheat, and tobacco. In the evenings, Maud continued her laborious workday by "washing dishes and clothes, scrubbing floors, and sewing, starching, and ironing." "My main object of working was wanting the children to have a better way of living," explained Maud, "that the world might

be just a little better because the Lord had me here for something, and I tried to make good out of it, that was my aim.”¹²⁷ Mr. Bryant probably shared his wife’s hopeful vision and strived to make a better life for his children as well, and though the historical record is silent on Mr. Bryant’s worldview, what remains apparent is his reliance on Maud’s labor, and their collective willingness to defy white middle-class gender ideals.

The historical record of the Adams and Adamson families offers more fruitful insights. Just as Mr. and Mrs. Bryant tilled their North Carolina fields, the wives of Ezra Adams and Frank Adamson labored alongside their husbands on their South Carolina farms. For Ezra Adams, his wife’s economic partnership was not a source of discomfort or shame. In fact, Ezra equated his wife’s labor as a contribution to his manly identity. “A man wid a good wife,” explained Ezra, was a woman “dat pulls wid him.” When a wife worked alongside her husband, a man “can see and feel some pleasure and experience some independence.”¹²⁸ Frank Adamson expressed a similar manly pride in his wife’s economic contributions. With hyperbolic enthusiasm, Frank boasted:

I marry Kate...De day after de weddin’, what you reckon? Don’t know? Well, after gittin’ breakfas’ she went to de field, poke ’round her neck, basket on her head and picked two hundred pounds of cotton. Dats de kind of woman she is.¹²⁹

Not every family collectively worked the fields. Even so, freedmen’s wives contributed to the family economy regardless of their location of work. Nelson and Phoebe Humphrey, for example, were both field hands during slavery, but during the postwar, Nelson and Phoebe cooperatively contributed to their household economy by doing whatever was necessary to provide for their family of seven. According to extant records, Nelson performed “miscellaneous: for other people” while “Phoebe took in laundry.”¹³⁰ Indeed, white demand for black laundresses provided stable economic opportunities for freedwomen which sometimes

supplanted the benefits of assisting their husbands in the field.¹³¹ One Georgia freedman in the 1870s, for example, observed a gendered division of labor where the “women raise chickens and take in washing” while “the able-bodied men cultivate.”¹³² Sometimes, however, freedwomen performed the role of fieldworker *and* laundress. “We had to work mighty hard,” explained freedwoman Fanny Hodges. “Sometimes I plowed in de fiel’ all day; sometimes I washed an’ den I cooked.”¹³³ Whether performing fieldwork, laundry, or both, freedmen’s economic survival and success depended on their wives’ economic contributions.

The location of freedwomen’s work has garnered notable attention from contemporary observers and historians alike. Both have focused their attention on freedwomen’s purported “removal” from the field in the immediate years after slavery, ostensibly demonstrating that freedmen and women espoused white middle-class gender patterns. “The freedmen have almost universally withdrawn their women and children from the fields,” reported a Georgia newspaper in 1869, “putting the first at housework and the latter at school.”¹³⁴ Black women will no longer “pick cotton,” complained another contemporary. “They will merely take care of their own households and do but little or no work outdoors.”¹³⁵ Such querulous observations have been employed as evidentiary “proof” that freedmen “removed” their wives from the field as part of their manly identities. “The father ruled in worldly matters,” declared historian Joel Williamson, “women stayed home.”¹³⁶ “There is no question,” historian Eric Foner emphatically proclaimed, “that many black men considered it a badge of honor to see their wives working at home and believed that, as head of the family, the man should decide how its labor was organized.”¹³⁷ And yet, freedmen’s so-called “removal” of their wives from the field implies several tacit assumptions about black manhood that deserve further attention.

First, the nomenclature is problematic. If freedmen “removed” women from the agricultural fields, then freedmen’s gender construction appears to be one of individual authoritarianism. Concomitantly, the logic of “removal” renders black women utterly docile and submissive – that is, the mere result of their husbands’ willful demands. While it is true that by the 1870s, many freedwomen engaged in household labor, it is dubious to assume that freedmen suddenly ruled over their wives with an iron fist, or that freedwomen simply relinquished power over their lives. In fact, records from the Freedmen Bureau and Freedman’s Savings Bank indicate women’s strong economic beliefs. Some freedwomen, for example, contested labor contracts signed by their husbands. Some claimed no responsibility for their husbands’ debts. And some wives opened bank accounts independently of their husbands.¹³⁸ Actions such as these do not resonate with a marriage consisting of a docile wife and despotic husband. More likely, as historian Jacqueline Jones has maintained, “the reorganization of female labor resulted from choices made by *both* men and women.”¹³⁹

Second, the data does not support a wholesale “removal” of black women from field labor. While it is true that by the 1870s, black field labor had diminished by “one-quarter or one-third pre-emancipation levels,” a significant number of freedwomen continued to labor in the fields.¹⁴⁰ “In 1870,” writes Jacqueline Jones, “more than four out of ten black married women listed jobs, almost all as field laborers.”¹⁴¹ Mississippi freedwoman Matilda Bass, for example, described her postwar occupation as fieldworker. After “I married my husband, we farmed,” explained Bass.¹⁴² And those who listed “Keeping House” or “At Home” in the 1870 census actually engaged in field labor during “cotton-picking time.”¹⁴³ If nearly half of black women continued to engage in field labor, this data is more representative of freedmen and women making collective decisions based on their family’s economic needs rather than having some

men “remove” women from fieldwork while having other husbands “keep” women in the fields. Put another way, freedwomen’s labor was neither a unilateral decision made by husbands, nor a monolithic “removal” of all black wives from the field.¹⁴⁴

Third, women’s subsequent return to the field challenges the argument of “removal.” As plantation owners continued to experience a labor shortage, and as freedmen and women continued to value independence from white oversight, a system of sharecropping spread throughout the South by the 1870s. Under sharecropping, freedmen were provided with a plot of land, and in return, an agreed-upon share of the crop was divided between freedmen and landowner. From the perspectives of both labor and landowner, a successful crop yield depended upon the labor of all family members, including the labor of freedwomen. Therefore, under the sharecropping system, some freedwomen who had solely labored in the household returned to the agricultural field alongside their husbands.¹⁴⁵ Here, the logic of the “removal” thesis loses much of its explanatory power. If an independent authoritarian black husband “removed” his wife from the field as an expression of his manhood, then why would he “re-remove” her back to the field a few years later, thereby signifying his own emasculation?

Moreover, as the data above suggests, only a portion of black families decided to divide women’s labor according to a fieldworker/homemaker pattern while others chose a combination of the two. Rather than postwar adherence to white middle-class gender ideals, economic necessity appears to be at work. Since women received “one-half to two-thirds” of the typical male wage, it was often more profitable for women to work in the household, maximizing their domestic labor while beneficially increasing the demand for male field labor with their absence.¹⁴⁶ In return, greater labor scarcity spawned increased wages for their husbands as well as greater bargaining leverage during labor contract negotiations. Although traveling journalist

Charles Nordhoff erroneously believed that only men made decisions for the entire family, his observations in 1875 indicates that economic necessity was the governing factor that impinged upon freedmen and women's labor decisions. "A man takes more or less land according to the number of his family," reported Nordhoff. "Where the negro works for wages, he *tries* to keep his wife at home. If he rents land, or plants on shares, the wife and children help him in the field."¹⁴⁷ North Carolina freedman, John Evans shared an equally powerful insight.

Eve 'ybody had work to do in slavery an' dey gone right on doin' it sence. An' nobody don't git nowhere settin' down holdin' their han's. It do'n make so much diffunce anyhow what you does jes so's you does it.¹⁴⁸

Fourth, when freedwomen worked in the home, they succumbed to the pernicious assumption projected towards most women working in the household – that their labor did not constitute economic gains relative to their husbands' earnings. This assumption could not be further from the truth. As historian Sharon Ann Holt has cogently demonstrated, freedwomen participated in a highly productive "home-based economy" which provided vital profits for the entire family. This household economy produced a litany of goods which served as de facto currency at local country stores. According to merchant records, families made payments to country stores in the form of household goods, foodstuffs, and farm animals; including homemade crafts, textiles, baskets, ribbons, hats, shoes, butter, eggs, berries, candy, cord wood, liquor, meat, cabbage, peas, corn, rabbits, hens, and turkeys; as well as captured fish and game.¹⁴⁹ In addition, records indicate that homemade commodities served as collateral at country stores, allowing black families access to much-needed credit, which in turn, allowed families to purchase costly items such as "horses, cows, wagons, buggies, household goods, and guns."¹⁵⁰ Not only were women's "home-based economies" an indispensable boon to the entire postwar family, it served as a notable example that out of historical practice and economic

necessity, black men and women labored cooperatively. As South Carolina freedwomen Lavinia Heward recalled, my husband and I “bought dis two-story home by de sweat of *our* brow... And we git ’long pretty well by trustin’ in God and doin’ our best.”¹⁵¹

Home-based economies were not just the domain of wives. Freedmen depended on their children’s labor just as they relied on their wives’ home-based incomes. “My father hired me out to work for my victuals and clothes,” remembered Kentucky freedman Wes Woods, “and I got \$25 at the end of the year.”¹⁵² Tennessee freedwomen Sylvia Watkins also recalled her father’s dependence on her labor. “We wuked in de fiel’ wid mah daddy,” recalled Sylvia, “en I know how ter do ebirting dere ez ter do in a fiel’ ’cept plow.”¹⁵³ North Carolina freedman Berle Barnes shared a similar recollection. “Dem was hard times shore ’nough,” remembered Berle. “I worked for wages and help my daddy and Mammy till I was over twenty.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, hard times dictated the lives of many children. “When we farmed share[crop],” recalled William Scott of his childhood memories, “de took all we made,” so we had to “split cordwood to live through the winter.”¹⁵⁵ From working in the fields to splitting firewood, children contributed in any way they could. For North Carolina freedwoman Elizabeth Johnson Harris, it was her childhood sales of produce that contributed to the household economy:

I can remember when I was a little girl just between nine and ten years of age how I would willingly go out early every morning with a large basket of nice fresh vegetables which Grandpa had gathered. I would go out about half past eight o’clock and I would very quickly dispose of all I had selling to the best old families of the Hill, and soon returning to my home with a little purse of one dollar to one and a half. This was really good work in those days, for a little girl then of my size and age, and I was proud of it.¹⁵⁶

Just as freedmen depended on their wives for economic support, freedmen’s economic identity was neither undermined, nor emasculated by their dependence on their children’s labor. Indeed, the practice was quite common for many black postwar families. According to the

census of 1870, nearly 25% of all black households included at least one working child under age sixteen.¹⁵⁷ With so many children contributing to the family economy, freedmen were forthcoming in retelling their children's efforts and economic gains. Freedman Joseph Adams, for example, freely expressed his appreciation for his children's work in the family garden. According to Joseph, his children's labor saved the family at least "a dollar or more each month."¹⁵⁸

When it came to familial interdependence, freedman Anderson Scales epitomized cooperative manhood. While running a drayage business in Raleigh, Anderson depended on his family's home-based economy to supplement his income. On their single "acre homestead," Anderson's wife, Cora, performed many jobs alongside their children including: fertilizing the crops, tending the vegetable garden, harvesting fruit, making preserves, and "forag[ing] for berries and apples."¹⁵⁹ Cora also contributed to the family coffer by taking in washing. As a result, Anderson and Cora could boast of a modest home, plentiful food, and "money in the bank."¹⁶⁰ Rather than pursue an individualistic relationship with the economy, Anderson Scales depended on his wife and children's labor just as much as they depended on his.

Freedman like Anderson Scales performed cooperative manhood in a variety of ways. As mentioned above, a collective approach to landownership was one example. "Cooperative accumulation" in the form of sharing livestock was another. Helping neighboring farms during labor shortages, providing long-term room and board for friends and family, adopting black orphans destined for forced apprenticeship, participating in economic organizations, and mutually depending on their wives and children for economic survival – all of these actions underscored freedmen's values and beliefs that economic interdependence did not diminish their manliness; rather, it defined their manliness.

Therefore, unlike the tenets of self-made manhood which defined manhood by the position one held in the economy, freedmen's occupations did not define black men's manly esteem. For the majority of freedmen who were relegated to unskilled jobs and meager earnings, humble occupations based on manual labor were not, in themselves, demonstrations of black manly performance.¹⁶¹ Freedman "Uncle" Berle of North Carolina, for example, took whatever jobs were available. "I farmed on de [Carter] Gay place five years," explained Berle, "den commenced railroadin', cuttin' right o' ways, layin' cross ties, and peggin' de irons. Atter five or six year, I went back to farmin' for two year, but gin [give] it up to go back to railroadin' and loggin'."¹⁶² Freedman John Barnett shared a similar pattern of postwar work. "I worked on the railroad section," recalled Barnett, "laid crossties, worked in stave mills...hauled and cut wood;" all while farming "a whole lot all along."¹⁶³ James Baker of Arkansas engaged in a variety of labor arrangements as well. "I worked around at most any kind of farming," explained Baker. "Moved around pretty considerable. Sometimes I hired out – sometimes I share cropped – sometimes I worked thirds and fourths."¹⁶⁴

And yet, when it came to black men's participation in the postwar economy, even poor wages allowed freedmen to gain a sense of dignity in completing an honest day's work, in addition to contributing to their families' welfare. For freedman Joseph Smith, there was no shame in performing manual labor of any kind. After making his way to freedom in Canada, Smith explained: "I work here at common laboring work – anything I can get to do. They give four shillings a day and board you, or six shillings a day and board yourself."¹⁶⁵ For former Maryland slave George Ross, work in itself was a component of manliness. "I know how good freedom is," declared Ross. "I know now that if a man will work and behave himself and respect himself, other people will respect him, & he will always get work." According to Ross, "It is a

pleasure to a man to work for his own living & pay his own way through the world. I know what it is to be a man – that is the idea exactly.”¹⁶⁶

Even so, cooperative manly performance had its limits. An ethos of mutuality may have governed freedmen’s gender identity, but performances of cooperative manhood stopped where reminders of slavery and white oversight began. The reinstatement of gang labor offers a prime example.¹⁶⁷ Under slavery, many slaves worked as gangs under the supervision of a white overseer. As a strategic method for maximum control and efficiency, fast-paced workers were placed in front of the slave group, working unhindered by those behind them, while setting the pace for the entire gang in the process.¹⁶⁸ Not only was gang labor a useful tool for enslavers, slaves welcomed this collective practice as well. Slaves were not only able to stave off loneliness, gang labor allowed them to commiserate and dissemble collectively. Although employed as a coercive tool for greater production, gang labor aligned well with slaves’ “ethos of cooperation.”

During the postwar, however, freedmen fiercely guarded their autonomy and refused to submit to conditions that reminded them of their prior servitude. Although gang labor was a proven means for greater productivity, freedmen and women valued their sense of freedom above all else, including their adherence to cooperative manhood. While freedmen continued to depend on the labor of their friends, neighbors, and families, they vehemently rejected gang labor as a symbolic throwback to reenslavement.¹⁶⁹ Thus, not all forms of collective labor constituted cooperative manhood, nor was cooperative manhood the only concept that influenced freedmen’s values, beliefs, and behavior. Interdependence was one thing. Returning to “slave labor” was another thing entirely. Put another way, if freedmen valued freedom above all, then gang labor represented the ultimate symbol of economic servitude.¹⁷⁰

Postwar communal living also fell victim to freedmen's desire for autonomy. Although cooperative manliness depended on home-based economies, freedmen and women rejected postwar living conditions that resembled the communal quarters of the slave era. The postwar logic against communal living was similar to freedmen's rejection of gang labor, even though both contributed to a cohesive slave culture prior to emancipation. Just as gang labor aligned well with an "ethos of cooperation" during slavery, slave quarters offered slaves ample domestic opportunities to help and defend one another against the intrusion of white enslavers. In fact, by living in close proximity to one another, the slave quarters provided slaves the means of developing – what historian Peter Kolchin has called – a "flourishing" and "vital subculture."¹⁷¹ However, as one contemporary observer explained, former slaves of the postwar era perceived communal living as nothing less than a "relic of their former subjection."¹⁷² In other words, regardless of the salutary benefits of communal living during enslavement, once freedpeople shed their proverbial shackles, they refused to re-chain themselves to visages of the past. Communal living was one such visage.

Cooperative manhood did not trump all other concerns. While black men constructed a gender identity that incorporated economic interdependence with others, cooperative manliness did not compel men to elide their concerns for freedom and autonomy. Nor did cooperative manhood hold universal sway over every freedman. North Carolinian Frank Freeman, for example, was the exception to the gender rule – that is, he constructed his manly identity in the form of a bona fide self-made man. "When I was 21 [on] Christmas Eve 1880," recalled Freeman, "father told me I was my own man and that was all he had to give me." By rigorously applying *himself* via independent and diligent labor, and by practicing *self*-discipline in the form of abstention from alcohol, Freeman managed to save \$47.75 for tuition at Shaw University,

which he subsequently parlayed into a forty-three-year career as a public school teacher.¹⁷³ For black men in the postwar era, such exceptional constructions of self-made manhood were not unheard of; and as Freeman's life makes clear, some black men adopted an individual approach to the economy as a means of reaching middle class status. But for the vast majority of black men during the postwar, self-made manhood was far from their normative values and beliefs.

Although Frank Freeman's self-made approach to the economy appears to have paid dividends, those who espoused strict middle class notions of gender sometimes found themselves at odds with fellow freedmen and women. A letter written by freedwoman Alice Dabney illustrates this point of contention. Writing to her former enslaver in 1867, Alice expressed her desire and disappointment in finding a breadwinning husband. "I am still single," wrote Alice, "and don't think very much about a beaux. I don't think the men in these days of freedom are of much account. If I could find one whom I think a real good man, and who would take good care of me, I would get married."¹⁷⁴ For Alice, her conflation of a "good man" with a breadwinning provider did not correlate with most freedmen's financial identities. Surrounded by cooperative men, Alice remained single.

Tom Thornton's gender beliefs conflicted with cooperative manhood as well. As an aspiring farmer in North Carolina, Tom espoused a breadwinner identity – a role that clashed with his wife's belief that men should work in partnership with their wives. "Tom never did want me ter work hard while he wus able ter work," recalled Margaret Thornton. But in defiance of Tom's protestations, Margaret "nursed babies off an' on all de time [Tom] lived." For Tom, a collective economic approach could have aligned well with his wife's gender beliefs, however, his uncommon and intractable pursuit of a provider role precluded that possibility. Sadly, Tom's breadwinner identity proved the source of much distress: "when he wus in his death sickness,"

Maragaret remembered, “[Tom] uster cry case I had ter take in washin’.”¹⁷⁵ Although Margaret’s economic contributions as a nurse and laundress were the exemplification of a home-based economy, Tom’s rejection of cooperative manhood cost him dearly. Just as Alice Dabney’s search for a breadwinning husband left her disappointed and alone, Tom’s pursuit of a breadwinner identity failed to correspond to his economic and marital conditions.

Unlike the exceptional examples of Alice Dabney and Tom Thornton, the Haynes family offers a powerful demonstration of the normative familial relationship practiced by freedpeople. For Paul Haynes, his career was due to – and contingent upon – the labor of his wife Dolly. When Paul Haynes aimed to preach the word of God, Dolly expressed concern over her husband’s lack of “learnin;” but rather than discourage Paul’s economic pursuits, Dolly devised a thoughtful plan:

I tell him to go to de Benedicts an’ see what book he needs to study, come by town bring me a pair of broggans for me, ’cause I wuz a-gwine to wuk and he wuz a-gwine to school. For t’ree long years I plowed de farm an’ sent Paul to de Benedicts ’til he wuz edicated. De briars cut my legs an’ de breshes tore my skirt, but I tuck up de skirt an’ plow right on ’til I bought my little farm. Paul bin dead now ’bout twelve years, but he preached right up to de day he died.¹⁷⁶

Paul Haynes diligently applied himself and successfully achieved his vocation as a preacher. But he did not succeed alone. While Paul studied books, Dolly earned the bread. And over those three years that his wife labored in the field, Paul constructed a gender identity that was neither weakened by his wife’s leg abrasions, nor emasculated by her torn skirt. Paul’s gender identity was defined by his interdependent relationship with his wife – a marriage which constituted a consummate example of cooperative manliness.

Although his wealth was indisputable, even the entrepreneurial Robert Smalls did not practice an individual approach to the economy. From his time in Charleston as a waiter, lamplighter, and pilot to his harrowing escape from slavery onboard the *Planter*, Smalls pursued

his goals based on the governing values of mutuality and cooperation; and though Smalls amassed property valued at \$6,000 and savings of \$1,000 through his actions as a hired out slave, Civil War hero, and prominent politician; at every step of the way, Smalls cooperated with, and depended on, the labor and goodwill of others.¹⁷⁷

The *Planter* affair offers a good case in point. Although Smalls is given credit for piloting the Confederate steamship out of Charleston Harbor and into Union waters, the success of the escape did not belong to Smalls alone. Seven men, five women, and three children were also onboard the steamer – including Smalls’s wife and children – who were brought aboard surreptitiously with the help of two male crewmembers. In fact, the men who accompanied Smalls on the *Planter* were crewmembers for nearly a year – each taking their planned posts, each putting their lives in jeopardy, and each working cooperatively to ensure their escape. And their monetary award reflected this ensemble effort. After the federal government appraised the *Planter* at \$9,000, Admiral Samuel F. Du Pont distributed a federal award ten ways, with seven men receiving roughly \$400 each. As captain, Robert Smalls received \$1500.¹⁷⁸ While one of Smalls’ descendants referred to him as a veritable “rag[s] to riches, ‘Horatio Alger story’” – a man who “pull[ed] himself up by his [own] bootstraps” – Smalls would have probably acknowledged that his bootstraps were heavier than his progeny assumed, requiring the manly strength of many, or at least more than one single man, to steer his ship through the angry currents of postbellum waters.¹⁷⁹

CHAPTER FIVE

Without Permission *Black Manliness in the Family and Community*

It is the chattel relation that robs him of his manhood...It is this that transfers the proprietorship of his wife and children to another.

- James W. C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith* (1849)¹

As the crowd entered Shiloh Baptist Church, a palpable energy resonated throughout the holy edifice. Just ten days prior, President Abraham Lincoln had announced his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862; and now with a visit from the famous runaway slave and Civil War hero Robert Smalls, the black citizens of New York and Brooklyn awaited their guest with unbridled exuberance and anticipation. With his wife Hannah and his two-year-old son Robert Jr. at his side, the northern crowd welcomed Robert Smalls with “deafening cheers” and “a massive and very handsome gold medal.” Inscribed on its face was the famous Confederate steamship the *Planter* – the Charleston vessel that Smalls steered out of slave waters and into heroic legend. With the announcement of five successive resolutions touting Smalls’s heroic prowess and escape from “the despotism” of the South, the New York crowd once again erupted into “wild and prolonged cheering.” Unequivocally, Robert Smalls was *the man* of the hour.²

Despite such celebratory flair, however, Robert Smalls did not travel on his own volition. As a pilot in the Union Navy, Smalls required permission from his naval superior, Admiral Samuel F. Du Pont, to attend the Baptist Church reception.³ Even so, soliciting permission from those in power was nothing new to Robert Smalls. As a formerly enslaved man, Smalls understood that, regardless of the rhetorical principles of American freedom and independence,

seeking the consent of his master was part of the southern order. Not that a life of perpetual consent was an easy one. For slave men and women, obtaining permission from enslavers was a constant reminder that their lives belonged to the will of others; and for enslaved men in particular, it was tantamount to the negation of manly identity – or what the hegemonic culture of the nineteenth century referred to as dependent boyhood.⁴ Indeed, rendering black men as “boys” was more than mere nomenclature. It was a discursive tool of disempowerment that hit at the heart of black manly identity. Thus, for Robert Smalls and his enslaved brethren, a perpetual need to obtain permission was commensurate with a boyhood dependency on white authorities – an unmanly status of childhood that severely constrained black men’s ability to construct their identities as full-fledged gendered subjects.

If slavery rendered black men commensurate with unmanly boys, then freedom offered black men with opportunities to construct their manhood independent of immediate authoritarian supervision. No longer were black men enslaved to their masters’ will. No longer were they subject to the socio-economic demands of the slave system. No longer were they chained to the unchecked consent of others. While portions of postbellum society continued to deny the manliness of black men, freedmen were no longer rendered the legal boyhood dependents of white masters. Suddenly, with the unmanly status of boyhood a thing of the past, freedom offered black men the opportunity to construct a relatively unconstrained manly performance in relation to their families and communities – an opportunity that freedmen took full advantage of. Without the constraints of enslavement, black men constructed their postbellum manhood within the contexts of their families and communities, engaging in manly performances based on the southern ideals of “mastery” and “honor.” As the warm sun of emancipation dawned on the American horizon, its unfettered rays dispersed the overcast layers of enslavement, clearing the

skies for black men to perform their postbellum manhood without masters, without chains, and without permission.

* * *

The nature of black manhood during slavery was one of circumscription. Both discursively and materially, slaves performed their gender within a world of restraints, and while it is true that slavery did not completely emasculate black men, it is also true that slavery did much to restrict their manly constructions.⁵ According to the southern discourse of the antebellum Era, for example, slavery was predicated on a familial model of white paternal mastery. According to southern apologists, white planters were discursive father figures who – by employing patience and benevolent discipline – guided their inferior black “boys” and “girls” towards a life of productivity and civilization.⁶ Under this system of white paternal mastery and black infantilization, both parties were assumed to live by the dictates of God’s natural order, performing their presumptive racial roles in relation to master and dependent. As the *Richmond Examiner* proclaimed in 1854:

Let us not bother our brains about what *Providence* intends to do with our Negroes in the distant future, but glory in and profit to the utmost by what He has done for them in transplanting them here....True philanthropy to the Negro, begins, like charity, at home; and if Southern men would act as if the canopy of heaven were inscribed with a covenant, in letters of fire, that *the negro is here, and here forever; is our property, and ours forever*;...they would accomplish more good for the race in five years than they boast the institution itself to have accomplished in two centuries.⁷

Although the discourse of slavery infantilized both male and female slaves, enslaved men, in particular, were infantilized as the stereotypical Sambo – a “submissive half-man, half-child” whose personified ignorance and pliancy went hand in hand.⁸ Following the logical consequence of such discursive rationale, the only subjects worthy of performing southern

manliness were white men who provided, protected, and cared for their dependent wives, children, and black slaves. Enslaved males, on the other hand – defined by their abject dependency and Sambo-like characterization – proved antithetical to the concept of manhood. After all, Sambo was a child, and a boy was not a man. Thus, when it came to male slaves, southerners discursively elided black men’s familial roles as manly husband and father.

The distinction between white paternal manhood and black dependent boyhood was more than just a matter of racialized gender “difference.” Rather, the two were reciprocally intertwined. The more white men reified their manhood as paternalistic masters – that is, performing the manly attribute of “mastery” over his dependents – the more black men were constrained as unmanly boys.⁹ When a slave asked his master for permission to borrow a coat, for example, the slave’s very request subjected himself to the role of a dependent “boy” while simultaneously upholding his master’s position as manly arbiter of paternal authority. In this specific instance, the historical source material remains silent on whether the master granted or denied permission to his slave’s request, but the master’s final decision to lend his slave his coat was less important than having decisive mastery over his slave in the first place. What the extant record does reveal is telling. According to neighbor Fanny Kemble, the slave-owner traveled to her residence and retold the incident “with great glee.”¹⁰

Slaves understood the gravity of the southern familial discourse and generally did their best to survive within their prescribed boyhood roles. To do otherwise was a direct and dangerous challenge to white paternalism. For example, slave Jack Foster demonstrated his dependent status by dutifully accompanying his owner’s son who had enlisted in the Confederate Army. In an attempt to reify his infantilized dependency, Jack reaffirmed his pleasure in serving his master’s family in a letter, and signed off the correspondence with a literary token of

infantilized deference: “I am, your boy, Jack.”¹¹ With such dangerous legal and extralegal repercussions for challenging white paternalism, it was often times smarter to play the boy than to undermine white owners’ sense of manly “mastery.”¹² When male slaves challenged their masters, they did so cryptically by remaining within the discursive boundaries of black “boyhood.” Georgia slave John Brown, for instance, performed the role of deferential “boy” to his master as a means of feigning his fealty. “I determined to do all that I could,” remembered Brown, “to delude my master into the belief that I was cured of running off, and by appearing very humble and submissive.” After a period of “gain[ing] his [master’s] confidence” by performing the role of dutiful dependent, however, Brown escaped once again.¹³

Although enslaved men sometimes feigned boyhood for their own strategic gain, such examples of historical “agency” should not be confused with actual black infantilization. Under certain conditions, black male slaves may have acted the boy as a form of “hidden resistance” or a “weapon of the weak,” but when it came to their gender identities, the discourse of boyhood – as well as the legal and extralegal forces upholding black men’s discursive dependence – could not completely infantilize male slaves.¹⁴ Though the constraints imposed upon slaves were significant, black male slaves attempted to refute their emasculated boyhood status as best they could.

Enslaved men’s attempts to construct their manliness took several forms. Strenuous labor offered one avenue for black manly construction. Despite the gender-neutral labor of fieldwork performed by both male and female slaves, a gendered division of slave labor did exist. Just as women generally engaged in “women’s work” such as food preparation, quilting, weaving, mending clothes, and nursing; male slaves constructed their gender identities by performing manly acts of labor such as plowing, lifting heavy objects, chopping firewood,

repairing cabins, and building furniture.¹⁵

Contributive labor to their families constituted another form of enslaved manliness. By hunting and fishing, or engaging in extra work on the weekends, male slaves were able to provide additional food for their families, “delicacies” such as coffee, tea or sugar, and gifts for their wives such as scarves, cloth, or dresses.¹⁶ As North Carolina slave Louisa Adams recalled, “my old daddy partly raised his chilluns on game. He caught rabbits, coons an’ possums. He would work all day and hunt at night.”¹⁷ By working and contributing in manly ways, black men did their best to refute discursive boyhood. As slave William Green attested, “the man who” labored for the benefit of his family was “a great man amongst them.”¹⁸

Physical prowess and aggressive courtship were additional avenues for manly construction. Tennessee slave Robert Falls, for example, recalled the demonstrative aggression and unrestrained physicality of his manly father. “He was as mean as a bear,” remembered Falls. In fact, “he was so bad to fight and so troublesome he was sold four times to my knowing and maybe a heap more times.”¹⁹ Sometimes, male slaves’ aggressive and physical performances bolstered their ability to engage in successful courtships. According to the recollections of South Carolina slave Frank Adamson, his father’s aggressive pursuit of his mother was proof of his manly identity. “My pappy...He sho’ was a man,” exclaimed Adamson. “He run all de other niggers ’way from my mammy and took up wid her widout askin’ de marster.”²⁰ Just as Robert Falls’s father aggressively fought with other slaves, Frank Adamson’s father “sho’ was a man” by aggressively fending off rival suitors. When it came to black men’s manliness under slavery, aggression and courtship were sometimes mutually constructive.

Manly attributes of physical prowess and aggression were sometimes performed within the confines of the slave quarters. Just as white southerners engaged in manly performances of

aggression under the hegemonic tenet of southern “mastery” over wives, children, servants, and slaves, some enslaved men engaged in similar forms of manly aggression at the expense of their wives and children. On the Georgia plantation of Robert Collins, for example, domestic abuse at the hands of male slaves prompted Collins to conclude that “if allowed, the stronger will abuse the weaker; husbands will often abuse their wives.”²¹ Prescriptive author “Foby” agreed. “The husbands” wrote Foby, “are taught by sad experience to know that they shall not abuse their better halves.”²² And according to slave-owner W.W. Hazard, “I never permit a husband to abuse, strike or whip his wife, and tell them it is disgraceful for a man to raise his hand in violence against a feeble woman, and that woman too, the wife of his bosom, the mother of his children, and the companion of his leisure, his midnight hours.”²³ Thus, as dependents under the mastery of white men, some black men constructed their own sense of “mastery” by engaging in similar acts of abuse.

Adherence to southern “honor” constituted yet another form of enslaved manliness. Just as white southerners constructed their manly “honor” by defending their reputations and their dependents within the purview of their communities, enslaved males also subscribed to a manly notion of southern honor, albeit with one significant caveat.²⁴ Since defending one’s honor among white southern rivals was a foolish and often fatal proposition, male slaves chose to defend their manly reputations predominantly within the confines of the slave quarters. In 1851, for example, two South Carolina slaves named Jack and Leu engaged in a physical altercation over an insult to Jack’s sister Diana. According to court records, “Leu Give the first Challenge” when he “Cursed Dianna...& Calld her a Damnd Bitch.” With his female sibling slandered and his honor maligned, Jack responded to Leu’s aspersions with a declarative warning. “Don’t you abuse my sister,” cautioned Jack. Apparently, Leu failed to heed Jack’s forceful warning, since

Jack proceeded to “bit[e] off pt of one of Lue Ears.”²⁵ In other instances, prevarication between slaves sometimes encroached upon a man’s honor. A South Carolina slave named Dandy, for example, was none too pleased with slave Jim’s alleged mendacity. After Jim apparently told Dandy a “God dam lye,” Dandy “threw a stone and hit Jim in the side & wounded him severly.”²⁶ And in Mississippi, alleged lies resulted in more than just stone-throwing. According to a slave named Simon, the slave Norvall ridiculed him “for his awkward plowing;” and since the laborious act of plowing was usually reserved for males, Norvall’s ridicule proved nothing less than a challenge to Simon’s manly honor.²⁷ As extant records indicate, the dishonored Simon warned Norvall that his “laughing” was intolerable, and that “if he did not quit it, he would be damned if he didn’t put [Norvall’s] head under the dirt.” Days later, Norvall was found dead.²⁸

In a few instances, black men defended their sense of manhood beyond the boundaries of the slave quarters. From displays of physical prowess to acts of chivalry and vengeance, a minority of black men acted with manly honor in response to the vexing actions of white southerners. “Uncle” William Baltimore of Arkansas, for example, warned his white overseer to desist in his angry and abusive ways. “I was a big nigger and powerful stout,” recalled Baltimore, and “when [the overseer] found he was to have a fight he didn’t say no more about the whipping.”²⁹ In another instance, Laura Bell’s father behaved honorably when he gallantly subjected himself to punishment by a white enslaver rather than have a female slave suffer the whip.³⁰ Sometimes, however, black men sought to regain their honor after a whipping had already commenced. In Kentucky, a young slave was compelled to seek revenge after witnessing his sister being stripped and whipped by a white overseer. After arming himself with a wooden club, the young male slave fatally struck his white overseer and made his escape via

the “Underground Railroad.”³¹ In each of these instances, black men constructed a sense of manly honor in relation to abusive white men who victimized black womanhood.

When it came to the defense of male honor outside the slave quarters, however, the most famous incident involved one of the most famous black slaves: Frederick Douglass. According to Douglass’s autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), the notorious white “slave breaker” Edward Covey “cut and slash[ed]” Douglass’ body over the course of six months, leaving Douglass desperate and despondent.³² On one particular Sunday, however, Douglass’s disposition changed. After Covey feigned Christian benevolence out of respect for the Sabbath, Covey’s once-a-week piousness proved too much for Douglass. Christianity “hindered [Covey] from breaking the Sabbath,” wrote Douglass, “but not from breaking my skin. He had more respect for the *day* than for the *man*.”³³ From that Sunday on, Douglass resolved to “defend and protect” himself from Covey’s “savage persecution” – a resolution that was tested the very next day. While working in the stables, Covey attacked Douglass without provocation. With his manly honor challenged, Douglass retaliated by grabbing Covey’s throat. After a two-hour fight, Covey finally relented, but not without making an empty declaration: “I would not have whipped you half so much,” proclaimed Covey, “had you not resisted.” Douglass, however, underscored “the fact” that Covey “had not whipped me at all.” In fact, the fight had “revived a sense of my own manhood,” wrote Douglass. “I was *nothing* before; I WAS A MAN NOW.”³⁴

Thus, enslaved black men found ways to construct some semblance of manhood. By engaging in strenuous labor, providing gifts for the family, fighting other men, courting black women, seeking “mastery” over their dependents, and defending one’s manly “honor,” black men were able to construct a gendered identity that sought to defy the emasculation of discursive boyhood. And yet, the boundaries that circumscribed their gender construction were real. While

it is true that male slaves were not abject victims of emasculation, it is equally true that the grim realities of enslavement severely curtailed black manliness – including the few methods of gender construction that black men managed to perform. In other words, black male slaves may have developed ways to refute discursive boyhood, but even their refutations were vulnerable to the manacles of the slave system.

Consider the performance of manly labor and contribution under slavery. Male slaves may have engaged in manly labor and contributed gifts to their families, but such behavior was always subject to the discretion of their masters. The father of former Tennessee slave Fannie Alexander offers a good example. Although Fannie's father employed his shoemaking skills "to make extra money to buy things" for his family, his work was wholly contingent upon his master's consent. If her father suddenly lost the good graces of his master, if his master was unable to procure the necessary raw materials, or if his master's economy required him to work elsewhere, Fannie's father would have been unable to provide family gifts. In fact, Fannie remembered a time when her father "wasn't 'llowed to keep [his shop] open on Sunday."³⁵

A closer look at other black manly performances during slavery demonstrates the constraints imposed upon black males. Reconsider a few examples mentioned above. While Robert Falls's father may have been "mean as a bear," it is important to remember the consequences of his father's "troublesome" behavior. My father "was sold four times," Falls recollected, "and maybe a heap more times." Similarly, Frank Adamson's father may have successfully chased away his wife's suitors "widout askin' de marster," but his manly aggression may have left him in a precarious position. By taking manly action without the consent of his owner, Adamson's father brazenly defied the delicate relationship between slave and owner – potentially provoking the ire of his master and eliciting the punitive crack of the whip. In

Alabama, for instance, a male slave aroused the “jealous” ire of his master when he independently courted a female slave. Apparently, in an act of either defiance or naiveté, this Alabama slave pursued the same slave woman that caught his master’s eye.³⁶ Virginia slave David Bennet incurred the wrath of his bride’s enslaver as well. Since Bennet did not seek permission to marry his beloved Martha, her master christened their marriage by stripping and beating Martha after their wedding.³⁷ And reconsider the conflict sparked by Norvall’s derision of Simon’s “awkward plowing.” Although the outcome was extreme, their conflict over manly “honor” was indicative of other altercations between enslaved black men. Just as Simon’s sense of manly “honor” resulted in Norvall’s death, a successful defense of manly “honor” between two male slaves was tantamount to a zero-sum game – that is, when one black man bolstered his manly “honor,” it was directly at the expense of another.³⁸ Moreover, although Simon did successfully defend his “honor,” his murderous actions landed him in the hands of white court authorities. In other words, black males may have performed manly acts under slavery, but their very attempts at manly construction often precipitated emasculating repercussions.

Of course, when it came to the constraints imposed upon male slaves, conflicts with white enslavers often elicited terrible repercussions. By challenging white authority, black men were, in effect, undermining white men’s sense of mastery over their dependents. Although Frederick Douglass’s fight with the slave-breaker Covey proves the exception (Covey never whipped Douglass again), black male slaves jeopardized their health and lives by fighting with white men. The father of former slave Lucretia Alexander offers a representative example. According to Lucretia’s depiction, her manly father “wouldn’t take nothin’” from others – including abuse from his owner. Once, when her father was apprehended for “beatin’ up his master,” the repercussions for his manly aggression were grisly. Not only did white men “beat”

and “knock” Lucretia’s father “about,” they also “put him on the [auction] block” to be sold.³⁹ The results of other conflicts between slave and enslaver were equally brutish. When an Alabama overseer lashed Abram for “mov[ing] off [too] slowly,” Abram grappled the overseer to the ground and bit off the white man’s ear. In return, the overseer knifed Abram.⁴⁰ In yet another conflict involving a knife, the repercussions were even more acute. After a Virginia slave accosted his overseer with a butcher’s knife, his overseer brandished a gun and shot the male slave.⁴¹

Regardless of the weapon at hand, slave conflicts with white men may have been daring acts of “honor,” but they were also deadly acts of “honor.” While the sheer danger of fighting white men may have intensified a slave’s manly “honor,” more often than not the costs were too much to bear. Reconsider the previous example of the young Kentucky slave whose sister was stripped and whipped by the overseer. Although the young male slave avenged his sister’s abuser by killing him with a wooden club, the young slave’s performance of manly “honor” severely narrowed his future choices. Facing imminent death or sale, the young man saw no option but to escape via the Underground Railroad – not only leaving his sister to fend for herself, but leaving her vulnerable to possible retaliation as well. A more common response to the punishment of a family member was to silently endure the abuse. According to his autobiography, the young slave Austin Steward described his reaction to witnessing an overseer whip his sister.

The God of heaven only knows the conflict of feeling I then endure; He alone witnessed the tumult of my heart, at *this outrage of manhood* and kindred affection. God knows that my will was good enough to have wrung his neck; or to have drained from his heartless system its last drop of blood! And yet I was obliged to turn a deaf ear to her cries for assistance, which to this day ring in my ears. Strong and athletic as I was, no hand of mine could be raised in her defence, but at the peril of both our lives.⁴²

Austin Steward's reaction obviously differed from the Kentucky slave who killed his overseer and escaped via the Underground Railroad. And yet, both examples speak to the limitations of black manliness under slavery. Male slaves could construct their manliness by employing violence against white men, but when forced to flee or face death, they knew this act of manliness would probably be their last. After all, as one overseer told the peripatetic Frederick Law Olmsted: "Some negroes are determined never to let a white man whip them and will resist you, and when you attempt it; of course you must kill them in that case."⁴³

Manly performances by male slaves may have refuted discursive boyhood, but if their manly constructions subjected them to grim repercussions, then what type of manhood best describes the gender performances of enslaved men? The examples delineated above speak to an attenuated gender identity – a type of manhood that was continually tempered by the power of the slave regime. Although gender theorist Judith Butler has described gender as "a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint," the scene of constraint that circumscribed enslaved black men was undoubtedly coercive relative to their gender "improvisation."⁴⁴ In other words, without neglecting their human agency to "improvise" as brawny laborers, family contributors, aggressive courtiers, and honorable combatants; the gender constructions of enslaved males could be best described as a *constrained manhood* – an enslaved black manhood that should be noted for the constraints imposed upon black men, as well as their attenuated attempts to defy those constraints.

An analysis of slave marriage reveals the dynamics of constrained manhood. Since southern states failed to recognize the legal status of slave marriages, from the moment of a slave's marriage proposal to the death of a partner, marital decisions were subject to the discretion of enslavers. Bill Simms of Missouri explained the initial constraints imposed upon

slave nuptials. “Back in Missouri,” recalled Simms, “if a slave wanted to marry a woman on another plantation he had to ask the master, and *if* both masters agreed they were married.”⁴⁵

Virginia slave Tom Epps shared a similar recollection. “When a man court a gal on ’nother plantation,” explained Epps, “he would ax de gal’s marsa could he marry her. If de marsa said, ‘Yes’ den dey would marry right away.”⁴⁶ While a majority of slave marriages were approved, including marriages whose partners resided on different plantations – or what historians have referred to as “abroad marriages” – the contingency of slaves’ marriage proposals should not be overlooked.⁴⁷ Just as some enslavers granted male slaves permission to marry, other masters placed their labor needs ahead of their slaves’ nuptial considerations, or denied abroad marriages altogether.⁴⁸ According to his diary, Louisiana enslaver Bennet Barrow believed that abroad marriages “create[d] a feeling of independence” among male slaves by allowing black men to leave their home plantation and temporarily defy “the control of the masters for a time.”⁴⁹ Although planters such as Barrow appear to be the exception, the underlying point is worth underscoring. When it came to male desire and the women they desired to marry, black men’s decisions were not entirely theirs to make.

In fact, the very nature of abroad marriages is indicative of the restraints that circumscribed black men’s lives. For some male slaves, the coercive actions of enslavers influenced their initial decisions to marry abroad. “No colored man wishes to live at the house where his wife lives,” explained Moses Grandy, “for he has to endure the continual misery of seeing her flogged and abused, without daring to say a word in her defence.”⁵⁰ John Anderson made a similar case. “I did not want to marry a girl belonging to my own place,” wrote Anderson, “because I knew I could not bear to see her ill-treated.”⁵¹ Demographic constraints also contributed to male slaves’ desires to marry abroad. With a limited pool of potential mates

on the average farm, black men's nuptial "choices" were, indeed, constrained. "I'm here to tell you," declared Andy Marion of South Carolina, "dat a nigger had a hell of a time getting' a wife durin' slavery. If you didn't see one on de place to suit you, and chances was you didn't suit them, why what could you do?"⁵² Marion's dilemma is understandable considering the number of potential mates enslaved in any one location. Except for large workforces enslaved on rice and sugar plantations, half of all slaves were forcibly held on modest cotton and tobacco farms consisting of 10 to 49 slaves, while one-quarter of the slave population lived on farms consisting of 9 or less slaves.⁵³ With only 0.1 percent of masters owning 200 or more slaves, it is little wonder that enslaved men "chose" to marry abroad.⁵⁴

When slaves were granted permission to marry, consent was still needed to determine the most basic contours of marriage. From wedding ceremonies to weekend visits, black men's marital lives were beset with contingencies, limitations, and curfews. The wedding of Tempie and Exter demonstrates the constraints imposed upon black manhood. After sharing their wedding vows, Tempie's master "Marse George" had "his little fun" at the groom's expense by prompting the newlyweds to "jump over de broom stick backwards." "You got to do dat," proclaimed "Marse George," "to see which one gwine be boss of your household." With a crowd surrounding the bride and groom, Tempie "sailed right over dat broom stick" but Exter "got all tangled up" and "fell headlong." According to Tempie, "Marse George he laugh and laugh, and told Exter he gwine be bossed [by Tempie] 'twell he scared to speak." As if public ridicule by his wife's master was not enough, Exter was forced to return to his plantation the very next day "'cause he belonged to Marse Snipes Durham and he had to go back home."⁵⁵

Once newlywed husbands like Exter returned to their home plantations, enslavers restricted black men from seeing their wives for various periods of time. "Marse Snipes

Durham” prevented Exter from seeing Tempie until Saturday nights – a restriction that commonly applied to most married slaves.⁵⁶ Freedman J.H. Beckwith, for example, recalled his father walking “seven miles every Saturday night to see [his] mother” with a curfew to be “back before sunrise [on] Monday.”⁵⁷ However, in some instances, enslavers forbade husbands from seeing their wives for weeks at a time. Missouri slave Bill Simms recalled male slaves “sometimes” making Saturday visits “every two weeks,” while the father of Kentucky slave Kisey McKimm made visits on a seasonal basis.⁵⁸ “Pappy, he come ovah to see us every Sunday, through de summer,” recalled McKimm, “but in de winter, we would only see him maybe once a month.”⁵⁹ The master of Willis Garland practiced a more stringent policy. Although his master praised Garland as “one of the best servants I ever saw,” his master promised Garland visitations to his wife “as often as he can be spared – at least three times annually.”⁶⁰

When male slaves made their weekly or monthly visits to their wives, slave husbands were further constrained by a system of surveillance – that is, by white patrollers who surveyed the roads and countryside policing the movement of slaves. As part of this surveillance system, permits were required of traveling slaves who left the plantation premises, including slave husbands who were visiting their abroad wives. George Jackson of Loudon County, Virginia, for example, recalled boyhood memories of his father obtaining “a permit from his massa” in order to make visits on Saturday; while Millie Barber of South Carolina also recalled her “pa” acquiring “a pass to come to see my mammy.”⁶¹ Slave husbands who left their plantations without permits were subject to violent repercussions. When Millie Barber’s father came to visit her mom “widout de pass,” patrollers searched the quarters and found him hiding “way up [in] de chimney.” Consequently, the patrollers stripped her father “right befo’ mammy and give him

thirty-nine lashes, wid her cryin' and a hollerin' louder than he did."⁶² Thus, even the act of visiting loved ones was subject to scrutiny, inspection, and discipline.

Sanctioned visitations were harder to come by during the Civil War. Whether situated near military lines or advancing contingents of northern soldiers, masters were well aware that slave visits of any kind were prime opportunities for slaves to flee towards Union-controlled territory. For one Georgia master, this was exactly the reason why he denied his slave Frank Frazier permission to visit his abroad wife. According to a Freedmen's Bureau affidavit conducted in June of 1865, "the last time I had seen [my wife] was Sunday in April," reported Frazier. "This is the ticket [my master] gave me last. He had always given me one every saturday night...He said he would not give me one because the Yankees were on the road and I would get in bad company and run away." Ironically, his master decision to deny visitation rights resulted in the very outcome he feared the most. "I come away," explained Frazier, "because my master would not allow me to go to see my wife."⁶³ Other masters during the Civil War not only denied slaves permits to travel abroad, they also physically restricted them from movement of any kind. In Elizabeth City, North Carolina, for example, one master had his slaves "under lock and key through[out] the war at night."⁶⁴

When married couples obtained permission to spend time together, male slaves were further denied their husbandly role as manly protector. Although silently witnessing the abuse of loved ones was not solely restricted to those in wedlock, slave husbands were, nonetheless, compelled to endure the beatings of their wives – either as firsthand witnesses or as abroad husbands. Autobiographer Austin Steward, for example – the same slave who indignantly witnessed the beating of his sister – explained to his readers that when their wives were flogged, slave husbands felt compelled to "submit without a murmur."⁶⁵ However, when it came to the

diminution of their manly esteem as husbands, it was the sexual exploitation of their wives that severely undermined black men's roles as manly protectors. According to an interview conducted by the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Tennessee slave J.W. Lindsay described the machinations of one master who would sexually accost single and married slaves alike. This infamous master "kept a stallion in his barn," explained Lindsay, "and he made one of his women tend upon that stallion and used to meet her at that barn. She had a husband, too;" but according to Lindsay, "that made no difference [since] he used her whenever he saw fit."⁶⁶ Virginia slave Ishrael Massie also recalled depredatory masters who employed duplicitous gambits to exploit the bodies of slave wives. "Marsters an' overseers" would "make slaves dat wuz wid deir husbands git up, do as dey say," remembered Massie. "Send husbands out on de farm, milkin' cows or cuttin' wood. Den he gits in bed wid slave himself..[And] ef dey told dey husbands," Massie explained, "he wuz powerless."⁶⁷

Not that slaves in wedlock were robbed of all humanity. Husbands and wives did react. "Some women would fight an tussel, recalled Ishrael Massie, while some husbands chose to directly confront their wives' victimizers."⁶⁸ One Mississippi slave named Alfred, for example, killed his white overseer after discovering that the white man "had forced [his wife] to submit to sexual intercourse."⁶⁹ In another example, the father of Josiah Henson fought off his wife's would-be rapist, and only after entreaties made by both his wife and the overseer did Henson's father stop short of killing the man.⁷⁰ Even so, just as most slave wives chose to be "'umble" out of fear of "dat beatin'," most slave husbands abstained from challenging their wives' abusive masters.⁷¹ With such disparity in power between enslaver and enslaved, most slave husbands felt that attempts at thwarting their wives' victimizers did not outweigh the multiple threats of physical retribution, exile, or death. In the case of Josiah Henson's father, for instance, the

repercussions of his actions were forever debilitating. After promises of a *détente*, the overseer proceeded to lash Henson's father one hundred times while nailing his ear to a post. With both his ear and his role as protector ruptured, Henson's father was forever lifeless. As Henson recalled:

Previous to this affair my father...had been a good-humored and light-hearted man. But from this hour he became utterly changed. Sullen, morose, and dogged, nothing could be done with him....Threats of being sold south had no effect on him...[Speculatively], he came to prefer separation from the wife [that] he loved to enduring life there. His master sold him to Alabama, and he was never heard from again.⁷²

Indeed, with such overwhelming odds militating against slave husbands, most male slaves concurred with Ishrael Massie's lamenting refrain: "what we saw [we] couldn't do nothing 'bout."⁷³

When slave husbands did respond to their wives' abusive treatment, it was usually in the form of running away. One master, for example, complained that his "negro men" were running away because his licentious overseer was "interfering with their wives."⁷⁴ Virginia slave Dan Lockhart "made up [his] mind to leave" because he "could not stand" witnessing the abuse of his wife and children.⁷⁵ And for Kentucky slave Henry Bibb, it was not only the "insults" and "stripes of the lash" directed at his wife that prompted him to run away; it was also the "licentious passion of wicked slavedrivers and overseers."⁷⁶ Thus, with their role as husbandly protector severely curtailed, despondent slave husbands saw little option but to flee.⁷⁷

If constraints circumscribed black men's marital selections, marriage ceremonies, weekend visits, and their ability to protect their wives, so too did enslavement restrict decisions regarding the residences and temporary relocations of their marriage partners. The precarious residence of Granvill Clark's wife is clearly evident in a written plea sent to his master. In a tone of abject dependence, Clark begged his master for "a favor." "If you please Sir to Let my Wife

Nancy to Remain as she is Until I come up and see you,” wrote Clark. “Sorry to troble you again and I am in the hope that you Will Let my Wife Be hire out here in Richmond.”⁷⁸ Sometimes, temporary changes in a partner’s residency had serious consequences. For Virginia slave Charles Tibbs, his master’s decision to temporarily hire out Tibbs resulted in permanent separation from his wife. According to a letter written to his master, Tibbs explained: “I seat myself to rite you a few lines and I hope that they may find you and Mistress well,” wrote Tibbs. “I was very sorry to come away [to be hired out] and leave my wife sick I would have liked to have stayed until she got well but I learned a few days ago that she was dead...Dear Master I trust she has gone to a better plase than in this veil of sin and sorrow.” As if his loss wasn’t enough, Tibbs sought permission from his master to return home to see his deceased wife. “Mr. Ward says he can spare the time for me to come if you will pay my way back,” wrote Tibbs.⁷⁹ As the letters of Granvill Clark and Charles Tibbs demonstrate, slavery narrowed the marital decisions afforded to enslaved husbands. Subject to the power of their enslavers, slave husbands had little choice but to deferentially ask their masters for *favors*, apologize for the “*troble*” of asking, and *hope* that their masters obliged.

When it came to slave residences and forced relocations, the domestic slave trade may have been the ultimate constraint imposed upon married slaves. Between 1790 and 1860, roughly one million slaves were forcibly removed from the Chesapeake and Lowland states of Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas to the Western and Deep Southern states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.⁸⁰ In the Upper South, an estimated one out of three marriages were forcibly broken due to the slave trade, whereas in Mississippi and Louisiana, a quarter of all registered slave marriages in 1864 and 1865 reported a previous slave marriage.⁸¹ Amongst married registrants who were at least 40 years of age, the

percentages of prior marriages were much higher. Since older slaves were exposed to the domestic slave trade for longer periods of time, seven in ten married couples reported former slave marriages.⁸² The master of Virginia slave Lorenzo Ivy, for instance, “separated families right an lef.” As Ivy recalled, “[my master] tuk two of my aunts an’ lef dere husbands up heah an’ he separated all tergether seven husbands an’ wives...separated dem all an’ tuk ’em south wif him to Georgy an’ Alabamy.⁸³ With forced separations being a regular feature of the domestic slave trade, slave-owners demonstrated little regard for the integrity of slave marriages when their financial livelihoods were foremost in their minds.⁸⁴ As one slave-owner tellingly advised: “[It is] far more humane not to cherish domestic ties among slaves.”⁸⁵

In respect to black manliness, the mere existence of the domestic slave trade impinged upon black men’s emotional lives. Although strength, aggression, and bravado were ideal components of black manliness, when it came to the domestic slave trade, a sense of helplessness and fear governed black men’s existence. According to the observations of slave Peter Clifton, “a man was scared all de time [of] being sold away from his wife and chillen.”⁸⁶ And for good reason. Slave after slave testified to chilling and heart-wrenching tales of forced family separations due to the domestic slave trade. In Louisville, Kentucky, for example, former slave J.W. Lindsay witnessed an emotional slave sale “one Sunday morning” that he considered “the most affecting sight I ever saw in my life.” According to Lindsay:

I saw a new boat, and a great many colored people round, and I drew near to see what was the matter. Directly I saw the slaves coming down. Sometimes a young girl would come, looking like she might be 16 or 17, with a little bundle, & tears streaming, or a young man, about the same age. And the people kept gathering, until there were two or three hundred there. Old gray-headed fathers & mothers had come there to bid their children a long and last farewell. One man ran up the wheel house, and put his head into a window, to see his wife, perhaps, and one of the keepers took him by the shoulders and flung them back & he came very near going into the water. I think that was the most horrible scene I ever saw in my life. Such sighing, such groaning, such lamentation! Well, they groaned with

groanings that cannot be uttered.⁸⁷

For Lindsay, as well as the hundreds of bystanders on the dock that morning, palpable emotions of helplessness and fear could not be easily dismissed, even when considered alongside manly ideals of strength, aggression, and bravado.

Although forced family separations occurred throughout the year, feelings of fear and helplessness were most pronounced as the New Year approached. As the unofficial day of slave sales throughout the South, New Year's Day challenged the emotional strength of male slaves who were, ideally, ostensible pillars of fortitude. Virginia slave Silas Jackson, for instance, was forthcoming in expressing the emotional strains of the holiday season. "On New Year's day," explained Jackson, "we all were scared, [since] that was the time for selling, buying and trading slaves. We did not know who was to go or come."⁸⁸ Maryland slave Mary James agreed. "On New Year's Day," recalled James, "*everybody* was scared as that was the day that slaves were taken away or brought to the farm."⁸⁹ It was no wonder, then, that slaves referred to New Year's Day as "heartbreak day."⁹⁰

Threats of marital dissolution fueled further uncertainty and consternation amongst slaves. According to Kentucky slave Amelia Jones, slave-owners used threats of slave sales as disciplinary tools of control. "You all belong to me," proclaimed Jones's enslaver, "and if you don't like it, I'll put you in my pocket" meaning of course that he would sell that slave and put the money in his pocket."⁹¹ Jones further noted that chicanery was sometimes used to forcibly separate married couples. When a slave-owner "would sell a man's wife," explained Jones, "he...sent him to another job and when he returned his wife would be gone."⁹² In other instances, it was the suddenness of a sale that vexed slave husbands. "If [slave-owners] got short of cash and wanted four or five hundred dollars," remembered Virginia slave William Johnson,

Jr., masters would tell a slave “‘to get ready and go to the courthouse with me this morning.’ They would take you on down there and that’s the last we’d see of them.”⁹³ Particularly amongst small planters, slave sales were a common feature of slave life. In Maryland, for example, where the overwhelming majority of planters engaged in small-scale wheat production rather than the labor-intensive demands of tobacco, planters were more susceptible to the inclement storms of the market, often prompting cash-strapped planters to sell one or two slaves as a means of clearing their clouds of debt.⁹⁴ With marriages beset by threats, duplicitous tactics, and abrupt slave sales, it was no surprise that feelings of impotence and despair constrained black men’s lives.

Even for those who were not forcibly torn from their wives, the looming potentiality of the slave trade actively reminded slaves that marital decisions were not theirs to make. The ceremonial bliss of a slave wedding, for instance, could be muddied by the dispiriting reality that slave marriages were not legally sanctioned or sanctified. Virginia slave Matthew Jarrett explained: “‘We slaves knowed that them words [marriage vows] wasn’t bindin’. Don’t mean nothin’ lessen you say, ‘What God has jined no man pull asunder.’ But de never would say dat. Jus’ say, ‘Now you married.’”⁹⁵ In other ceremonial exchanges, it was the qualification of the wedding vows, rather than the omission of them, that underscored the ephemeral nature of slave marriages. Although declarations of love and fidelity were exchanged, slaves were only called upon to affirm their matrimony until “‘*distance* or death do you part.”⁹⁶ In a few instances, the impermanence of slave wedding vows were tested soon after a bride and groom declared their marital commitment. In one extreme example retold by freedwoman Susan Hamlin, a South Carolina slave couple who was married in the evening awoke the next “‘mornin’” only to find that “‘de boss sell de wife,” prompting Hamlin to aver that slaves “‘wus always dyin’ from a

broken heart.”⁹⁷ It was under these conditions of marital uncertainty and broken hearts that black men and women fell victim to the domestic slave trade. Thus in October of 1861, when a slave “husband” suggested to his wife that they be legally married by a Union minister, the woman scornfully responded: “O! of what use will it be? Master can separate us tomorrow.”⁹⁸

Still, despite their inability to make autonomous marital decisions, black men did not waver in their pursuit of establishing strong marital bonds. Unlike nineteenth-century observers such as Alexis de Toqueville, who believed that an enslaved “man does not marry when he cannot exercise marital authority”; or twentieth-century historians such as Kenneth Stampp, who contended that both a “casual attitude” and a lack of “enduring affection” amongst slave males equated to marital weakness, abhorrence, and pathology; black men did, in fact, establish strong emotional bonds and lasting unions with their wives – that is, within the rigid boundaries of a stalwart slave system.⁹⁹ Even so, the point should not be missed. When it came to every major marital decision – including the selection of marriage partners, the contours of marriage ceremonies, weekly spousal visitations, protection of their wives, the locations of spousal residences, or the separation from their wives for months, years, or forever – nearly every aspect of married life required an enslaved man to negotiate marital decisions under the yoke of his enslaver. While a slave husband’s deficit of power should not be confused with marital weakness or pathology, a black man’s constant need to obtain permission from his owner unequivocally checked his manly abilities. As a husband, a black man was indeed a constrained man.¹⁰⁰

It wasn’t just the arena of slave marriage that constrained black men’s gender construction. Black men’s manly roles as slave fathers suffered as well. While enslavement constrained nearly every aspect of their roles as husbands, so too did slavery pointedly clip black

men's roles as manly fathers. In fact, when it came to black fatherhood, the impositions that eroded their manly performances were distinctly corrosive. The ideal of southern fatherhood, after all, posited male parents as ostensible "masters" of their dependents.¹⁰¹ Yet, according to the discursive logic of the antebellum South, the status of a slave father was reduced to a level of parity with his children. As mentioned above, a black man was deemed by the hegemonic southern culture as a discursive "Sambo" – a dependent "boy" if you will, whose undisciplined, irrational, and pliant nature disqualified him from fulfilling the manly tenets of white Southern "honor" and mastery. By following this southern discourse to its logical conclusion, then, Sambos were not only antithetical to manly mastery; their infantilization and emasculation divested black men from wielding parental authority. For how could a mere Sambo "boy" be master of boys and girls?

Of course, slave men attempted to refute their emasculated parental status as best they could. Just as male slaves sought to construct manly identities by working strenuous jobs, giving small presents to their wives, fighting in violent conflicts, courting black women, and defending their manly "honor", so too did slave men attempt to thwart notions that their supposed emasculation precluded their parental abilities as manly fathers. Some slave fathers, for instance, left their sons and daughters with indelible memories of their manly strength, skill, and parental protection. Author and former slave James Mars described his father as "a man of considerable muscular strength" who was "not easily frightened into obedience," whereas one anonymous South Carolina slave revered his father with unabashed adornment. "I loved my father," he proclaimed. "He was such a good man. He was a good carpenter and could do anything."¹⁰² Likewise, Arkansas slave Mack Bertrand left his son with memories of his shoemaking abilities, and South Carolina slave George Fleming remembered his father as "de best harness maker on

de place.”¹⁰³ For some slave fathers, the act of screening their children from sensitive topics – whether they were of a mature or clandestine nature – allowed black men to perform their manly roles as paternal protectors. According to Georgia slave Sarah Anderson, for example, “old folks” on her plantation “didn’t [al]low us chillum round when they was talkin’ bout their business, no ma’am.”¹⁰⁴ And for Maryland slave Charles Ball, even in light of the “arbitrary will” of masters or the “fickle caprice” of overseers, slave children “look[ed] up to [their fathers]...as their protector and supporter.”¹⁰⁵ By exuding a sense of paternal strength, skill, and protection, then, did male slaves attempt to perform their fatherhood roles.¹⁰⁶

Even under dire circumstances, male slaves devised ways to perform their paternal manliness. When slave-owners forcefully severed ties between father and child, some fathers attempted to be manly “masters” of their dependents by consigning guardianship of their children to another male slave. The slave father of Mingo White did just that when he entrusted his son to a fellow male slave prior to being sold.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, male slaves who performed the role of guardian for children of both kin and non-kin relations allowed them to be, in a sense, fictive “masters” of their adopted dependents.¹⁰⁸ As a boy, slave Clayton Holbert recalled male slaves who took a fatherly role on his Tennessee plantation. While learning to plant crops, Holbert remembered that “they always had a man in the field to teach the small boys to work, and I was one of the boys.”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Louisiana slave Solomon Northup – famed author of the slave narrative *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853) – characterized the elder slave “Uncle” Abram as a fictive father. As a “cabinmate for years,” explained Northup, Abram “was one of the kindest and most faithful creatures in the world...He regarded us with a kind of parental feeling, always counseling us with remarkable gravity and deliberation.”¹¹⁰ Thus, whether making the difficult decision of entrusting their children to others, or by taking on the role of fictive father

themselves, male slaves took on manly roles amidst oppressive conditions.¹¹¹

In other instances, male slaves performed their fatherhood roles by imbuing their children with valuable skillsets and paternal knowledge. The father of Virginia slave George White, for example, was a self-touted “doctor” who appreciated the medicinal attributes of “roots” – a skillset that his father bequeathed to his son. “Dere’s a root for ev’y disease an’ I can cure most anything,” boasted White. “My daddy...showed dem to me.”¹¹² Kentucky slave Joseph Sanford also recalled paternal lessons from his father. “My father always advised me to be tractable,” recalled Sanford, “and get along with the white people in the best manner I could, and not be saucy.”¹¹³ The father of North Carolina slave W.H. Robinson taught his son life strategies as well, albeit far removed from the accommodating advice of Sanford’s father. “William,” his father implored, “never pull off your shirt to be whipped.” And when it came to the protection of Robinson’s mother, his father commanded him to follow his lead and stoically defy the slave regime at all costs. “I want you to die in defense of your mother,” proclaimed his father, “for once I lay in the woods eleven months for trying to prevent your mother from being whipped.”¹¹⁴ Indeed, it was paternal lessons such as these that constituted slave fathers’ attempts to defy their discursive designations of emasculated boyhood.¹¹⁵

Although slave fathers did their best to defy their discursive status as dependent boys, the exigencies of the slave regime attenuated their paternal abilities. Similar to their constrained roles as husbands, black fathers had little authority over themselves or the lives of their children, including an inability to shield their children from witnessing their unmanly subjugation. Take, for example, the advice of W.H. Robinson’s father mentioned above. Robinson’s father may have left his son with manly commands to defy the slave regime and protect his mother at the cost of his life, and yet, the powerlessness of his father’s position could not be more woeful. At

the same time that he admonished his son to courageously defy his enslavement, Robinson's father was imprisoned; reduced to communicating with his son through the cramped spaces of "iron bars" while awaiting his immediate departure for the Richmond slave market.¹¹⁶ Likewise, the father of South Carolina slave Margaret Hughes could not prevent his daughter from witnessing his powerlessness. As Hughes recalled, "once I saw my poor old daddy in chains. They chained his feet together, and his hands too, and carry him off to whip him, 'cause he wouldn't tell who stole a trunk that was missing." According to Margaret, her "poor old" father "couldn't tell" who the thief was "'cause he didn't know, but they thought he did."¹¹⁷ And in Maryland, the father of slave James Wiggins could not conceal his disempowerment after surreptitiously "writing passes for some slaves in the county." "[My father] was given 15 lashes by the sheriff of the county" for his forgeries, recalled Wiggins, and "immediately afterwards he ran away, went to Philadelphia, where he died while working to save money to purchase mother's freedom." While in one sense, Wiggins's father exemplified manly qualities of resistance and escape, as well as a desire to liberate his wife, in another sense, he left his son with memories of his whipping, exile, and distant death.¹¹⁸

Sometimes a lack of education impeded the power of slave fathers. Since the overwhelming majority of slaves were prohibited from learning to read or write, slave fathers were susceptible to the power and ridicule of literate authorities. An incident involving North Carolina father Arthur Boone offers a case in point. According to his son J.F. Boone, his father's "young master would give him a pass and the pass would say, 'Whip Arthur Boone's [ass] and pass him out' ... They wouldn't hit him more than half a dozen licks," recalled his son, "but they would make him take his pants down and they would give them to him jus' where the pass said." Although Boone's son characterized the incident as merely "devilment than anything else," the

ridicule and abuse Arthur Boone suffered must have been injurious to his manly pride and deleterious to his paternal dignity.¹¹⁹

Although less dramatic, even basic activities such as their children's "playtime" undercut the parental authority of slave fathers. From the selection of their children's playmates to the interaction between their children's friends, slave fathers had little means of making the most prosaic of paternal decisions. The fathers of slaves John Williams Matheus and George White, for example, had little jurisdiction over their children's play-yard companions, including friendships with their master's children. Matheus recalled playing with his master's "two daughters" who were "both a little older," while White remembered playing "wid de white chillum" including his master's "little boy" named Lawson.¹²⁰ Although government of their children's playmates was hardly their most urgent dilemma, slave fathers' lack of supervisory power over their own children – particularly when it came to interactions with white children – contributed to their parental atrophy. An incident involving a slave boy Francis Black and his master's son illustrates this point. When his master's son verbally assailed Francis with invectives regarding his servitude, Francis's father could neither protect Francis from the white boy's abuse nor refute the substance of the white boy's aspersions. "Come on nigger," goaded the white boy as he ordered Francis to accompany him. "I'm no nigger," responded Francis; to which the white boy replied: "Yes, you is, my pa paid \$200 for you. He bought you...to play with me."¹²¹

In other instances, it was enslaved children's work duties that flouted the paternal authority of slave fathers. Whether the task at hand included light duties such as pulling weeds or more taxing labor such as working the plow, white enslavers, rather than black fathers, determined the direction of their children's labor.¹²² For Kentucky slave George Henderson, his

workday was directed by his owner rather than his father. As a means of offsetting the cost of his food and clothing, Henderson recalled spending his childhood days “pulling weeds, feeding chickens, and helping to take care of the pigs” for his master.¹²³ Similarly, Virginia slave West Turner remembered working at the behest of his master by plowing the field “fo’ I could reach up to de handles. Used to stick my head under de cross bar,” recalled Turner, “an’ wrap my arms roun’ de sides whilst another boy led de mule.”¹²⁴ And when it came to giving work orders, even the authority of white children sometimes took precedent over slave fathers. In Kentucky, young George Buckner worked for his master’s son – performing childhood duties such as putting away his young master’s toys, polishing his shoes, and obeying his childhood commands.¹²⁵ Thus, when it came to their work duties, slave fathers stood aside as their children took orders from their enslavers.

In many ways, the very structure of enslavement elided the power of black fatherhood. With slave fathers either living abroad or working arduous hours, it was distance rather than the direct imposition of slave-owners that undercut any paternal objections that black fathers may have made. In fact, when it came to their day-to-day supervision, parents were forced to work for their owners, leaving slave children in the hands of white supervision, older kin, or older children. “Mr. Gibson, he had big farms en my mother en father, dey worked on de farms,” explained South Carolina slave Josephine Bristow. “Yes’um, my mother en father, I used to never wouldn’ know when dey come home in de evenin, it would be so late. De old lady, she looked after every blessed thing for us all day long en cooked for us right along wid de mindin.”¹²⁶ North Carolina slave Amsy Alexander and South Carolina slave Henry Brown painted similar portraits. “While the old folk were working the larger young uns mongst the children would take care of the little ones,” explained Alexander; while Brown recalled slave

babies “taken to the negro house,” where “old women and young colored girls” cared for them.¹²⁷ Likewise, during his travels through South Carolina, Frederick Law Olmsted described a scene of “twenty-seven children, most of them infants,” who were cared for by “a number of girls, eight or ten years old.”¹²⁸ Noticeably, the observations of Bristow, Alexander, Brown, and Olmsted did not include the daily presence of black fathers.¹²⁹

The absence of slave fathers affected more than their children’s supervision. Similar to their constrained roles as husbands, black men’s forced separation from their families during the workday or the week was indicative of their overall disempowerment, precluding their ability to perform the role of family protector. With the absence of his father, for example, Virginia slave Allen Wilson spent his days taking refuge in his own boyhood fantasies of protecting his family. “Lawd, Lawd!” exclaimed Wilson after a malevolent overseer stripped and whipped his “crippled” mother against an “ole peach tree.” “I prayed Gawd dat someday he’d open a way fur me to protect mother. I used to tell my brother, Shed, ‘ef I got a big man, le’s kill dat man!’”¹³⁰ Still, had Wilson’s father been present to witness his mother’s abuse, little may have changed. As South Carolina slave Jacob Stroyer recounted in his compelling autobiography, the presence of his father did little to thwart the beating he received by the hands of an overseer. According to Stroyer:

This was the first time I had been whipped by any one except father and mother, so I cried out in a tone of voice as if I would say, this is the first and last whipping you will give me when father gets hold of you....When I got away from [the overseer] I ran to father with all my might, but soon found my expectation blasted, as father very coolly said to me, “go back to your work and be a good boy, for I cannot do anything for you.”¹³¹

Like many slave children before him, the full reality of his father’s powerlessness struck Stroyer like a piercing epiphany. As Stroyer explained, that was the first time “the idea...came to me that I, with my dear father and mother and the rest of my fellow negroes, was doomed to cruel

treatment through life, and was defenceless.”¹³²

While the structure of the slave regime often contributed to a father’s disempowerment, so too did slave-owners directly impose upon a slave’s paternal power. Forced separations via the slave trade accounted for much of this imposition. Just as the slave trade severed matrimonial ties, the massive interstate movements of enslaved Americans from the Upper South to the Lower South forcibly ruptured relationships between parent and child.¹³³ For slave fathers, in particular, the effects of the slave trade were grim. Since masters were inclined to keep mother and child together, the integrity of the father-child relationship was often torn asunder.¹³⁴ This was the experience of Tennessee slave Priscilla Shorter. During her infancy, the slave trade deprived her of any memory of her father. “My father’s name was Charles Sadler,” explained Shorter. “He was sold when I was a little baby and went south. I don’t remember ever having seen him.”¹³⁵ Similarly, from the perspective of a slave father, the slave trade was nothing less than agonizing. Louisiana slave Charles Washington was the father of three children, however, when his master took them to Texas, Washington “never heard of them since.”¹³⁶ Thomas Ducket – a Washington D.C. slave who had been sold to a Louisiana sugar plantation in 1850 – was rendered equally powerless. “I long to hear from my famaly how the ar geten along,” pleaded Ducket in a heartfelt letter of desperation. “You will ples to let me no how the ar geten along....for god sake let me hear from you all my wife and children are not out of my mine nor night.”¹³⁷

Likewise, the domestic slave trade curbed a father’s ability to keep his children’s relationships intact. When the master of Virginia slave Ben Brown died, Brown’s father could do little to keep his son and his daughter Hannah together. When “missie...and a son-in-law took charge of de place,” explained Ben, “mah sistah Hannah wuz sold on de auction block at

Richmon...an' taken to de [Maxie] plantation near Charlottseville. I missed mah sistah terrible an ran away to see her, ran away three times, but ev'ry time dey cum on horseback an git me jus befoh I got to Maxies."¹³⁸ Whether the domestic slave trade divided father from child or son from daughter, a slave father's manly "mastery" over his dependents was as tenuous as the relationships he wished to protect.

In addition to the domestic slave trade, slavery undermined a slave father's "mastery" over his dependents when slave-owners abused slave children. From slave-owners' crude dispensations of slave children's food to punitive repercussions for childhood offenses, slave fathers were unable to object to the coarse handling of their children. On his Maryland plantation, for instance, Frederick Douglass recalled slave-owners who boorishly treated slave children as nothing more than brute animals. During mealtimes, recalled Douglass, slave children were fed at a trough, "called like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush;" while other slaves, such as Mississippi slave Harry Bridges, remembered slave traders placing "young negro boys" in "wooden cage[s], the door securely locked and food tossed to them to eat in animal fashion."¹³⁹ South Carolina slave Forest Hunter also recalled brutish treatment during his childhood. Once, "[Marse James] had done got off'n his fine bay mare and had a great big switch," recalled Hunter. "He made us all stan' right close together," and after he "sprinkled us wid dat switch," Marse James "tole us to take and wrestle." Like caged animals ordered to fight, "us niggers wrestled so hard dat we broke out in a big sweat. Marse James laff."¹⁴⁰ As Hunter's recollection also reveals, fathers were unable to thwart enslavers from inflicting pain and punishment upon their children. Recalling the abuse he suffered as a boy, Maryland slave James W.C. Pennington underscored "the want of parental care and attention" that enslaved children endured as they were robbed of "the benefit of [their]

natural guardians.” According to Pennington, slave children were often left “without hope, shelter, comfort, or instruction,” and with no father to address these wrongs, children like Pennington were “flogged” at the hands of “cruel” overseers.¹⁴¹

On the other end of the spectrum, slave-owners undermined black fatherhood by treating enslaved children as their favored “pets.” Although from a child’s perspective, favorable treatment was merely an expression of their master’s kindness; for slave fathers, it was one more example of their paternal disempowerment. According to Arkansas slave Cora Armstrong, her favored standing with her owners frustrated her father’s attempts to discipline her. My masters “did not allow ma and pa to whip me. When ever I do something and I knew I was going to get a whipping I would make it to old Miss. She would keep me from getting that whipping.”¹⁴² In other instances, it was slave-owners’ deliberate efforts to play the role of beneficent patriarch that undermined the manly “mastery” of slave fathers. On her North Carolina plantation, for example, slave Ida Akins recalled that her “Marse Frank” would not only return from visits to Raleigh with candy for the slave children, he would also go by the name “Big Pappy.”¹⁴³ Likewise, South Carolina enslaver Ferdinand Gibson enjoyed showering affection upon the children he enslaved – that is, at the expense of their fathers. “We chillum did love to run en meet” master Gibson when he “come to de plantation drivin his rockaway,” recalled one of Gibson’s slaves. “We would go a runnin en holler, ‘Massa comin! Massa comin!’ En he would come ridin through de big gate en say, ‘Yonder my little niggers! How my little niggers? Come here en tell me how you all.’ Den we would go a runnin to him en try to tell him what he ax us.”¹⁴⁴ The benevolence that masters – like Gibson – showered on slave children must have irked slave fathers to no end. After all, it was the same master who greeted their children with doting smiles that enslaved father and child in the first place.¹⁴⁵

In short, whether a father's disempowerment took the form of being imprisoned within eyesight of his children, being humiliated as an illiterate slave, being stripped of his supervisory power over his children's play and labor, being restricted from his children's residence, being deprived of protecting his children from abuse, or being shown up by the ostensible magnanimity of slave-owners – when it came to their fatherhood roles, enslaved black men were just as circumscribed paternally as they were maritally. As both husbands and fathers, then, the figurative manacles of enslavement shackled black men in such a way that – besides fatal attempts at overt rebellion or modest attempts at covert resistance – black men generally performed manly acts when delimited within the acceptable boundaries of their masters' domain. While enslaved black men may have engaged in instances of manly behavior – including acts of strength and courage, aggressive courting or gift-giving, or displays of southern “honor” and “mastery” – they generally did so contingently – that is, as encircled subjects who acted in relation to the pervasive reach of their masters. Only at great risk did they behave otherwise. In other words, when it came to their marital and paternal roles, black men generally behaved as manly as their constraints allowed them to be. Thus, when it came to black men's gender constructions under slavery, black manliness was, indeed, a constrained performance.

Constrained black manliness did not last forever. Just as the demise of slavery freed African Americans from the shackles of servitude, so too did it augur a new beginning for black manliness. Even so, the demise of constrained manhood under slavery did not strike America like a solitary flash of lightning or a single torrential flood. Rather, the transition to a freer expression of black manliness transpired over the course of many years – beginning with four stormy years of civil warfare. As the Union Army encroached ever deeper into southern territory – granting slaves the opportunity to flee towards Union lines – and as President Abraham

Lincoln answered the clarion calls for abolitionism with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the authoritarian control that masters wielded over their slaves proved unsustainable.¹⁴⁶ With the military and political exigencies of war ever-weakening the authority of slave-owners, black men gradually seized the opportunity to perform their gender independently of the constraints that historically bound them. Thus, amidst the hazy smoke of Civil War cannon and the clearer skies of postwar America did many black men – as husbands, fathers, soldiers, and citizens – begin to express their manliness irrespective of a white man’s authority.

As the storm clouds of Civil War gave way to the era of Reconstruction – that is, the hopeful albeit brief postwar period from 1865 to 1877 – new conditions allowed black men to express their gender values and beliefs in ways previously denied them. As free and independent subjects, black men were no longer strictly limited to the dependent status of discursive boyhood. They were neither subject to the demands of the slave regime, nor forced to seek the consent of white slave-owners. And though the ideal expression of their postwar manhood never went uncontested by all white Southerners, black men constructed their manly roles in ways that were scarcely imaginable prior to the Civil War. Like a raging tempest of fury, the Civil War altered the terrain of black manly construction like never before; spawning an era of Reconstruction where black men perform their manhood without permission.

If constrained manhood met the same fate as slavery, then how did black men during the postwar construct their manly identities? The answer resided in the southern idealization of manly “mastery” and “honor.” According to these gender ideals, southern men expressed their manliness in two arenas: private and public life. Whereas southern men sought “mastery” over their dependents within the private boundaries of one’s home and property, southern men attained “honor” via their reputation within the public realm of the community.¹⁴⁷ Although

slavery did much to complicate the private/public dichotomy of enslaved males, the southern pillars of “mastery” and “honor” were never wholly absent from their lives. As mentioned above, male slaves engaged in limited performances of “mastery” within their “private” lives by displaying their manly strength, aggressively courting women, instilling guidance and skillsets unto their children, and granting “guardianship” of their children prior to their forced departures. Similarly, male slaves engaged in limited performances of manly “honor” within the community of the slave quarters by defending one’s reputation against insults, challenges, and prevarication from fellow slaves; or in rarer instances, from abusive white slaveholders.¹⁴⁸ While the actions of male slaves were severely circumscribed, thereby preventing male slaves from fully expressing their manliness, the tenets of “mastery” and “honor” did, in fact, inform their manly values and beliefs.

With the death of slavery, freedom granted black men greater opportunity to express their southern manhood. Liberated from the constraints of enslavement, freedmen were able to perform “mastery” and “honor” to a much greater extent than their attenuated attempts under enslavement. Even so, freedmen’s gender constructions were not identical to that of white southerners. Whereas white proponents of southern “mastery” – including white southern planters and aspiring white yeomen farmers – sought authoritarian control over dependents within the private context of household and property, freedmen espoused a variant of southern manliness – one that did not seek dominance over others.¹⁴⁹ The difference resided in black men’s historical experience. Since black men were marginalized members of the American South and former dependents themselves, freedmen had neither the power nor inclination to pursue a strategy of domination as a means of manly expression. Nor did black men champion authoritarian control over their wives and children. Since freedmen had historically depended on

their families for physical and emotional support during slavery, and since they continued to appreciate a legacy of interdependence from their days of their enslavement, freedmen continued to engage in a cooperative relationship with their wives and children just as they had under slavery.¹⁵⁰ While it was true that the southern ideal of manly “mastery” informed black manly performance, it was not the brand of “mastery” that white southerners espoused.

Still, freedmen shared in the basic premise that southern “mastery” centered on manly authority within the private domain of one’s life. The difference resided in the type of “mastery” that black men sought to construct. Rather than pursuing dominance and control over others, black men sought to be “masters” of their own private lives. By engaging in manly performances as empowered husbands and fathers – that is, as free family men who made marital and parental decisions independent of their former masters – black men performed a version of southern “mastery” that, within the context of the black family and household, refuted the invasive reach of white authority. In other words, after centuries of domination under white “mastery,” freedmen sought to be masters of themselves.

Marriage was a key site for black manly “mastery.” Liberated from their slave-owners and the marital constraints imposed upon them, black men performed their manliness by freely exercising their legal right to marry. From the war years on, freedmen courted their wives, recited their vows, and obtained official marriage certificates, unhindered by the authority of other men or the many constraints that previously limited their marital decisions. The sheer demand for marriage certificates was indicative of freedmen’s marital expressions of manliness. As early as 1861 – the first year of the Civil War – the Reverend L.C. Lockwood wrote to the American Missionary Association regarding the high volume of marriages between freedmen and women. “Please send me a hundred engraved marriage certificates such as are sold in

Nassau street,” requested the reverend – only weeks after his arrival at Fortress Monroe, Virginia.¹⁵¹ Three years later, the demand for marriage licenses continued unabated. In 1864, while stationed at Yorktown, Reverend Lockwood – the same official who had requested marriage certificates while at Fortress Monroe – made additional requests for certificates to satisfy freedpeople’s incessant demands for official matrimony.¹⁵²

It wasn’t just their legal access to marriage that contributed to black men’s “mastery” over their private lives. Rather, it was the dignity that the institution of marriage afforded that granted freedmen the opportunity to express their manliness. Unlike the marital conditions of enslavement, which was neither legal nor binding, and performed under the patronizing eye of white enslavers, freedom allowed black men the opportunity to enter marriage in a dignified manner – with official ceremonies, paperwork, and legal standing that befitted a solemn and lifelong commitment. Moreover, official military policy bolstered freedpeople’s access to dignified marriages. In March of 1864, John Eaton - the Superintendent of Contrabands in the Department of Tennessee and Arkansas – formally issued “Special Order 15,” encouraging Union clergy to “solemnize the rite of marriage among Freedmen” and provide “neat” marriage certificates to former slaves.¹⁵³ With greater access to dignified weddings, the rate of freedpeople’s marriages continued to soar. In an eight-month period in 1864, for example, 3,000 freedmen and women in Vicksburg, Mississippi took their wedding vows – 500 of whom had been previously separated under slavery.¹⁵⁴ And in Memphis, Tennessee, Union Chaplain Fiske reportedly conducted 119 freedmen marriages in a single hour.¹⁵⁵ While dignified marriages undoubtedly bolstered freedwomen’s performances as moral, mature, and respectable women, for black men in particular, whose previous enslavement rendered them unmanly boys, their ability – and eager willingness – to marry in a free, legal, and dignified manner could not have

been more different from constrained manhood.¹⁵⁶

Performances of manly “mastery” were not always uplifting. As masters of their own private lives, freedmen faced difficult decisions that stemmed from the days of enslavement. After many years of forced marriages, multiple separations, and subsequent remarriages, some freedmen made the painful decision to dissolve previous marital bonds.¹⁵⁷ Such was the case of Georgia freedman Harry Peterson and his wife Eliza. After more than two decades of marriage, four children, and several masters, the Petersons chose to live their postwar lives apart from one another. Although the reasons for their separation were unclear, as free man and woman, Harry and Eliza dissolved their marriage without fear of punishment or the consent of white authority.¹⁵⁸ And though their decision may not have been Harry’s alone to make, it was a far cry from constrained manhood when, under enslavement, some masters inflicted 100 lashes upon divorced slaves, as well as three-year waiting periods before remarriage.¹⁵⁹ Without fear of punishment or the need for permission, then, did freedmen like Harry engage in weighty decisions regarding their private lives.¹⁶⁰

“Mastery” over one’s private life took many forms. In addition to postwar marriage and divorce, black men’s ability to search for family members constituted another form of “mastery.” For black males in particular, who had been disproportionately sold away from their families via the domestic slave trade or separated from their loved ones due to military service, it was their ability as freedmen to search for and reconstitute their families – without requiring traveling permits or evasion from slave patrollers – that contributed to their manly esteem. In September of 1865, for example, one freedman who had been previously sold to Georgia reportedly walked over 600 miles to North Carolina to find his wife and children; whereas Union soldier Archibald Winn returned from the war, rejoined his beloved Harriet in New Bern, “went to the Court

House...and got the 25[-cent] marriage license the same as all the colored people did.”¹⁶¹

Whether freedmen reconstituted their families in person, arranged safe passage via train or steamship, or petitioned the Freedmen’s Bureau for help, freedmen demonstrated that their decisions were theirs alone to make. After the surrender at Appomattox, for example, former Georgia slave Angeline Lester recalled her father arriving in person to gather up the family; the husband of a freedwoman named Sinai arranged safe passage for her to his residence in Savannah; and one Texas freedman who had been sold twenty-four years prior solicited the help of the Freedmen’s Bureau to find his “dearest relatives” in Virginia.¹⁶² No matter what avenue freedmen took, the pursuit of familial reconstitution contributed to black men’s “mastery” over their lives. As one Union officer blissfully reported to his wife in May of 1865: “I wish you could see this people as they step from slavery into freedom. Men are taking their wives and children, families which had been for a long time broken up are united and oh! Such happiness. I am glad I am here.”¹⁶³

Not that white paternalism and black infantilization receded altogether. Even during the Civil War, when thousands of black soldiers proved their manly resolve in defense of the Union, white men of various creeds continued to infantilize black men as little more than children. White officers such as Captain Luis F. Emilio of the black Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry, espoused paternalistic attitudes towards black men that harkened back to the days of slavery. “To the soldier,” wrote Captain Emilio, “his true commander is a father, his superiors, elder brothers to be obeyed.”¹⁶⁴ Famed minister and abolitionist, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, shared similar sentiments. As Colonel of the First South Carolina Volunteers, Higginson considered black men to be “the world’s perpetual children...docile, gay, and lovable.” “They take a “childlike pleasure” in getting up early, claimed Higginson, and shout “with childish

delight over every explosion.”¹⁶⁵ And well into the postwar era, countless white Americans – including well-meaning Northerners and Freedmen Bureau agents – continued to share similar assumptions that were espoused by former slave-owners. According to missionary Samuel Ashley, for example, black men were something akin to “children,” even though Ashley hypocritically implored others to defend “the manhood, all the social, intellectual, civil, and moral rights of the colored people to their fullest extent.”¹⁶⁶ Likewise, South Carolina Freedmen’s Bureau agent John De Forest questioned the manly “mastery” of freedmen who ostensibly seemed “hopeless” when attempting to control their “wives and daughters.”¹⁶⁷ In other words, freedmen may have performed manly “mastery” in the postwar, but their performances were not free from contestation.

Moreover, not every postwar performance of manly “mastery” was *sui generis*. Just as in slavery, black men during the postwar continued to express their manliness in ways that were not wholly different from their days as constrained men. Displays of physical strength, for example, – particularly in the presence of wife and children – continued to afford black men with opportunities to showcase their manly prowess. Former slave Bacchus White, for instance, described the impressive physicality of his father’s postwar labor – a manly trait of brawniness that Bacchus, himself, sought to emulate. According to White:

I mem’ers so wel’ af’er the War, when I was a livin wid my fa’her we uster to take two bushels of corn on our bac’s ’an walk seven miles to town, withert e’en takin ’hit off our sho’lers. We wuld git what we want for de corn, an den we wuld go on bac’ ’ome. We didn’t think nothin of dat. We wuld wade ri’te thru Massaponox Creek, didn’t think it wus nothing. Den walk ’ome seven miles.¹⁶⁸

Of course, postwar freedom augmented black men’s ability to demonstrate their physicality in ways that proved impossible during slavery. Not only did freedmen, like White’s father, exert themselves within the context of their own labor, trade, and economy; freedmen also constructed

their identities as stalwart “masters” by bestowing lessons of manly strength unto their sons. As Bacchus White recalled, “I mem’ers father sed to me un da’, ‘Son when I am de’d an’ gone you kin tel’ de youngsters what you have cume up to.’”¹⁶⁹

Similarly, gift-giving during the postwar continued to bolster black men’s manly esteem, just as it had during slavery. However, the types of gifts black men were able to purchase during the postwar were of greater variety and monetary value than during the antebellum Era. Instead of humble presents of coffee and sugar, or modest gifts of apparel, black men of the postwar era used portions of their earnings to buy “fashionable dresses...many-colored ribbons, pretty hats and delicate parasols” for their wives; or in the case of former slave J.M. Alexander, “something nice” for his four children.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, though the act of giving may have been similar to constrained manhood, the types of gifts freedman gave were anything but slavish. As former slave Harry McMillan explained, freedmen had “a little more chance to mind their families and make more money to support their families,” which granted freedmen greater means to make manly household contributions.¹⁷¹

In other instances, however, expressions of black postwar “mastery” were completely novel. From the manner in which black men addressed white southerners, to the ways in which they protected their families, when it came to their roles as fathers and husbands, freedmen refuted the intrusive actions of white Southerners and demonstrated “mastery” over their private lives. Criticism of freedmen’s private decisions, for example, did not go unchecked. As “masters” of their private lives, freedmen proved unwilling to endure criticism of their personal decisions. For example, when Louisiana freedman Henry Adams informed his boss of his upcoming visit to Shreveport, Adams’s boss proclaimed: “You better carry a pass.” Adams’s response, however, was anything but obsequious. “I will see whether I am free by going without

a pass,” Adams declared.¹⁷² Likewise, when a white Louisiana landowner reproached a black tenant for spending his earnings on clothes for his wife, the black tenant responded with forceful logic and resolve. “What’s the use of living,” challenged the freedman to his invasive white landowner, “if a man can’t have the good of his labor?”¹⁷³ So too did black men seek to protect their wives from aspersions cast on their womanly virtue. In some southern states, for example, freedmen were quick to establish a “Sons of Benevolence” organization to protect the “female virtue” of black womanhood; whereas in many areas of the South, freedmen solicited the help of the local Freedmen’s Bureau to redress wrongs committed against freedwomen.¹⁷⁴ With three times more Freedmen Bureau claims made by black men than women, freedman such as James Alexander reported a number abuses, ranging from contractual violations over freedwomen’s use of land to unremunerated services rendered by “Self & wife.”¹⁷⁵ In other instances, husbands directly intervened when conflicts erupted between female family members and white Southerners. A freedman named Jessie did just that when he abruptly broke up a fight between his wife and a white Southerner living on the same plantation.¹⁷⁶

Likewise, when white Southerners ordered black children to do their bidding, black fathers were quick to respond. An incident between North Carolina freedman A.D. Lewis and a white Southerner by the name of Dr. Jones illustrates this point. “I was in my field at my own work,” wrote A.D. Lewis in 1869, “and this [Dr.] Jones...drove up to a man’s gate that live close by...and ordered my child to...open that gate for him.” “There was children in the yard...not more than twenty yards from him,” explained Lewis, “and jest because they were white and mine black he wood not call them to open the gate...I spoke gently to him that [the white children] would open the gate,” however, Dr. Jones “walked nearly hundred yards rite into my field... and strick me in the face three times and ...cursed me [as] a dum old Radical.” In a dignified

response, Lewis wrote directly to the governor of North Carolina, inquiring “how to bring this man to jestus.”¹⁷⁷ Although physically accosted by the white doctor, Lewis’s actions were telling. Within the context of invasive white criticism, unfair treatment, and unprovoked abuse, black men like A.D. Lewis performed their version of southern “mastery” by challenging the incursions of white aggressors, protecting their wives and children from white mandates, and seeking legal redress for racial injustice.

When it came to novel performances of manliness, freedmen’s denunciations of the slave trade constituted one of the strongest expressions of black manhood. After generations of anguish, tears, and loss – of being forcibly torn from the loving bonds of family while standing helplessly by as white masters determined the fate of wife and child – freedman unequivocally claimed “mastery” over their private lives by castigating the nefarious practice of human sale. In a Charleston, South Carolina parade in 1865, for example, a former slave conducted a masterful performance of manliness by scornfully mocking the domestic slave trade. Amongst a panoply of marching bands, banners, and carriages, the former slave stood upon an auctioneer’s block situated on “a large cart, drawn by two dilapidated horses.” “As the cart moved along,” reported the *New York Daily Tribune* “the man mimicked a slave auctioneer by ringing a bell and crying out to parade onlookers: ‘How much am I offered for this good cook? She is an excellent cook, gentlemen. She can make four kinds of mock turtle soup – from beef, fish or fowl. Who bids?’ ‘Two hundred’s bid! Two-fifty. Three hundred.’ ‘Who bids? Who bids.’”¹⁷⁸ Although in one sense, the mock-auctioneer’s display of inverted power was playful and amusing, in another sense, his performance was both a jeering indictment of the slave trade and a manly refutation of white authority. By mocking one of the most poignant practices conducted under slavery, the mock-auctioneer performatively declared what another freedman proclaimed in words: “Now, no

more Dat!...Dey can't sell my wife and child any more, bless de Lord!"¹⁷⁹

Novel performances of postwar “mastery” were not limited to conflicts with white Southerners or performative assaults on the domestic slave trade. With an influx of philanthropic teachers and missionaries from the North, direction and assistance from the Freedmen’s Bureau, as well as grass-root efforts amongst freedpeople themselves, the establishment of freedmen schools offered black fathers the opportunity to claim “mastery” over their private lives by sending their children to school.¹⁸⁰ The novelty of such paternal freedom should not be understated. For the first time, it was black fathers rather than white “masters” who determined how black children spent their days. In an 1871 letter to his son Johnny, former Arkansas slave John Alexander expressed conspicuous pride in his son’s academic progress – an expression of paternal authority that testified to Alexander’s newfound “mastery” as a free black father. “I am proud that I have a son of seven years old that can write me a letter,” wrote Alexander. “Your description of the tornado was so very good.”¹⁸¹ Virginia freedman William Johnson, Jr. shared similar sentiments of paternal pride. “I have raised all of my children, educated them, then college, those who wanted it,” Johnson boasted. “I’ve helped grandchildren and now I help to educate great grandchildren.”¹⁸² And for Alabama freedman Ambrose Headen – who, as a carpenter slave, constructed the Baptist Academy in Talladega for white children – the novelty of sending his children to school rather than seeing them labor for a slave-owner was nearly impossible to comprehend. “It was a hard thing having to build that school for the white boys when I had no right to educate my son,” Headen candidly explained. “Then when the war was over and they bought that building for our children, I could hardly believe my eyes – looking at my own little ones carrying their books under their arms, coming from the same school the Lord really raised up for them. I rubbed my eyes and said, ‘Ambrose, you must be

dreaming.”¹⁸³

For some freedmen, postwar access to education contributed to their manly “mastery” in multiple ways. The father of North Carolina slave J.H. Beckwith augmented his role as a freedman and father by obtaining an education for himself and his children. “Father learned to read and write after freedom,” recalled Beckwith. “After freedom he sent my oldest brother and sister to Hampton, Virginia and they were graduated from Hampton Institute and later taught school.”¹⁸⁴ For other freedmen, obtaining an education for their children not only bolstered their roles as fathers, it also contributed to their economic autonomy by having, for the first time, literate members of the household. Veteran of the Forty-fourth Colored Infantry George Roper, for example, implored a crowd of freedmen during the 1868 political season to educate their children “so they can read and write for you” and thwart the usurious practices of white storeowners.¹⁸⁵ With access to postwar education, Missouri freedman Bill Simms fulfilled multiple roles of manliness as well. Upon his wife’s deathbed, Simms promised his wife that he would provide their daughters with an education. “So I worked,” explained Simms, “and sent the girls to school. My two girls both graduated from Ottawa university, the oldest one being the first colored girl to ever graduate from that school.” And when his oldest daughter’s salary as a teacher proved insufficient, Simms sent “her money to pay her expenses.”¹⁸⁶ By making the most of postwar schooling and faithfully honoring their wives’ wishes, did some freedmen perform “mastery” over their lives by fulfilling their respective roles as paternal provider, economic consumer, and cooperative husband.

While it was true that freedmen sought “mastery” over their lives, their postwar performances as free men were not free from blemish. Whether enslaved or free, black men were bound to the same foibles and imperfections as other men and women of their time and

place. For some, the bottle was to blame. “My father drank too much,” freedman Jeff Bailey bluntly recalled. “I used to say to him, ‘I wouldn’t drink so much whiskey.’ But he drank...hissself to death.”¹⁸⁷ Likewise, freedwoman Mary Jane Taylor spoke of the harmful effects that alcohol had on her marriage. “[My husband] Bill White was an awful drinker,” reported Taylor. “He would get drunk often and come home and want to fight and we did. We separated three different times.”¹⁸⁸ While some freedmen led ruinous lives with bottle-in-hand, others committed adultery or shirked their responsibilities as a father. Freedman George Jackson, for example, fathered five children with his wife Rebecca Saulsbury, however, according to Saulsbury, “we parted because he treated me bad and...ran about after other women.”¹⁸⁹ For Kansas freedwoman Belle Williams, marriage offered her mixed experiences with freedmen. Although Williams sang the praises of her first husband, upon his death, Williams remarried, only to find her second husband unwilling to help raise the “chilluns.”¹⁹⁰ And for some former slaves, their postwar constructions of “mastery” resembled the abusive control that white “masters” sought over their dependents. Freedman James Jeter, for example, sought “mastery” over his dependents by “claiming the right of whipping his own child instead of allowing his...former master to do so.”¹⁹¹ A Georgia freedman sought control over his wife Elizabeth by repeatedly beating her to the ground.¹⁹² And according to Hely Ann, when she asked her stepfather for blankets, he demurred.¹⁹³ Thus, some freedmen performed a less idealistic “mastery” over their lives by engaging in destructive, neglectful, or abusive behavior at the expense of their wives and children.

If freedmen were not manly exemplars of perfection, neither were the years of Reconstruction a time of perfect peace, egalitarianism, and free expression. Particularly during the immediate postwar years of Presidential Reconstruction from 1865-1866, freedmen’s gender

performances of “mastery” were challenged at nearly every turn. Bolstered by the lenient policies of President Andrew Johnson, former Confederate states wasted no time in re-establishing power in the hands of elite white Southerners – many of whom had only recently relinquished their Confederate uniforms, not to mention the moniker of slave-owner. Seeking to retain their social, political, and economic power of the antebellum Era, Southern politicians quickly instituted draconian policies against former slaves by the end of 1865. Known as the “Black Codes,” southern states forbade freedmen from owning or renting land in urban areas, restricted the free movement of freedmen without the consent of a white landowner, reinstated whipping as a form of discipline, criminalized non-contracted workers for “vagrancy,” implemented onerous taxes upon skilled freedmen, denied freedmen equal access to judicial courts, removed black children from the custody of freedmen under the guise of “apprenticeship laws,” and enforced labor contracts with onerous fines, imprisonment, and forfeiture of wages.¹⁹⁴ As W.E.B. Du Bois concluded in his masterful work, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), passage of the Black Codes was a “plain and indisputable attempt on the part of the Southern states to make Negroes slaves in everything but name.”¹⁹⁵ Collectively, the Black Codes reified a Republican prediction that, if given the opportunity, Southerner Democrats would spend “their whole thought and time” trying to return “as near to slavery as possible.”¹⁹⁶ “If you call this Freedom,” challenged a black Civil War veteran, “what do you call Slavery?”¹⁹⁷

Fortunately, the Black Codes were short-lived. As flagrant displays of prejudice and southern intransigence, Black Codes violated Northerners’ commitment to establishing a “free labor” system in the postwar South – that is, an economic ideology where labor and capital harmoniously engaged in the marketplace free of restrictions and coercion. Consequently, Republican military officials and governors rescinded the most egregious elements of the Black

Codes by the end of 1866.¹⁹⁸ Even so, despite their ephemerality, the years of Presidential Reconstruction were hardly the ideal stage for black manly performance as white Southerners legally rode roughshod over black men's roles as laborers, husbands, and fathers. Indeed, for the first two years of Reconstruction, manly "mastery" over their private lives proved a challenging ideal for many freedmen to attain, harkening back to the many constraints imposed upon them during slavery. As Virginia freedman Mr. Walton explained, slavery "was bad enough, but I've seen plenty of slavery since Lincoln turned the slaves loose."¹⁹⁹

In the face of inequitable conditions, then, did freemen staunchly pursue a gender identity of "mastery" over their private lives. In fact, freedmen's performances of manliness within the challenging context of reactionary postwar politics served as a testament to their tenacious pursuit of manly "mastery." By making decisions regarding marriage and divorce, by searching for lost loved ones and reconstituting families, by demonstrating physical prowess while engaged in remunerative labor, by parlaying the fruits of labor into contributions for the family, by defending wives and children from white criticism and incursions, by denouncing the evils of the domestic slave trade, and by acquiring an education for themselves and their children; black men during the postwar constructed an alternative version of southern "mastery" – one that rejected the obtrusive authority of white Southerners, one that dispelled notions of their discursive boyhood, and one that sought unequivocal control over their roles as husbands and fathers. In these ways, black men constructed a gender identity amidst the many trials and tribulations of the postwar era.

If private life provided a setting for black manly expression, so too did the public realm offer black men a vital stage for postwar gender performance. Commensurate with their private pursuit of "mastery" over their personal lives, freedmen constructed an identity of manliness

within the purview of their communities – one that was based on the southern concept of manly “honor.”²⁰⁰ According to this ideal, southern manhood rested on one’s communal reputation. By constructing a social status of prominence – via cogent performances of power, prestige, and worth – did southern men seek to garner manly esteem within the eyes of the larger community. This dual process between individual and community, then, was a syncretic construction. Whereas “mastery” involved the internal pursuit for control over self (or dependents, in the case of white Southerners), manly “honor” required both an external projection of manly esteem by the individual *and* social confirmation of that projection by residents of the community. In this way, southern men attained manly “honor” by successfully garnering recognition of their performative displays of power, prestige, and worth within the public arena of social and political life.²⁰¹

However, just as freedmen constructed their own variant of manly “mastery,” so too did black men perform an alternative version of southern “honor.” White southern “honor,” for example, was pursued for individual gain. That is, for most white Southerners, “honor” was a superficial means for self-aggrandizement – a way for men to gain public esteem for themselves by crafting an appearance of individual power in relation to the community. As southern conservative Robert Barnwell Rhett explained in a pamphlet entitled “The Code of Honor” (1878), southern “honor is the sentiment by which a high estimate is placed upon individual rights, social repute and personal self-respect.”²⁰² Thus, it was the ability to obtain public acceptance of one’s manly “appearance” – or what southern historian Kenneth S. Greenberg referred to as the “surface of things” – that mattered most to white southern men.²⁰³ For freedmen, however, appearance and public acclaim were secondary concerns. Rather than seek approbation for the mere appearance of individual greatness, black men performed a version of

southern “honor” that was based on communal uplift – a version of “honorable” manhood that garnered the respect of others by performing manly acts *for* others. And though some black men – particularly political leaders – worried about their public appearances, even those instances of purported vanity were actually based on concerns for the black community. In an era when their intellect, conduct, and capabilities were simultaneously doubted and put on display, prominent black men worried that any hint of a disreputable appearance might sully the reputation of the entire black race.²⁰⁴ In other words, it was the manly pursuit of betterment for the community, rather than the approval of the community for the superficial self, that defined black men’s performances as “honorable” men.²⁰⁵

In the postwar era, churches were prime settings for manly performance. As formative institutions for communal cohesion and uplift, black churches – predominantly Baptist or Methodist in denomination – functioned as highly-visible forums for black men to express their “honorable” manhood. The father of Mississippi freedman F.H. Brown, for instance, constructed an identity of “honorable” manhood by literally constructing a black church from the ground up. “In 1874,” recalled Brown, “my daddy moved up on his own place at Hurricane Creek” and “built a church” there. “He stayed there till 1880,” allowing Brown’s father to maintain an “honorable” reputation as founder of the Hurricane Creek church during his six-year residency.²⁰⁶ For others, it was their participation in church activities that helped them garner manly “honor.” “Fer 65 years I been licensed as a preacher,” boasted South Carolina freedman George Briggs, and fer longer dan dat I been a member of Padgett’s Creek Baptist church.”²⁰⁷ Briggs’s prolonged tenure as a member of the church must have earned him both plaudits and respect from the laity, particularly since his exhortations as a preacher guided and comforted members of the Padgett Creek community during the difficult decades of the late nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries.

Still, regardless of one's length of tenure as a preacher or layman, it was freedmen's ability to freely participate in public church activities – without needing to obtain permission from white authority – that contributed to their manly “honor.” By presiding over church functions with grace, dignity, and solemnity, and in the service of others, did some freedmen garner the respect of community members. Freedman Andrew Baccus must have gained manly “honor” when he presided over the marriage of his cousin Emma Barr and her fiancé in the presence of church members; whereas the pastoring of one anonymous freedman from Rockwood, Tennessee earned him public acclaim as a “fiery preacher.”²⁰⁸ Likewise, the son of former South Carolina slave Harry Green grew to prominence as a preacher in Texas. “Appointed to take care of a large number of the little flocks scattered over the country,” Green, attracted a following “from all directions...never fail[ing] to touch somebody's heart.” And though Green constructed an “honorable” identity through his individual efforts, Green's prominence was acquired through service to the community. “During the whole number of years I was preaching,” recalled Green, “I never took any thought of money or how I would fare in life” since “people that I had never seen or heard of would take me up...and put me in a place of honor.”²⁰⁹

Maryland freedman Phillip Johnson also garnered an “honorable” reputation as a postwar preacher. Just as Green serviced the spiritual needs of black communities throughout Texas, Johnson acquired a prominent reputation amongst members of the Sugar Loaf Mountain community by dutifully answering their prayers. Although filled with self-doubt, Johnson put the spiritual needs of the community above his personal reservations and successfully rescued the Sugar Loaf Mountain church from ruin. According to Johnson:

I preached six years at Sugar Loaf Mountain. The presidin elder he wants me to go there. The man that had left there jus tore that church up. I went up there one Sunday and I didn't see anything that I could do. I think I'm not able for this. I said they needs a more experienced preacher than me. But the presidin elder keeps after me to go there and I says, well, I go for one year. Next thing it was the same thing. I stays on another year and so on for six years. When I left there that church was in pretty good shape.²¹⁰

As Phillip Johnsons' actions demonstrate, a superficial pursuit for individual acclaim did not drive most freedmen's public behavior. Rather, when it came to their public performances, freedmen attained prominence and manly "honor" by committing themselves to the service of others.

Male participants of the postwar church may have constructed an identity of "honorable" manhood, and yet, their roles as church builders, elders, and preachers belied the structural gender biases inherent in church doctrine. In the North, female members had historically participated in church affairs – either as petitioners for abolitionism or as prominent female "exhorters" – however, free black men came to dominate positions of religious authority, thereby augmenting their status as both members of the community and as preachers at the pulpit.²¹¹ In the antebellum South, male slaves – particularly the exceptionally literate – also tended to hold religious sway over the clandestine religious practices of the slave community. Indeed, it was telling that the wife of one slave-owner referred to a literate male preacher on her husband's plantation as the one slave "trusted and respected by every one."²¹² By the time that the southern black church transitioned from a largely "invisible institution" under slavery to an organized institution during the postbellum era, the structures of the black church – both North and South – favored authority in the hands of black men. It was upon this gendered church structure that freedmen performed their version of southern manly "honor."²¹³

The black church was not the only postwar institution that structurally favored

performances of black manly “honor.” When it came to favorable platforms for manly performance, few areas within the public realm – with the exception of the battlefield – outmatched the manly world of politics.²¹⁴ As an exclusive arena for manly expression, the political world constituted the quintessential platform for the performance of black manly “honor.” In particular, political acts such as voting and office holding proved advantageous for freedmen, providing foundations for black men to construct their public identities without requiring permission from white authority. Moreover, political participation afforded freedmen with opportunities to express their concern for others, thereby granting black men with public avenues for communal uplift. By actively participating as voters and officeholders, black men prominently advocated on behalf of the community, expressing communal concerns regarding relief funds for impoverished freedpeople, access to landownership, passage of civil rights legislation, schools for both adults and children, prohibitions against abusive labor practices, and taxation relief for black cotton planters.²¹⁵ Although such exclusively male prerogatives came at the expense of freedwomen’s political power, black men pursued “honorable” manhood for the betterment of the entire community.

Of course, freedom from slavery and freedom to vote were two separate components of black postwar manhood. While the former was guaranteed with the passage of the 13th Amendment (1865), the latter remained a political uncertainty until the formal passage of the 15th Amendment (1870).²¹⁶ Even so, as early as 1865, freedmen did not shy away from publically pursuing their manly right to vote. In May of 1865, for example, North Carolina freedmen – some of whom donned the blue uniform of the Union Army – collectively petitioned President Johnson to extend suffrage rights to black men. “Since we have become Freemen, we begin to feel that *we are men*,” wrote the black petitioners, “and are anxious to show our countrymen that

we can and will fit ourselves for the creditable discharge of the duties of citizenship. *We want the privilege of voting.*”²¹⁷ Later that year, 52 male delegates met at a Colored People’s Convention in Charleston, South Carolina to demand their rights as men – including, what they referred to as, “the inestimable right of voting.” “Now that we are freemen,” declared the delegates, “now that we have been lifted up by the providence of God to *manhood*, we have resolved to come forward, and, *like MEN*, speak and act for ourselves.... We ask for no special privileges or favors... We simply ask that we shall be recognized *as men*.”²¹⁸ And in 1867, in front of a congregation of 7,000 freedpeople, former slave James Sims “impressed everyone” by forcefully proclaiming black men’s “honorable” right to suffrage. “Colored men are not fools,” declared Sims. “They knew enough to fight right and they will vote *with honor*.”²¹⁹ Thus with both voice and pen, and without permission from white authority, freedmen exercised their manly “honor” by making political assertions within public venues.

As freedmen stepped off “the auction-block to the ballot-box,” black men parlayed their right to vote into performative demonstrations of their manliness.²²⁰ Whether they casted votes for constitutional convention delegates on the state level or for congressmen or the presidency on the federal level, freedmen demonstrated that they belonged to the “honorable” club of manly voters. In 1867 – the year Congress overrode the failed policies of Andrew Johnson’s Presidential Reconstruction and called for new state constitutional conventions under the aegis of Congressional Reconstruction – black male voters turned out in droves for the election of state delegates to their respective constitutional conventions. In total, an estimated seven hundred thousand black men throughout the South registered to vote, with seventy percent of black men casting their votes in Georgia, and ninety percent of black men turning out in Virginia.²²¹ In fact, throughout the south, one-fourth of all state delegate seats were held by black men; and in South

Carolina – a state that housed a majority of black registered voters – freedmen elected a majority of 76 black delegates to their constitutional convention in relation to a minority of 48 white delegates.²²²

Likewise in the presidential election of 1868 between Republican Ulysses S. Grant and Democrat Horatio Seymour, freedmen such as former Georgia slave Boston Blackwell enthusiastically voted the Republican ticket and publically urged others to do the same. Indeed, in an era predating the “Australian” secret ballot, when Americans displayed their voting preferences by dropping colored cards into a public ballot box, freedmen’s actions on election day were all-the-more public and unequivocally conspicuous. “I voted for Genral Grant,” proclaimed Blackwell. “All you had to do was tell who you was vote for and they give you a colored ticket. All the men up [candidates] had different colored tickets. Iffen you’re voting for Grant, you get his color.”²²³ With such public and prolific turnouts, black men not only asserted their political beliefs without the consent of white Southerners, they also performatively claimed their manly “honor” by exercising their independent beliefs at the ballot box.

Despite such earnestness at the ballot box, black political expression during the Reconstruction Era was not an easy performance. Although some freedmen, such as former Alabama slave Bob Benford, “never had no trouble” voting “for the man we wanted,” many freedmen faced verbal, physical, and sometimes fatal assaults from recalcitrant white Southerners.²²⁴ Civil War veteran George Roper, for instance, was accosted by a white Southerner who took exception to Roper’s political proclamations. Leading up to the 1868 presidential election, Roper entered the local courthouse yard and publically implored his fellow freedmen to vote the Republican ticket. “You all come here today to hear the truth, to find out who is the best man to vote for,” declared Roper. “Remember *you are your own men*, and each

of you say “*I am my own man now.*” With dozens of white men hearing Roper’s calls for black manly resolve, as well as Roper’s public “hurrah[s] for Grant and Colfax,” one white Southerner approached Roper and shot him “clean around.”²²⁵

White vigilante groups further imperiled politically-active freedmen. Terrorist groups such as the Knights of the White Camelia, the White League, the Red Shirts, and the Ku Klux Klan sought to dispossess freedmen of their manly “honor” by employing tactics of hooded violence. Throughout the South, white vigilantes targeted freedmen in various political settings. In Camilla, Georgia, for example, a mob of 400 armed white Southerners attacked a freedmen’s election parade, while in Louisiana, white gangs broke up black Republican meetings, destroyed a Republican press in St. Landry Parish, and accosted freedmen while at work on nearby plantations.²²⁶ As South Carolina freedwoman Nellie Boyd recalled, the “Ku Klux” used to ride out with “white clothes and white caps,” making out as if “dey was ghost from de cemetery.” According to Boyd, “I ’member my husband voted once or twice. He was Republican; but [the Ku Klux Klan] soon put a stop to dat.”²²⁷ And though federal legislation severely curtailed Klan violence via the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, black men’s political performances were never completely immune to white southern retribution.²²⁸ Even so, many freedmen defied white tactics of intimidation and bravely expressed their political convictions on behalf of the black community.

Consider the voting experience of Florida freedman Robert Meacham. As Meacham and a hundred other freedmen made their way to the ballot box situated in the “window-sill” of the local courthouse, a white Southerner named William C. Bird reportedly “stamped and cursed,” declaring that “no damned nigger shall vote here.” “There are three other polls your colored people can vote at,” proclaimed Bird. “This is our poll. It belongs to the white people.” In

response, Meacham retorted:

“Colonel, I do not think there is any one poll set aside for the white people or the black people. They are set aside for the citizens of the county.” I pushed on until I got close to him when he called me “a damned son of a bitch.” I said, “Colonel, I have not insulted you. Now you take that back.” He said, “I will die first.” I said, “Colonel, you will have to take it back,” just that way.

After Meacham “looked him right in the face” and demanded a public retraction, Bird drew his pistol. Meacham stood his ground. And like a Southern duel between two “honorable” men, the two Florida men exchanged verbal insults and threats of violence until the arrival of “a great many” armed black men prompted Bird to seek sanctuary in a nearby store. Even so, Meacham’s “honor” had not been restored. With Meacham still demanding a public retraction, Bird finally sent word from his ensnared position that he had neither “seen” Meacham that day, nor had he “insulted” him. With Meacham accepting Bird’s halfhearted retraction, “the thing was quieted down...the polls were opened and,” according to Meacham, “they went on voting again.”²²⁹

If the political “duel” between Bird and Meacham attests to black “honorable” manhood in the postbellum era, so too did the public words of former slaves George Teamoh and George Houston speak to freedmen’s manly “honor” as official political officeholders. As two of an estimated two thousand freedmen who held political office during Reconstruction – ranging from judgeships and justices of the peace to state congressmen and superintendents of public education – Teamoh and Houston represented a conspicuous group of black men who performed their postwar roles of prominence on behalf of the interests of the black community.²³⁰ As a member of the Virginia state senate, for example, George Teamoh publically rallied against historical abuses of the slave era that continued to be practiced during the postwar. In a poignant political speech given to the Virginia senate in 1871, Teamoh decried the use of the whipping

post as an instrument of “evil” invented to punish the poor. “Judging from the past, whipping settles nothing,” declared the former slave-turned-state-senator. Instead, “make a law that will meet the demands of justice without maiming the body, crippling the intellect, brutalizing the man.”²³¹ Likewise, former slave and member of the Alabama legislature George Houston challenged white members of the community for their racial pomposity and violent tactics. During a “public meeting... we had some speeches and I told them I was opposed to colored men being shot down like dogs when I knew that the officers of the county could stop it,” explained Houston. “*I told the sheriff that to his face.* If they took exception to me on that account that is all I can tell for I was raised there and they never could have put a scratch of a pen against me before.”²³² Thus, instead of seeking permission from white authority, some former slaves “honorably” challenged white Southerner authority in the postbellum era. Commensurate with their own authority as political officeholders, black men like Teamoh and Houston engaged in “honorable” performances of manhood by confronting, disputing, and castigating white men for their racist beliefs and behavior.

Symbolically, black officeholders brought “honor” upon themselves as well as the black race. Whether they originated from the North or South, from humble beginnings or privileged families, for the millions of freedpeople throughout the south, black officeholders were visible symbols of communal pride and “honor.” From the five black men from the North who registered as Freedmen’s Bureau agents in South Carolina in 1867 to Martin Delany – the highest ranking black officer in the entire Freedmen’s Bureau organization – black men symbolized manly authority in the eyes of the community.²³³ Likewise, prominent black political figures such as former fugitive slave Oscar Dunn – a Union veteran who held the “honorable” position of Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana in 1868 – were palpable symbols of

black communal pride and progress.²³⁴ As former Georgia slave Boston Blackwell exclaimed: “Gol’er mighty. They was colored men in office, plenty. Colored legislatures, and colored circuit clerks, and colored county clerks. They sure was some big officers colored in them times... This here used to be a good county.”²³⁵

The fifteen black members of the United States Congress may have been the most prominent symbols of postwar manliness. As members of the highest legislative body in the land, the thirteen black members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the two black members of the U.S. Senate - Mississippi Senators Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce - were examples of “honorable” manliness for black men and women throughout the nation. Eight of the fifteen black congressmen, in particular, offered freedpeople irrefutable evidence of racial progress and black manly “honor,” since Mississippi Senator Blanche K. Bruce, South Carolina representatives Robert C. De Large, Joseph H. Rainey, and Robert Smalls, along with Mississippi representative John R. Lynch, Georgia representative Jefferson F. Long, Alabama representative Benjamin S. Turner, and Florida representative Josiah T. Walls were all former slaves.²³⁶ But when it came to symbolic power, it was the famous lithograph of the very first group of black congressmen by the printmakers Nathaniel Currier and James Merritt Ives that publically commemorated black “honorable” manhood for all to see. Entitled “The First Colored Senator and Representatives in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States (1872),” Currier and Ives depicted the seven black congressmen - including Senator Revels, South Carolina representative Robert B. Elliott, and representatives De Large, Rainey, Long, Turner, and Walls - as dignified gentlemen; successfully capturing their air of confidence, august demeanors, as well as their stately clothing consisting of gold stopwatches, frock coats, and ties.²³⁷ It was this venerable image of black officeholders that symbolized black “honorable” manhood at its finest

– a symbol of communal pride that, according to historian Dorothy Sterling, “once hung in black people’s parlors across the land.”²³⁸

However, it was more than a popular lithograph that granted black congressmen public prominence. Not only did black congressmen – by their very existence – prove symbolically meaningful, their congressional words and actions on behalf of the black community were powerful spectacles of manly “honor.” By verbally sparring with white congressmen on the highest legislative floors of government, black men forcefully and eloquently challenged the racial pretensions of white authority, thereby demonstrating that the black race was politically self-assured, intellectually adroit, and capable of fully participating in the great experiment of American self-government. Thus, it was their manly image as officeholders, combined with their performative advocacy for the black race, which allowed black congressmen to claim “honorable” manhood.

Consider the rhetorical duel between black South Carolina congressman Richard Cain, and his white congressional colleague from North Carolina, William McKendree Robbins. When Robbins expressed his desire to colonize the black race upon the continent of Africa or the islands of the West Indies, Cain responded with rhetorical skill and persuasive wit. “The gentleman wishes that we go to Africa or to the West Indies or somewhere else,” exclaimed Cain. “I want to enunciate this doctrine upon this floor. We are not going away. We are going to stay here.” Upon this adamant declaration, Cain continued:

We propose to stay here and work out the problem. We believe that God Almighty has made of one blood all the nations upon the face of the earth. We believe we are made just like white men are....Look. I stretch out my arms. See; I have two of them, as you have. Look at our ears; I have two of them. I have two eyes, two nostrils one mouth, two feet. I stand erect like you. I am clothed with humanity like you. I think, I reason, I talk, I express my views as you do. Is there any difference between us? *Not so far as our manhood is concerned, unless*

it be in this: that our opinions differ and mine are a little higher up than yours.
(Laughter)²³⁹

Or consider the verbal defense of his race by black South Carolina congressman Robert B. Elliot. As a member of the 43rd Congress, Elliot shared the House chamber with Alexander H. Stephens – the congressman from Georgia who had, prior to his imprisonment in Boston, held the position of Vice Presidency of the Confederate States of America. It was Stephens who had famously reduced the entire Confederacy to one racial truth. Unlike the United States, stated Stephenson, “our new [Confederate] government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea, its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man.”²⁴⁰ More than a decade later, in a congressional debate between Elliot and Stephens, Elliot took command of the House floor and excoriated the elder white statesman with a history of past events. “Sir, it is scarcely twelve years since [Stephens] shocked the civilized world by announcing the birth of a government which rested on slavery as its cornerstone. The progress of events has swept away that pseudo-government...and *the race whom he then ruthlessly spurned are here to meet him in debate*...Sir, the gentleman from Georgia has learned much since 1861, but he is still a laggard...Let him accept, in its fullness and beneficence, the great doctrine that American citizenship carries with it every civil and political right *which manhood can offer*.”²⁴¹

The verbal “duel” between Robert Elliott and Alexander Stephens was extraordinary. Whereas a decade earlier, enslaved black men were forbidden from expressing themselves as “honorable” men, by the 1870s, black men like Robert Elliot entered the public realm dressed in gentlemen’s garb, holding the same dignified political offices as other white men, and engaging in contentious debate with fellow white officeholders in defense of the black community. The juxtaposition could not have been more stark. From an era of enslavement that constrained black

manhood in both private and public settings; to an era of freedom that witnessed black political performance on the highest stages of the nation's capitol, the forceful defense of the black race and castigation of the former Confederate Vice President by Congressman Robert Elliot's was an astonishing accomplishment – one that signified black “honorable” manhood in its highest form.

If the Elliot-Stephens “duel” was the pinnacle of postwar black manhood, the apotheosis was an ephemeral one. While the failure of Andrew Johnson's Presidential Reconstruction opened the door for racial progress under Congressional Reconstruction, the vigor of southern conservatism perpetually threatened the advancements of African Americans. Congressional legislation offers a case in point. During the crucial era of Congressional Reconstruction (circa 1866-1877), the Republican-controlled congress passed a series of groundbreaking laws that sought to ensure a secure footing for black Americans. Beginning with the Reconstruction Act of 1867, and continuing with the passage of the 14th Amendment (1868), the 15th Amendment (1870), and the Civil Rights Act of 1875; Congress collectively established black manhood suffrage, equal protection under the law, and equal access to public accommodations – in effect, granting black men the opportunity to express their manliness, as well as providing black men with vital avenues for legal redress.²⁴² However, in a series of Supreme Court decisions – including the majority opinions rendered in the *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873), *U.S. v. Cruikshank* (1876), and the *Civil Rights Cases* (1883) – Supreme Court Justices vitiated the substance of Reconstruction legislation. More concerned with upholding the concept of federalism – the separation of power between federal and state governments – than protecting the basic rights of its citizens, justices of the Supreme Court limited the jurisdiction of the federal government, declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, and only guaranteed African Americans their federal rights – that is “access to ports and navigable waterways, the ability to run for

federal office, travel to the seat of government, and [protection] on the high seas and abroad.”²⁴³ Consequently, the judicial activism of the High Court, in effect, repudiated the legal gains of African Americans, once again leaving freedpeople subject to the discretion of southern local authorities.

Moreover, difficult election cycles splintered the national resolve of the Republican Party. As the Republican Party struggled to retain political power in both Northern and Southern elections, the coalition between fiscally-moderate Republicans and Republican proponents of racial equality waned.²⁴⁴ And thus, so too did the Republican Party’s national commitment to racial equality.²⁴⁵ By the mid 1870s, pressing concerns over political corruption, reform, currency, and debt grabbed the attention of the electorate while persistent racial strife in the South tried the political stamina of northern Republicans. Had racial beliefs of white superiority been buried in the same coffin as the moribund Confederacy, the fragility of the national Republican Party may not have been politically problematic. However, entrenched beliefs of white male superiority remained a central element of white southern culture, surviving both military defeat and Congressional Reconstruction. In fact, performances of white manly “mastery” and “honor” during the postwar continued to include notions of racial dominance over black inferiors. “Wherever I go,” reported former Union general and Missouri senator Carl Schurz, “– the street, the shop, the house, the hotel, or the steamboat – I hear the [white southern] people talk in such a way as to indicate that they are yet unable to conceive of the Negro as possessing any rights at all. *Men who are honorable* in their dealings with their white neighbors, will cheat a Negro without feeling a single twinge of their *honor*.”²⁴⁶ In this way, white superiority continued to inform visions of the future, and though calls for the resurrection of the defunct Confederacy remained little more than fanciful dreams, white Southerners sought

to recreate conditions that degraded freedmen and women.

By 1877, Reconstruction perished in the form of a contested presidential election. With neither Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes nor Democratic candidate Samuel J. Tilden garnering the 185 Electoral College votes necessary to claim the presidency, an informal agreement was made to resolve the contest. Infamously known as the “Bargain of 1877,” Tilden capitulated the White House to Hayes, and in turn, Hayes unofficially abdicated federal authority over Southern racial affairs.²⁴⁷ With Republican losses in Florida and Louisiana in the same election year, the return of Democratic political authority throughout the South – referred to by Democrats as “Redemption” – was complete.²⁴⁸ And though *de jure* segregation and disfranchisement – or Jim Crow, as it became known – did not appear in official legislation until the turn of the century, incipient forms of *de facto* Jim Crow were already apparent.²⁴⁹

For freedpeople, the consequences of white “Redemption” were more than a chimera. In the absence of federal support, the rights of African Americans were subject to local authorities who were less than enthusiastic about supporting racial equality. With the reinstatement of white southern power, hunting and fishing licenses were revoked. Black property was seized. Whipping was reinstated. Poll taxes, along with voter residency requirements and literacy tests were established. Black counties were gerrymandered. Funding for education was curtailed. A convict-lease system re-enslaved black convicts. And racial violence ruled the land.²⁵⁰ While not technically slaves, by the end of the 1870s, African Americans were neither free nor full-fledged citizens. As Louisiana freedman Henry Adams bemoaned, “the whole South – every state in the South had got into the hands of the very men that held us as slaves.”²⁵¹

For black males, the construction of manliness based on “mastery” and “honor” was, once again, severely constrained. As white supremacists usurped black political power via

intimidation, violence, and voter fraud, black men had little recourse when their manly performances of “mastery” and “honor” came under attack. For example, when one black office seeker took to the stump to garner political support, a “mob” of white men surrounded his residence, and threw “a ball of fire into the house and burned his wife and children... The next day,” according to freedman Waters Brooks, the black office seeker sought to redress the wrong, however, without the presence of federal authority, he was advised that “he couldn’t do anything about it.”²⁵² In other words, with the death of Reconstruction and the birth of an incipient Jim Crow, no legal recourse was available to restrict, parry, or rectify racial wrongs. And once again, black manly “mastery” and “honor” were performed at the peril of the black performer.

“I tell you it sure is tough now,” explained Georgia freedman Boston Blackwell. “I think it’s wrong – exactly wrong that we can’t vote now. The Jim Crow law, it put us out.”²⁵³ Preacher Robert Barr agreed. “White folks got all the laws and regulations in their hands.” Only if you “surrender under em and go along... you are all right.”²⁵⁴ While vestiges of black “mastery” remained – such as the free selection of spouses, parental claims to one’s children, and contributions to one’s family – such performances were contingent upon the resurgent power of local white authorities who, if inclined, could potentially interfere with black men’s private lives without repercussion. And in terms of black manly “honor,” doors to the public theaters of education and politics were racially monitored, in effect, restricting black men from garnering public prominence on behalf of the black community.²⁵⁵ Bereft of the ballot box and barred from holding public office, black men were, once again, subject to the discretion of white southern authority. As black abolitionist and educator Peter Clark explained, prejudice “hampers me in every relation of life, in business, in politics, in religion, as a father or as a husband.”²⁵⁶

For freedman Robert Smalls of South Carolina, the trajectory of his life mirrored the

historical conditions of black manhood. As an enslaved black man, Smalls performed his gender under the authority of his master, relegating him to the status of dependent boyhood. Although not completely emasculated, Smalls performed his manliness contingently – that is, by obtaining permission from his master. However, the raucous chaos of Civil Warfare afforded Smalls his *First Shot at Manliness*, which he claimed by steering an armed steamship into Union hands. And yet, his heroic deeds did not leave him unscathed. As a soldier for the Union cause, Smalls sustained lingering injuries to his eyes. And yet, his *Violent Drama of Bodily Trauma* did not leave him prostrate, allowing Smalls to successfully participate in the postwar economy with the help of family, friends, and neighbors. Such a collective effort was a testament to his cooperative efforts as a slave, as well as a strategic means of dealing with a challenging postwar economy. Indeed, Smalls understood that it took *More Than a Single Man* to survive the vicissitudes of the turbulent postwar market.

Moreover, both privately and publically, Robert Smalls constructed a manly postwar identity based on the southern gender ideals of manly “mastery” and “honor.” As “master” of his own private life, Smalls obtained an education for himself and his children. For nine consecutive months after the war, Smalls and his private tutor, Miss Rossa Cooley of Pennsylvania, dedicated three hours of every weekday morning to his education. And for his children – Elizabeth, Sarah, and William – Smalls sent them to the best schools available, including a local Freedmen’s Bureau school in Beaufort, a school on St. Helena Island instructed by the famous teacher Charlotte Forten, and even a classical school for women in West Newton, Massachusetts.²⁵⁷ So too did Robert Smalls gain manly “honor” as a prominent political officeholder. As a state congressman and senator in South Carolina, and later as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Smalls advocated on behalf of the freedpeople of South Carolina.

As a prominent man within the town of Beaufort and beyond, Smalls engaged in fundraising ventures to address the costs of clothing and educational materials for freedpeople, supported legislation for state-supported compulsory education, and called for the enforcement of the Homestead Act to ensure freedpeople greater access to landownership.²⁵⁸ With postwar performances of manly “mastery” and “honor,” Robert Smalls successfully constructed a gender identity *Without Permission* from white authority.

As white supremacy and judicial activism undercut the policies of Reconstruction, so too were the manly performances of Robert Smalls undermined. In 1877 – the same year that signified the death of Reconstruction – Robert Smalls was arrested at his home in the presence of his mother Lydia, his wife Hannah, his surviving children, and supportive members of the black community. Accused, indicted, and convicted of accepting a \$5,000 bribe four years earlier as a state senator, Smalls was sentenced to “three years with hard labor, in the state penitentiary” – a punishment that coincided with the prosecutions and forced resignations of fellow black South Carolina officeholders justice Jonathan J. Wright and state treasurer Francis L. Cardoza.²⁵⁹ Although the case against Smalls was less than convincing (the evidence proffered by his single accuser was spurious and contradictory), and though Smalls and Cordoza were later pardoned by Governor Simpson of South Carolina, the damage had been done. His alleged criminal activity “hung like the sword of Damocles” over his manly performances, and in the next election cycle of 1878, Robert Smalls lost his congressional seat in the United States House of Representatives.²⁶⁰

“The shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon the Negro people,” lamented W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) – a disappointment all the more somber in light of the hopeful, albeit truncated era, when black men performed their manliness as soldiers, laborers,

husbands, fathers, voters, and officeholders.²⁶¹ Had the shackles of Jim Crow immediately followed the chains of enslavement, the coercive limits that impinged upon black manhood would have flowed like one continuous current in a single river of constraint. However, this was not the case. A moment of promise and hope followed enslavement, allowing black men to construct a manhood that would only later be denied. “Atter de war,” recalled South Carolina freedwoman Nellie Boyd, “de niggers started up hill; den went back.”²⁶² And it was this curtailed climb that proved the most disheartening. As W.E.B. Du Bois eulogized in his pioneering work, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935): “The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery.”²⁶³ Indeed, freedmen performed their manhood without permission, but only for a “brief moment in the sun.”²⁶⁴

Notes

Chapter 1: Am I Not a Man?: An Introduction to the Study of Black Manliness

¹ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 132.

² Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 456.

³ Lewis Clarke, *Leaves from a Slave's Journal of Life*, retold by Lydia Maria Francis Child in *The Anti-Slavery Standard*, 20 and 27 October 1842, 78-79, 83.

⁴ This study should not be misconstrued as a study of the black race. Whereas previous scholars have assumed that “black” and “man” are synonymous – or in the parlance of masculinity studies a male “synecdoche” for the entire race – I seek to explicitly avoid such conflation. My proposed study consciously analyzes black men as gendered subjects while never seeking to “normalize” black men nor elide black women. By solely analyzing black manliness, my purpose is to illumine black manhood with more specificity rather than detract from the vital work of black women’s studies.

⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 453. According to Geertz, “one can start anywhere in a culture’s repertoire of forms and end up anywhere else. One can stay, as I have here, within a single, more or less bounded form, and circle steadily within it. One can move between forms in search of broader unities or informing contrasts. One can even compare forms from different cultures to define their character in reciprocal relief.”

⁶ For a detailed history of this modern passionate-primitive masculinity, see Rotundo, 5-6, 222-283; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 10-23; Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class And the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 152, 178; Kenneth B. Kidd, *Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 5, 92-93, 105-109.

⁷ This example derives from the Victorian culture of the Northeast region of the United States. As I explain in subsequent chapters, manhood in the South consisted of different gender beliefs and practices.

⁸ Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24-25.

⁹ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1 (italics mine).

¹⁰ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1. Butler also defines performance as a “stylized repetition of acts” which allows for the construction and reconstruction of gender identities. This “repetition” offers the possibility for historical change since repetitive performances replicate the same gendered outcome, whereas non-repetitive performances – either by force or agency – results in new forms of gender. See Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 10.

¹¹ The WPA interviews are published in George P. Rawick (ed.), *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972); George P. Rawick, Jan Hillegas, and Ken Lawrence, ed., *The American Slave*, Supplement Series 1, 12 vols. (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press 1977);

George Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement Series 2, 10 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); and Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976); and John Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).

Since only 15/300 Virginia interviews were received by the Library of Congress, Charles L. Perdue sought them out in *Weevils in the Wheat*. Although Perdue was unsuccessful in finding 80 of them, he managed to locate 159 Virginia interviews that escaped Rawick's *The American Slave*. According to reviewer F.N. Boney, "the story is also harsher in Virginia because, unlike the other state projects, the Virginia operation employed mainly black interviewers. Consequently the elderly interviewees were more candid about the harshness of slavery." See F.N. Boney, "Reviews: [Untitled], *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 85, No.2 (April, 1977), 211-212.

Orland Kay Armstrong published his interviews in *Old Massa's People: The Old Slaves Tell Their Story* (Indianapolis, 1931). The Fisk interviews are published in two volumes, Ophelia Settle Egypt, J. Masuoka, and Charles S. Johnson, *Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville, 1945), and the Fisk University Social Science Institute, *God Struck Me Dead: Religion Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Ex-Slaves* (Nashville, 1945); and re-published as volumes 18 and 19, respectively, in Rawick's *The American Slave*.

The AFIC interviews are published in multiple works, including Blassingame, *ibid.*, James McKaye, *The Mastership and Its Fruits* (New York, 1864), Robert Dale Owen, *The Wrong of Slavery, the Right of Emancipation* (Philadelphia, 1864), and S.G. Howe, *The Refugees from Slavery in Canada West Report to the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printers, 1864).

Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer, eds., *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

The *Freedmen and Southern Society Project* includes many volumes of Freeman Bureau records. I incorporate evidence from Series 3, volume 1, *Land and Labor, 1865*, ed. Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland (University of North Carolina Press, 2008) and Series 3, volume 2, *Land and Labor, 1866–1867*, ed. René Hayden, Anthony E. Kaye, Kate Masur, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, Leslie S. Rowland, and Stephen A. West (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doublday & Company, Inc., 1976).

Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹² David W. Blight, *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2007), 12.

¹³ See also Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (New York, Penguin, 1999). Ignatius Sancho, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African*, Joseph Jekyll, ed. (London: No. 20 Charles Street, Westminster, 1802).

¹⁴ Blight, *A Slave No More*, 13.

¹⁵ W.E.B. Du Bois explicitly refers to manhood when criticizing Booker T. Washington, stating that Washington "overlooked certain elements of true manhood," and that "manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses." See Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 44, 50.

¹⁶ Although the Feminist movement gave rise to the gender concept, and subsequently masculinity studies, the relationship between Feminism and Masculinity has not been entirely harmonious. As English and gender professor Judith Kegan Gardiner has reminded us, radical feminists posited “all men” as the oppressors. See Judith Kegan Gardiner, introduction, *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 3.

¹⁷ Whereas Smith-Rosenberg argued that white women lived in a completely independent world from white men, Cott claimed the existence of a female sphere “complementary” to white men.

My historiographical description of this period is cursory at best. For a closer look at white women’s historiography of the 1960s and 1970s see the updated preface to the second edition of Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), xi-xxviii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹ Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 16-17.

²⁰ For a detailed history of the transition from self-made manhood to passionate-primitive masculinity, see Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 222-283. Also see Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 117-155.

²¹ Rotundo, 5-6. Historian Kenneth B. Kidd concurs that by the turn-of-the-century, the uncivilized “feral boy” symbolized an aggressive ideal of the American male self; exemplified by fictional works such as Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Books* (1894-1895), Edgar R. Burroughs’s *Tarzan* series (1912-1913), and Edward Stratemeyer’s series *Bomba the Jungle Boy* (1924-1938). See Kenneth B. Kidd, *Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale* (2004).

²² In *American Manhood*’s appendix, Rotundo states that he “chose” the boundaries of his study since northern white manliness in the nineteenth century was the dominant ideal.²² According to Rotundo: “I have limited the scope of this book by race. Given the facts of racism, slavery, and the distribution of the nonwhite population, only a handful of middle-class men in the nineteenth-century North were anything but white. This small number of black men came to their middle-class status by a route so painfully different from that of whites that they deserve separate treatment and should not be thrown into the mix of white, middle-class Yankees who populate this book.” Rotundo’s conscious decision to exclude nonwhite men from his book illustrates the problematic consequences of analyzing “dominant” ideals. If a particular manhood is rendered a “subculture,” it fails to fall within the boundaries of the study. See Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 296-297.

²³ *Ibid.*, 43. Bederman explains: “I will not consider whether any of these four succeeded in transforming other Americans’ beliefs about gender but will instead consider the strategies they used in their efforts to remake manhood. These four figures show some of the different discursive positions it was possible to take in relation to race, manhood, and civilization. I am not suggesting that they are in any way representative.” See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 43

²⁴ Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 188.

²⁵ Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 64.

²⁶ Ibid., 75.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The masculinity studies of the 1990s coincided with the “masculinist” men’s movement – a reactionary movement to feminist gains that sought to victimize white males’ loss of power and status. See Judith Kegan Gardiner, introduction, *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 4-7..

³¹ Friend’s analysis is at odds with Kenneth Stampp’s belief that “Southern masters more or less conformed to” northern white middle-class self-made manhood. Stampp extends self-made manhood to male and female slave religious leaders as well. See Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 334-336

³² Craig Thompson Friend, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives On Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), xx.

³³ Ibid., xix.

³⁴ Although many previous works included black manhood, such as Willard B. Gatewood’s *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (1990), and Janette Thomas Greenwood’s *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White ‘Better Classes’ in Charlotte, 1850-1910* (1994), Martin Summers offered the first book solely dedicated to black manhood.

³⁵ Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*, 14.

³⁶ Ibid., 22.

³⁷ Ibid., 14.

³⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁹ Although I touch upon these distinctions tangentially, more scholarship is needed. In respect to urban and rural differences, see Claudia Dale Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820-1860: A Quantitative history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Howard Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 106. Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 47; and Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 61. According to historian Jacqueline Jones, in 1870, “the vast majority (91 percent) lived in rural areas.” See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1986).61

⁴⁰ For example, see Rawick, *American Slave*, v.14, part 1, 320. Based on this single piece of evidence, there is an argument to be made that black men born after slavery did not adopt a cooperative-centered manhood as I argue in chapter 4. Still, there is little extant evidence to suggest that cooperative manhood held less sway over younger freedmen.

⁴¹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 29.

Chapter 2: Their First Shot at Manliness: *Black Men and Firearms During the Civil War*

¹ Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1998), 114.

² Okon Edet Uya, *From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls 1839-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 11-17. Andrew Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free: Robert Smalls of South Carolina and His Families* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 51-61.

³ Uya, *From Slavery to Public Service*, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 (italics mine).

⁶ Uya notes that as a slave, Robert Smalls piloted the *Planter*, but could only hold the designation “wheelman” because of his blackness. See Uya, *From Slavery to Public Service*, 12. In fact, due to the navy’s literacy requirements, Smalls was inducted into the United States Army, given the rank of second lieutenant, and assigned to the 33rd United States Colored Troops. See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 61.

⁷ Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 218 (italics not mine).

⁸ James M. McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (1965; reprint, New York: Vintage, 2003), 248-249.

⁹ For statistics on black enlistment, see Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, vii, 187, 289. Jordan cites 18,000 black sailors in the Union Navy with 30,000 blacks “employed” by 1864. Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 211. Noah Andre Trudeau cites black army enlistment at 178,975. See Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 466. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 8. Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 115. Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 49.

The motivations of thousands of black men cannot be reduced to a single explanation. Historian David Blight provides a litany of motivations including independence, wages, dignity, family security, freedom; “release from white people’s expectations...last names, recognition of their own humanity, and control of their children. They wanted labor and livestock...; they wanted to live by a clock they themselves could set.” See David W. Blight, *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2007), 5. While factors such as financial gain, patriotism, freedom, and adventure are reasonable explanations for black enlistment, so too is opportunity. Black men from border-states such as Missouri and Kentucky constituted a disproportionate number of black enlistments relative to their own populations, as well as to the population of black men in the deep South. “Although Alabama and Georgia together contained 20 percent of all black men aged eighteen to forty-five,” explains historian Ira Berlin, “only 5 percent of all black troops enlisted from those states.” See Ira Berlin, Joseph Patrick Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom’s Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 21. Revenge was also a motivating factor. According to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, “The spot was pointed out to me where two of our leading men had seen their brothers hanged by Lynch law; many of them had private wrongs to avenge.” See Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 67.

It is reasonable to posit the Civil War as a gendered arena of manliness for black *and* white men. See W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1935), 29; and Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3-18.

¹⁰ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 26. Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

¹¹ Singer went on to explain: "Suppose the rebel army was as far North as the Union Army is South; what would be the result? I will tell you. Our homes would have been burned to the ground, and our aged and defenseless parents barbarously treated." See Sergeant Charles W. Singer, 107th USCI, 1864, letter 91, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 213-214.

¹² Joan Waugh, "'It Was a Sacrifice We Owed': The Shaw Family and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment," in Martin H. Blatt, Thomas J. Brown, and Donald Yacovone, eds., *Hope & Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 52-78.

¹³ Trudeau, 72. Heather Andrea Williams, "'Commenced to Think Like a Man': Literacy and Manhood in African American Civil War Regiments" in Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004), 209.

¹⁴ As Chaplain Garland H. White of the 28th USCI declared: "My hope is that I may never see Ohio again less than a man." See Garland H. White, Chaplain, 28th USCI, 1865, letter 86, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 201.

¹⁵ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 269.

¹⁶ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 81. See also, Keith P. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: The Camp Life of Black Soldiers during the Civil War* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2002), 194.

¹⁷ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁰ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 164.

²¹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 85.

²² Richard M. Reid, *Freedom For Themselves: North Carolina's Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 328.

²³ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 164. See also George Washington Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, Preceded by a Review of the Military Services of Negroes in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1887), 89; and Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 85.

²⁴ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 17-18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. Philip Morgan also recognizes “an act of 1643 that included black, but not white, servant women as tithables” as possibly the first racial statute – a finding that historian Kathleen M. Brown corroborates. See Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 116-128.

²⁶ Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 182.

²⁷ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 9.

²⁸ Harvey Wish, “American Slave Insurrections Before 1861,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.22, No.3 (Jul., 1937), 307-308.

²⁹ Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 153, 177-179.

³⁰ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 9.

³¹ Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 181.

³² *Ibid.*, 183.

³³ *Ibid.*, 221. In 1806, Virginia amended the law to allow free blacks to carry firearms upon receiving a license from the court or county. Failure to comply resulted in the loss of the weapon and thirty-nine lashes. See Charles H. Wesley, “The Employment of Negroes as Soldiers in the Confederate Army,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (July, 1919), 240. South Carolina officially prohibited slaves from gun ownership and militia service by the 1720s. See John K. Thornton, “African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion,” in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine L. Jenkins, *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men’s History and Masculinity, Vol. 1: “Manhood Rights”: The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 120.

Chesapeake colonies were not the only ones to proscribe black gun ownership. In 1656, Massachusetts prohibited free blacks from participating in the militia: “Henceforth, no negroes or Indians...shall be armed or permitted to trayne.” Williams, *A History of Negro Troops*, 26.

³⁴ For an understanding of the “rank” system, see Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston, *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

³⁵ Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 177-179.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Historian Chandra Manning makes a similar point. “The right to handle firearms freely...distinguished an individual as a white man.” Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 37.

³⁹ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 139, 152.

⁴⁰ Morgan, 152, 139. George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972) v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 30. Eugene Genovese mentions that at least one or two slaves per plantation had a gun for hunting purposes – a claim that seems reasonable, but goes unsubstantiated. See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 488. By the 1860s, black men must have had some skillset with firearms. In 1862, Massachusetts abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson recorded observations of his black regiment: “It needs but a few days to show the absurdity of doubting the equal military availability of these people, as compared with whites. There is quite...as much courage, I doubt not, [and] as much previous knowledge of the gun.” See James M. McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 166.

⁴¹ Jeff Forret, “‘He was no man attall’? Slave Men, Honor, Violence, and Masculinity in the Antebellum South,” in Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster, *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature 1820-1945* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2011), 25.

⁴² Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 139, 152.

⁴³ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 71. Joseph T. Wilson, *The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1775-1812, 1861-’65* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1882), 60-61.

⁴⁴ Wilson, *The Black Phalanx*, 22. Williams, *A History of the Negro*, 35.

⁴⁵ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 592. Harvey Wish, “American Slave Insurrections Before 1861,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.22, No.3 (Jul., 1937), 307-308. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 75.

⁴⁶ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 593.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 108. Brown *The Negro in the American Rebellion*, 8.

⁴⁸ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 156. Brown, *The Negro in the American Rebellion*, 13.

⁴⁹ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 205-206. John Brown’s raid consisted of five black men including two former slaves. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 1. Although southern states, including Virginia, recruited black men into the Confederate Army, southern states simultaneously enforced their gun laws during the Civil War. According to historian Ervin Jordan, two slaves, Brown and Joel, were caught with loaded pistols and severely flogged in December 1862.” A free black named George Harvey was also caught and lashed for carrying a “loaded pistol.” See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 169 and 208, respectively. According to historian Bernard H. Nelson, “Late in December, 1860, Georgia forbade any free Negro to purchase ‘any weapon which might be used in either offense or defense,’ and the following year, South Carolina enacted a prohibition against the carrying of firearms. In 1861 North Carolina forbade free Negroes ‘to carry, wear about their person, or keep in their houses, any shot-gun, rifle, pistol, powder, or shot.’ Moreover, all licenses which had been previously issued to free Negroes permitting the same were revoked by this act.” See Bernard H. Nelson, “Legislative Control of the Southern Free Negro, 1861-1865,” *Catholic Historical Review*, XXXII (April, 1946), 39.

Southern reaction to John Brown's Raid was arguably more terrifying than Nat Turner's uprising. As historian Chandra Manning explains: "A white man marching South to arm blacks and end slavery corresponded to white Southerners' worst nightmares." See Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 18.

⁵⁰ Frederick Douglass, *Douglass' Monthly*, V (August, 1863), 852; quoted in McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 161-162 (italics mine).

⁵¹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 202. Congressional approval for black soldiers came in 1862 via the Militia Act, which granted the arming of "persons of African descent [in] any military or naval service of which they may be found competent." See Berlin, et al., *Freedom's Soldiers*, 6. Generals in the field unofficially sanctioned black regiments in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Kansas in 1862. See Berlin, et al., *Freedom's Soldiers*, 9.

⁵² Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 8.

⁵³ Herbert Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXII (January, 1947), 30. Private Richard McDaniel of the 11th USCHA (heavy artillery) recalled being told, "You need never be afraid of having to fight, because this is not a negro's war, and the rebels will have to spill the blood of all the white men in the North before a nigger can take up arms. They don't know anything, and what would they do if they were armed? It would only cause the greater portion of the white men in the field to throw down their arms and rebel." See Richard McDaniel, Donaldson, Louisiana, June 25, 1865, letter 120, in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 266.

⁵⁴ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 205-206.

⁵⁵ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, xii (italics mine).

⁵⁶ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 78.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁸ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 203.

⁵⁹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 31.

⁶⁰ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 266.

⁶¹ Matthew Gallman, "'In Your Hands That Musket Means Liberty': African American Soldiers and the Battle of Olustee," in Gary Gallagher and Joan Waugh, editors, *Wars Within A War: Controversy and Conflict Over the American Civil War* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 96-97.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶³ Williams, "Commenced to Think Like a Man" in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 202. President Lincoln waited until the official Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863 to approve of black enlistments. Unlike the September, 1862 Emancipation Proclamation, the official document proclaimed that black men might be "received into the armed services of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places and to man vessels of all sorts in said service." See Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 18. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1935), 102.

⁶⁴ Gallman, “In Your Hands That Musket Means Liberty,” 96-97. Williams, “Commenced to Think Like a Man” in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 202.

⁶⁵ Although manhood and violence has often been conflated, W.E.B. Du Bois has criticized the connection in several instances. “How extraordinary...is the fact that in the minds of most people, even those of liberals, only murder makes men... The slave pleaded; he was humble; he protected the women of the South, and the world ignored him The slave killed white men; and behold, he was a man!” W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1935), 110, 104.

⁶⁶ As historian Barbara J. Fields explains, many free black men in the North were also restricted from owning firearms. See Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁶⁷ Williams, “Commenced to Think Like a Man” in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 203.

⁶⁸ *The Colored Citizen*, November 7, 1863, referenced in McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 205.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁰ In fact, 80% of all USCT soldiers originated from the South. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, vii, 289. Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 211. According to historian Eric Foner, “The highest percentage [of black troops] originated in the border states, where enlistment was, for most of the war, the only route to freedom. Nearly 60 percent of eligible Kentucky blacks served in the armed forces.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 8. According to historian Jacqueline Jones, “More than 93,000 black men from the Confederate states alone – 14 percent of the black male population aged eighteen to forty-five – fought with the Union army.” See Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 49. Williams, “Commenced to Think Like a Man” in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 203.

It is important to underscore the real differences between free northern black men and enslaved southern black men. According to historian Ira Berlin, free blacks entered the military “with different hopes and aspirations” such as the desire to obtain commissioned office. See Berlin, et. al. *Freedom’s Soldiers*, 36. Historian Richard Reid notes that ex-slave soldiers were illiterate, unskilled workers who fled from their enslavers. See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 299-300. Still, I argue that recruitment appeals to manliness resonated with free and enslaved black men because both were deemed unmanly.

⁷¹ Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (9 vols., New Brunswick, N.J. 1955), V, 357, 423, [italics mine]. According to historian Ervin Jordan, some “southern slaves and free blacks, including those in Virginia, showed little desire to participate. Increasing numbers of Afro-Virginians fled to Union-held areas of the state, much to the annoyance of Union officers and white civilians.” See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 265.

⁷² Philip Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, 5 vols., 3: 158-59.

⁷³ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 7.

⁷⁴ According to historian Joseph Glatthaar, white USCT officers held skilled middle-class professions such as “carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, and printers...lawyers, doctors, engineers, and clergymen. Indeed, very few of them had the unskilled jobs that were so prevalent in mid-nineteenth-century America.” See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 16.

⁷⁵ This brief description of self-made manhood is discussed in length by historian E. Anthony Rotundo. See Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993). For more on the Market Revolution, see Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture" *American Quarterly* 27 (December 1975). Authors of prescriptive literature also sought to control manly passions via the female sphere of domesticity. See Rotundo 22-25; Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History*, 75 (1988). For more on the importance of virtue in the Early National Period, see Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment – An American Perspective," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No.2, Special Issue: An American Enlightenment (Summer, 1976), pp. 187-205; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Volume 44, Issue 4 (Oct., 1987), 689-72; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), see 95-97.

⁷⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 84.

⁷⁷ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 209.

⁷⁸ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 149-150.

⁷⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 195.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸² Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 166.

⁸³ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 226.

⁸⁴ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 79.

⁸⁵ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 120.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 60. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 102.

⁸⁷ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 120; Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 102.

⁸⁸ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 485.

⁸⁹ Rich also blamed the mere presence of black troops at Petersburg as reason for Confederate brutality perpetrated on white Union troops. Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 156.

⁹⁰ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 114.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* According to historian Richard Reid, "the very diverse experience of black soldiers...allowed white Americans to remember and interpret events in ways that reinforced and confirmed their preexisting biases." Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 325. It is important to note that Reid's explanation – also known in the social

sciences as “the confirmation bias” – doesn’t negate prejudice as an abiding factor, but rather delineates how prejudice sometimes operates.

⁹² Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 142.

⁹³ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 50.

⁹⁴ Berlin, et. al., *Freedom’s Soldier*, 25 (italics mine).

⁹⁵ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 32.

⁹⁶ McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 163.

⁹⁷ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 50. Historian Chandra Manning also refers to a white Union soldier named Robert Winn who advocated for Herrenvolk freedom : “I am for liberty” Winn proclaims, “ – but not for equality – nor fraternity – except in the limited sense.” See Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 157.

⁹⁸ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 32.

⁹⁹ “R.W.W.,” 55th Massachusetts Infantry, Palatka, Florida, March 14, 1864. [Commissary Sergeant Richard W. White, of Salem, Ohio, probable author]; Letter 15, Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 38

¹⁰⁰ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 121.

¹⁰¹ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 32 (emphasis mine). In April of 1863, black soldiers also suffered friendly-fire from white Union soldiers assigned to the federal gunboat *Jackson* during a battle on Ship Island – the so-called “key to New Orleans.” See Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 107.

¹⁰² Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 278.

¹⁰³ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 245.

¹⁰⁴ For example, according to a private of the 43rd USCI, white officers “strike the men with their swords, and jog and punch them in their side to show them how to drill...I do not think it right that soldiers should be cuffed and knocked around so by their officers.... “Our officers must stop beating their men across the head and back with their swords, or I fear there will be trouble with some of us.” See “Private,” 43rd USCI, 1864, letter 117, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 261

¹⁰⁵ McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 179.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 194. In a similar example, when white Baltimore residents accosted black army doctor, Alexander T. Augusta while seated in a railroad car, a policeman approached and stood by Augusta. According to Augusta, “a person standing by asked [the police officer] if he intended to interfere. He answered him by saying it depended upon circumstances. I then turned toward him, and said to him, ‘If you are a policeman, I claim your protection as a United States officer, who has been assaulted without cause.’” Afterwards, provost guards defended Augusta, and ultimately, several white men were arrested and subsequently imprisoned for attacking the black doctor. See Alexander T. Augusta, Surgeon, 1863, letter 114, in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 252-256.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 63.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁹ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 196.

¹¹⁰ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 63.

¹¹¹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 187. Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 76.

¹¹² Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 56.

¹¹³ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 196-197.

¹¹⁴ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 181.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹¹⁶ Sergeant Samuel A. Valentine, 54th Massachusetts Infantry, South Carolina, July 25, 1864. Letter 27, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 66. White soldiers received sixteen-fifty a month: thirteen dollars in addition to \$3.50 for clothing. See Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 47-48.

¹¹⁷ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 253.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31

¹¹⁹ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 199-200.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 178. Also see "Bought and Sold," 6th USCI, 1864, letter 105, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 237.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 113.

¹²³ Robert Cowden, *A Brief Sketch of the Organization and Services of the Fifty-Ninth Regiment of United States Colored Infantry* (Dayton, Ohio, 1883), 38-40.

¹²⁴ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 155. Likewise, Gabriel P. Iverson of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry drew up a resolution that opposed unequal pay with reference to black manhood. "Resolved, That we are determined to make it our first duty as soldiers...to prove ourselves worthy...and our first duty as men...to contradict the slanders of our enemies, and prove to be true to our fitness for liberty and citizenship." See Gabriel P. Iverson, Sergeant, 55th Massachusetts Infantry, 1864, letter 112, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 247. Also see "Wolverine," 55th Massachusetts Infantry, 1864, letter 104, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 235.

¹²⁵ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 199.

¹²⁶ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 198 (italics mine). Although monetary concerns were at stake, the struggle over military pay was also about power distribution between white and black men. For example, when Secretary Stanton requested Congressional approval for equal pay, Democrats refused to place black men on the same level as white men. According to the *New York World*, "it is unjust in every way to the white soldier to put him on a level with the black." See McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 199.

¹²⁷ "Bellefonte" of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry believed that the fight for equal pay was an act of "contending manfully for our rights as volunteers." See "Bellefonte," 55th Massachusetts Infantry, 1864, letter 108, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 240.

¹²⁸ Renewed arguments during the Civil War for black colonization in Liberia or Latin America also challenged African Americans; and similar to their responses to unequal pay, black soldiers responded with claims of manliness. For example, W.A. Freeman of the 22nd USCI contended that "after four years of incessant toil, suffering, bloodshed, and carnage, we have been released from a worse-than-Egyptian bondage, not that we might colonize Liberia nor migrate to Mexico, but that we might engage in the great struggle and assist in making this a Republic. And shall we forfeit all claim to those rights which God has in his wisdom, designed for us at home! No, never!...Manhood itself, and justice to our race forbids!" See W.A. Freeman, 22nd USCI, 1865, letter 99, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 225.

¹²⁹ Ben used the butt of his rifle to fracture the white soldier's skull. Whether hand-to-hand combat was more manly than firing a weapon remains subject to debate. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 226, 290. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 20.

¹³⁰ See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 290. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 20.

¹³¹ Orderly Sergeant, Co. C, 5th USCI, Norfolk, Virginia, January 19, 1864; letter 35, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 93-94.

¹³² McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 213 (italics mine).

¹³³ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 273.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 326-327.

¹³⁶ McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 209. Former slave George Thomas of the 12th USCHA (heavy artillery) recalled participating in "dress parade downtown in the public square, and as we are drilled *very well*, the former slaveholders open their eyes, astonished that their former Kentucky *working stock* are capable of being on an equal footing with them at last." See George Thomas, Corporal, 12th USCHA, 1865, letter 79, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 190 (italics not mine).

¹³⁷ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 233.

¹³⁸ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 159. Likewise, Sergeant William A. Warfield of the 119th USCI recalled a 4th of July celebration in Kentucky where black soldiers participated in "exercises [that] consisted in martial music, songs, speeches, and declamations, with an interlude of a good dinner. The first part of the exercises were performed by the colored people themselves." See William A. Warfield, Sergeant, 119th USCI,

1865, letter 78, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 187-188. For descriptive example of another 4th of July celebration, see William H. Brown, private, 1st USCI, 1865, letter 70, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 174-175.

¹³⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 22.

¹⁴⁰ Mcpherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 187-188.

¹⁴¹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 137.

¹⁴² Dudley Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Lawrence: University Press Of Kansas; Reprint edition, 1987), 289 (italics mine).

¹⁴³ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 119.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 122.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 123.

¹⁴⁸ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 204.

¹⁴⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 119.

¹⁵⁰ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 212.

¹⁵¹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 291-292. Charles B. Fox, *Record of the Service of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Cambridge: Riverdale Press, 1868), 56-58. For an example of liberation in Richmond, see Garland H. White, Chaplain, 28th USCI, 1865, letter 71, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 175-178. For an example of liberation performed by black sailors, see George W. Reed, 1864, onboard the U.S.S. *Commodore Reed*, letter 121, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 272.

¹⁵² Williams, "Commenced to Think Like a Man," in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 203-204.

¹⁵³ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 205.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 205.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 206.

¹⁵⁶ Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, 1976), 23-24 (italics mine).

¹⁵⁷ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 329.

¹⁵⁸ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 119.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. Another soldier recorded his newfound power as a black man. “A member of the Fourteenth Regiment of Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (colored) wrote in May 1864: In the city of New Orleans, we could see signs of smothered hate and prejudice to both our color and present character as Union soldiers. But, for once in his life, your humble correspondent walked fearlessly and boldly through the streets of a southern city! And he did this without being required to take off his cap at every step, or to give all the side-walks to those lordly princes of the sunny south, the planters’ sons!” See McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 209-210.

¹⁶⁰ McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 210-211.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. Historian Chandra Manning tells of a remarkable story that illustrates black men and women’s newfound power. According to Manning, “One black regiment, camped in an area where many in the ranks had formerly been slaves, captured a local slave owner who had once owned Pvt. William Harris as well as several black women currently in the camp. After tying the former owner to a tree, private Harris and the women took turns flogging the man who had once given them ‘most unmerciful whipping[s].’” See Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 165.

¹⁶² Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 67.

¹⁶³ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 269.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 15-16, 109.

¹⁶⁶ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 130.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Trudeau, *Like Men of War* 76.

¹⁶⁸ John H.W.N. Collins, Sergeant, 54th Massachusetts Infantry, Fort Green, Folly Island, South Carolina, May 1864. Letter 24, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 63.

¹⁶⁹ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 297.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., xvii.

¹⁷¹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 211.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 234-235. These numbers are significant since black men constituted a disproportionate number of troops relative to the entire Union army. In May of 1865, the total Union Army numbered one million men; by December of 1865 the number fell to 152,000; and 38,000 by the Fall of 1866. See Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*, 148. According to Reid, “Union regiments were generally released according to their length of service, with the first to join being the first to leave.” However, this was not true in the case of black regiments. “As Northern white units were mustered out, the army became blacker....At the war’s end, black soldiers comprised about 10 percent of the army, but by the fall of 1865 slightly over one-third of the Federal

occupying army was composed of African Americans.” See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 256. General Sheridan deliberately retained more black regulars than whites, believing that African Americans preferred military life. In the beginning of 1866, Sheridan’s Texas forces consisted of 6,500 white soldiers and 19,768 black soldiers. According to historian Noah Andre Trudeau, “it took a direct order from U.S. Grant, in January 1867, to compel Sheridan to muster out the remaining USCT units.” Trudeau also reasons that the USCT was deliberately mustered out of service after white troops because of “a certain paternalism on the part of the white planners, who believed that by keeping the mass of untutored ex-slaves in uniform, they were not only providing them with food, shelter, and pay, but also helping to ease their transition into a free society.” See Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 461 and 456, respectively.

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Men of Color to Arms!: Black Soldiers, Indian Wars, and the Quest for Equality* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 8. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 219. Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 380, 373, 261.

¹⁷⁵ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 267.

¹⁷⁶ Leonard, *Men of Color to Arms!*, 55-57, 95.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 74-75.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 55-57, 95.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 78-79, 87, 103-105. Black regulars participated in other campaigns such as the Victorio Campaign of 1879 and the campaign against Geronimo and the Apache in the 1880s. These campaigns are beyond the boundaries of my study, but are indicative of the continued dedication of black regulars.

Black regulars also faced conflict with frontier locals. In 1867 black regulars stationed at Brownsville, Texas, were refused service by local businessmen, and were fired upon by a policeman and barkeeper. See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 270. In 1881, a white sheepman killed a black private for no apparent reason in San Angelo, Texas. The killer was later released by the local sheriff. In response black regulars distributed a handbill which implored locals “to recognize our right of way as just and peaceable men.” See William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

¹⁸² For the vast responsibilities of the Freedmen’s Bureau, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 210.

¹⁸³ William B. Johnson, Private, 3rd USCI, 1865, letter 72, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 179.

¹⁸⁴ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 80.

¹⁸⁵ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 285.

¹⁸⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 215.

¹⁸⁷ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 256, 273. Kevin R. Hardwick, “‘Your Old Father Abe Lincoln is Dead and Damned’: Black Soldiers and the Memphis Race Riot of 1866,” Earnestine Jenkins and Darlene Clark Hine, *A*

Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity, Vol.2, *The 19th Century: From Emancipation to Jim Crow* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 17.

¹⁸⁸ Former slaves were called freedmen, freedwomen, or collectively as freedpeople.

¹⁸⁹ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 311. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 122. According to Reid, "African American veterans were also instrumental in establishing several militia units in the Lower Cape Fear region. David Cooper, the first commander of "Cooper's Military Company," organized in December 1872, was a veteran of the 37th USCT. At virtually the same time, John Eagles became captain of the Wilmington Rifle Guard; David Chadwick, a veteran of the 35th USCT, was his first sergeant. Within two years the Rifles had created two companies that drilled every Wednesday night. Members were warned that unless they attended regularly, they could not take part in the annual Emancipation parade. The black militia maintained a public presence in the city. In 1874 Company A celebrated the Unit's anniversary by holding a parade on 20 April through the streets of Wilmington, followed by a target competition on Summer Hill." See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 311.

¹⁹⁰ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 571.

¹⁹¹ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 311. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 122. According to Eric Foner's history of the Hamburg Massacre, "a grand jury indicted seven men for murder and named several dozen more as accessories; all were acquitted after Redemption." See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 571. According to Mississippi freedman George Washington Albright, black postwar militias "drilled frequently," which angered "the rich folks [who] hated to see us, armed and ready to defend ourselves." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 18.

¹⁹² Violence directed at those who attempted to practice their "manhood rights" is particularly revealing. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 559-561.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁹⁴ Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States*; Series 3: Vol. 1, *Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 97.

¹⁹⁵ For Emanuel Fortune, his skill with a pistol or rifle was legendary in Jackson County, Florida. Fortune was not only eager to own firearms, he conducted military drills with his family and turned his house into an unofficial arsenal. See Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 163-164.

¹⁹⁶ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 437. Some freedmen were a good shot regardless of their comparatively inferior weaponry. According to Arkansas freedman Henry Blake, when his father was harassed by the KKK, "he carried a gun and he had shot two or three men" during those "bad times." Blake even remembered his father "mak[ing] his own bullets." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 176-177.

¹⁹⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 120.

¹⁹⁸ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 295. The Hertford soldiers filed a grievance with the Freedmen's Bureau, which promptly ordered the North Carolina militia to return their pistols and shotguns. See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 310.

¹⁹⁹ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 464. The Ku Klux Klan also aimed at taking away guns from freedmen. According to Arkansas freedwoman Rachel Bradley, “the only clash with the Ku Klux Klan was when they came to get an army gun [that] her husband had bought.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 235.

²⁰⁰ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 203.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 36, 79, 43.

²⁰² Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 214-215.

²⁰³ White angst over armed black men was central to the Memphis Riot of 1866. One white observer, H.G. Dent, complained that “within the last four or five months [leading up to the riot] the negroes in South Memphis have been very annoying, firing off pistols at all hours of the day and night.” See Hardwick, “Your Old Father Abe Lincoln is Dead and Damned” in Jenkins and Hine, *A Question of Manhood*, Vol. 2, 26.

²⁰⁴ Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 25, 27-28.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ James Gilbert Ryan, “The Memphis Riots of 1866: Terror in a Black Community During Reconstruction,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July, 1977), 246, 245.

²⁰⁷ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 213.

²⁰⁸ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 456.

²⁰⁹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 213.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* Foner, *Reconstruction*, 439-440. According to historian Eric Foner, Governor Clayton “placed ten counties under martial law at the end of 1868 and dispatched a state militia composed of blacks and scalawags (usually in segregated units)...Scores of suspected Klansmen were arrested; three were executed after trials by military courts, and numerous others fled the state. By early 1869, order had been restored and the Klan destroyed. Davis proved equally decisive, organizing a crack two-hundred-member State Police, 40 percent of whose members were black. Between 1870 and 1872, the police made over 6,000 arrests, effectively suppressing the Klan and providing freedmen with a real measure of protection in a state notorious for widespread violence.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 439-440.

²¹¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 431.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 435. Members of the 35th USCT protected black laborers by functioning as a mediator between planters and freedmen. “When an officer arrived at a farm, he would call together all the adults and explain to them the nature of the contracts. Then he would make an inventory of all stock and equipment and list the principal crops. Once both parties understood the contract, the officers would select the most reliable freedman to act for the others, who would sign over their power of attorney to him. The proportion of the crop contracted to the freedmen would depend on two factors: 1.) the greater the amount of stock, the less produce assigned to the freedmen, and 2) the larger the number of children or infirm adults, the greater the amount left to the planter to support them. In practice, this meant that the freedmen got one-half to one-fifth of the crops.” See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 278. Part

of the USCT's responsibility was to protect freedmen by empowering the Freedmen's Bureau. One USCT colonel noted that if the Freedmen's Bureau "call[ed] upon the military authorities at any garrison to carry out their mandates, guards should be furnished them to act under their instructions." See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 213.

It is important to recognize that members of the USCT were not always guardians of freedmen. For instance, members of the 35th USCT assisted in the removal of Sea Island freedmen from their lands. See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 281.

²¹³ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 80.

²¹⁴ Hahn, et. al., *Freedom*, Series 3: Vol. 1, *Land and Labor, 1865*, 158.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

²¹⁶ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 310.

²¹⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 362.

²¹⁸ Dennis C. Rousey, "Black Policemen in New Orleans During Reconstruction," in Jenkins and Hine, *A Question of Manhood*, Vol. 2, 94.

²¹⁹ According to historian Eric Foner, "Tallahassee and Little Rock chose black chiefs of police, and New Orleans and Vicksburg had black captains empowered to give orders to whites on the force. By 1870, hundreds of blacks were serving as city policemen and rural constables; they comprised half the police force in Montgomery and Vicksburg, and more than a quarter in New Orleans, Mobile, and Petersburg." See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 362.

²²⁰ Rousey, "Black Policemen in New Orleans During Reconstruction," 93.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

²²² Foner, 356-357, 595. Rousey, "Black Policemen in New Orleans During Reconstruction," 87, 98. Freedwomen Julia King proudly remembered her husband, Albert King, for his pioneering role as the first "Negro policeman" on the Toledo police force. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 57. According to historian Joel Williamson, "all-black militia [South Carolina] companies, unarmed, persisted until 1905." See Williamson, *A Rage For Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 154.

²²³ According to a USCT lieutenant, "New uniforms, guns in their hands, and the stamp of the government upon them seemed to give them self respect and consciousness of manhood and power so that the rapidity of the transformation was marvelous." See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 108.

²²⁴ William H. Johnson, 8th Connecticut Infantry, North Carolina, March 9, 1862, in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 18.

²²⁵ Williams, "Commenced to Think Like a Man," in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 203.

²²⁶ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 20.

²²⁷ Uya, *From Slavery to Public Service*, 17.

²²⁸ Ibid., 23-24 (italics mine).

²²⁹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 225.

Chapter 3: Violent Dramas of Bodily Trauma: Tracing the Physical Residues of Enslavement and Civil War

¹ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 219.

² Andrew Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free: Robert Smalls of South Carolina and His Families* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵ Topics of slave diet, health, and whippings receive their fullest expression in theses that examine the severity of the slave system. The most famous of these studies involved the cliometric dispute over Robert William Fogel and Stanley M. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston and Toronto, 1974); Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods – A Supplement* (Boston and Toronto, 1974). I agree with historian Peter Kolchin that Robert William Fogel's later work, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York and London, 1990) is merely a "less assertive" version of *Time on the Cross* with "fundamental similarities." See Peter Kolchin, "More *Time on the Cross*? An Evaluation of Robert William Fogel's *Without Consent or Contract*," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 58, No.3 (Aug., 1992), 493. According to Fogel and Engerman, the slave economy was efficient and profitable because slavery was a mutually beneficial system for all parties: slave masters only took "12 percent" of slaves' incomes; slaves' living conditions were relatively good; masters kept black families together; masters did not sexually exploit their female slaves; a quarter of slaves held higher occupations than field hands; and a slave was whipped only 0.7 times per year. In short, slavery was profitable because it was benign.

The "controversy" of *Time on the Cross* was more than an argument over slavery's profitability. Fogel and Engerman stoked the fire by standing on a social "scientific" pedestal of superiority, presenting their arguments as ostensibly "objective" "discoveries" and "findings," while casting their critics' arguments as subjective "interpretations" that have "kept blacks in the agony of racial discrimination during their century of freedom." For more on this controversy, see Paul A. David and Peter Temin, "Slavery: The Progressive Institution?" *Journal of Economic History*, XXXIV (September 1974), 739-83; Harry N. Scheiber, "Black is Computable: The Controversy over *Time on the Cross* and the History of American Slavery," *The American Scholar*, Vol.44, No.4 (Autumn 1975), 656-673; Richard Sutch, "The Treatment Received by American Slaves: A Critical Review of the Evidence Presented in *Time on the Cross*," *Explorations in Economic History*, XII (October 1975), 335-438; Paul A. David, Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin, Gavin Wright, *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1976); Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana and London, 1975), Norman R. Yetman, "The Rise and Fall of *Time on the Cross*" book review of Gutman's *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross*, *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 4, No.2 (Jun., 1976).

Fogel and Engerman's *Time on the Cross* also contended that slavery was a form of capitalism – a belief that their cliometric predecessors Conrad and Meyer and detractors Ransom and Sutch share. Although Ransom and Sutch argue that slavery stunted the growth of the postwar Southern economy, they argue that "slaveholders were capitalists without physical capital." See Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, "Capitalists Without Capital: The Burden of Slavery and the Impact of Emancipation," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 62, No.3, Quantitative Studies in Agrarian History (Summer, 1988), 133-160. Opposing views on the topic have been articulated by historians such as Ulrich B. Phillips and Eugene Genovese who believed slavery was a backward vestige of feudalistic paternalism. See Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (D. Appleton and Company, 1918), and Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965).

⁶ Michel Foucault re-introduced the body as a site of analysis. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1975). Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon, ed., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 58-59. Theorist Judith Butler further popularized the body in her second publication – *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993). Unlike her contemporaries, such as gender historian Joan Scott, who privileged (hetero-normative) gender consciousness, Butler located gender construction on displays of the “material” body, where subjects construct their gender identities via repetitious *performance*. Of course, Butler’s performative definition of gender is the key to her inclusivity of the body. For Butler, bodies matter because performance matters.

⁷ Here, I am referring to pioneering works such as Deborah Gray White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, revised edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), and Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1986).

Not only has the female body been “linked to corporality, in part because women menstruate, give birth, and lactate,” but also because women’s bodies have been subject to hyper-scrutiny, the fashion industry, and commercial exploitation (not to mention sexual assault, misogyny, and domination). Historian Lois W. Banner’s *American Beauty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983) is a prime example. While her title implies an inclusive history of beauty in the United States, the subjects of her study are overwhelming female. It appears that men’s bodies – like the concept of masculinity – have been largely rendered invisible.

⁸ The exceptions are studies of lynching which are beyond the boundaries of my study. The most prominent of these studies is James Allen, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000). Although the psychological legacies of enslavement and war are just as pernicious as corporeal legacies, I have deliberately underscored corporeality in an effort to bring balance to the consciousness-laden approach to history. For examples of psychological effects of slavery and civil warfare, see George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 14; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 305, 359, 360; John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972; rev. and enlarged edition, 1979), 297-301; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 66, 68-69, 72, 485. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African*, Paul Edwards, ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1966), 34; W.H. Robinson, *From Log Cabin to the Pulpit* (Eau Claire: James H. Tiff, 1913), 25, 40; Jermain Wesley Loguen, *The Rev. J.W. Loguen, As a Slave and as a Freedman* (Syracuse: J.G.K. Truair & Co., 1859), 38-52, 109-122; Henry Watson, *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1848), 5-17; John Thompson, *The Life of John Thompson, a Fugitive Slave* (Worcester: C. Hamilton, Palladium Office, 1856), 13-19; Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 91; William Wells Brown, *Narrative Of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave* (Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office, 1847), 16; John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia* (London: W.M. Watts, 1855), 158; Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 243; Richard M. Reid, *Freedom For Themselves: North Carolina’s Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 299, 316-317; Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 162.

⁹ Historian Peter Kolchin has made a similar point. “Despite the multiplicity of different slave experiences,” wrote Kolchin, “much more united the slaves than divided them.” See Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang; Revised and Updated edition, 2003), 111.

¹⁰ It is worth noting here that my analysis of bodily trauma perpetrated on enslaved males should not be read as an articulation of the severity of slavery. Nor is such an articulation necessary. By definition, the enslavement of a human being is a severe relationship.

¹¹ Norman R. Yetman, *Voices From Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives* Dover (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1999), 58. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract*, 161-162. The hours of work per week varied from enslaver to enslaver, and from industry to industry. According to Virginian slave, Austin Steward, “It was the rule for the slaves to rise and be ready for their task by sun-rise, on the blowing of a horn or conch-shell. They had approximately thirty minutes to get to the fields. A thirty-minute breakfast break came at about nine o’clock. Then they worked until noon, took a long dinner break (about one hour) and returned to work until sunset.” See Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 190. Historian Peter Kolchin also recognizes the seasonal and inconsistent nature of agricultural labor. With varying factors – such as summer daylight hours, harvest time, and the more demanding nature of the Louisiana sugar crop – slave work was not consistent year-around. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 106.

¹² Some slaves recalled working Saturdays and Sundays. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 35; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2 part 1, 63. Holidays included Christmas, and sometimes Thanksgiving, Easter, and birthdays. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 60. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 576.

¹³ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 566-567. According to Georgia slave Estella Jones, “De mens, more so than de womens, had to work every night ’til twelve o’clock.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 346.

¹⁴ Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 276. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 60, 566-567. South Carolina slave Nellie Boyd recalled working at night when “we had to get de corn shucked or de fodder hauled to de barn. Sometimes we picked cotton by de light of de moon.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, supplement, series I, 63-64.

¹⁵ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 59. According to Georgia slave Elisha Doc Garey, even as a child “Us wukked lak hosses. Didn’t nobody eat dar ’less dey wukked. I’s been wukkin’ ever since I come in dis world.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 2.

¹⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 4.

¹⁷ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 60. Sometimes, “de slaves did not do much after work,” recalled Maryland slave Mary Barnes, “dey was too tired that they didn’t feel like going anywhere.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 299.

¹⁸ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 309, 573. Tennessee slave Dan Thomas recalled seeing “sum cru’l Marsters dat hitched up dere slaves ter plows en made dem plow lak hosses en mules did.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 75. South Carolina slave Josephine Bacchus remembered arduous conditions as well. “Now de poor colored people in slavery time, dey give dem very little rest en would whip some of dem most to death.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 21.

¹⁹ According to historian Eugene Genovese, “The slaveholders alone took comfort in the comparative perspective. They believed that their slaves worked a shorter day than the slaves of Brazil or the Caribbean, who

could often expect an eighteen-hour day during the long sugar-grinding season and who worked as long as or longer than American slaves during the rest of the year. The slaveholders knew that even during the 1850s when conditions were improving, proletarians and handicraft workers in the North and in Europe worked twelve to fourteen hours, if not longer, exclusive of traveling time to work.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 62.

²⁰ Keith P. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: The Camp Life of Black Soldiers during the Civil War* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2002), 42, 43.

²¹ Herbert Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” *Journal of Negro History*, XXXII (January, 1947), 35, 22.

²² Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 92.

²³ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 43.

²⁴ According to historian Joseph Glatthaar, “after twenty-five of twenty-eight months in the USCT performing fatigue duty, the lack of training time was wearing down Col. Thomas Morgan: ‘I prefer service in the field in command of fighting men, to service in garrison in charge of laborers, as a profession.’” See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 106.

²⁵ After retaining three runaway slaves for the construction of a new bakery at Fortress Monroe, Confederate Major John B. Cary requested General Butler to return the slaves under the Fugitive Slave Law. General Butler replied: “I am under no constitutional obligations to a foreign country, which Virginia now claims to be... You say you *have* seceded, and so you cannot consistently claim them. I shall detain the Negroes as contraband of war. You are using them on the batteries. It is merely a question whether they shall be used for or against the government.” See Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 59-60.

²⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 183.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Todd Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2010), 96.

²⁹ Ira Berlin, Joseph Patrick Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom’s Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34.

³⁰ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 185.

³¹ Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1998), 26. Rawick, v. 8, part 1, 105. Some black men espoused similar beliefs. According to Private Henry Carpenter Hoyle of the 43rd USCI, “colored troops can stand more fatigue than the others” and “build breastworks more briskly.” See Henry Carpenter Hoyle, 43rd USCI, 1865, letter 85, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 199.

³² Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 162.

³³ The seven USCT “fatigue” regiments were the 42nd, 63rd, 64th, 69th, 101st, 123rd, and 124th. Three of these regiments saw combat even though they lacked training. See Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” 27.

³⁴ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 205.

³⁵ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 316.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 25-26.

³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³⁹ J.H.W.N. Collins, 54th Massachusetts Infantry, Deveaux Neck, South Carolina, January 24, 1865; letter 29, Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 71.

⁴⁰ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 95-96.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 249. For black men still enslaved during the Civil War, the dearth of clothing continued. With exorbitant prices of wool and cotton, slaves were the first to go without. Even a conscientious enslaver, Colin Clarke, went to extremes to clothe his slaves by attempting to procure the "clothing of soldiers who had died in Richmond hospitals." See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 28.

⁴³ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 33. Although no reason is given, the slave-owner may have been more concerned about fire damaging the crops rather than the health of his slaves.

⁴⁴ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 316-317.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 569.

⁴⁷ For paternalistic anecdotes regarding the clothing of slaves, see Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 555.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 550.

⁴⁹ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 35-36.

⁵⁰ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 323. Similar to slave diet, clothing, and treatment, access to shoes varied from slave-owner to slave-owner. For example, See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 356; Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 56.

⁵¹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 114. Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 189. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 551.

⁵² Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 550.

⁵³ Douglas *My Bondage and Freedom*, 101,132.

⁵⁴ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 289, 290.

⁵⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 62.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁷ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 27.

⁵⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 46. Perdue, et.al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 155.

⁵⁹ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 552.

⁶⁰ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 59.

⁶¹ Rawick, *American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 78. According to female slave Susan Bledsoe: "I always worked in the fields with the men except when I was called to the house to do work there." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 7. A male slave, Austin Steward, recalled that on his plantation, "it was usual for men and women to work side by side... and in many kinds of work, the women were compelled to do as much as the men." See Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman; Embracing a Correspondence of Several years, While Resident of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West* (Rochester: William Alling, 1857), 12.

⁶² The act of plowing was designated a gendered act of manliness even though black women plowed when required. For example, former slave Adeline Grey remembered that after emancipation, "Ma plow many a day, same as a man." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 2, 207.

⁶³ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 1, 113-114.

⁶⁴ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 291.

⁶⁵ In respect to slave bodies on the auction block, the sexualized meaning between male and female slaves was starkly different. "When they put the women up on the auction block, bidders would come up and feel the women's legs," remembered Virginia slave William Johnson, Jr. Bidders would "lift up their garments and examine their hips, feel their breast, and examine them to see if they could bear children." See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 166. Inspections of enslaved men had a different meaning. Slave Louis Hughes, for example, remembered feeling a sense of "humiliation" but not one of a sexualized nature. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 148.

⁶⁶ Theorist Todd Reeser explains the gendered meaning of an injury in his discussion of the "heroic wound." "A man can be wounded in a battle very quickly, transforming the male body and masculinity along with it. The wounded body can be taken as a sign of military masculinity: it might be decorated or considered manly. Like circumcision, the wound is embedded in cultural discourses that have already constructed ideas about it (film, political discourse, etc.). That change in the body is not a gradual habit, however, but a sudden body-changing experience that is nonetheless coded by culture." See Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 95.

⁶⁷ Even in terms of labor, there were gender differences. According to historian Brenda Stevenson, “some males did perform more physically strenuous work, but women generally worked more – spinning, weaving, nursing, and cooking once their field work was over, to say nothing of the child care and domestic work they did in the quarters. Gender, therefore, did impact the slave experience. Occupational differences outside the field, for instance, were substantial. A significant minority of females were domestics. Large holdings employed both men and women as domestics, but Antebellum women dominated these positions especially among smaller slaveholdings. Male slaves, on the other hand, had greater opportunity to hold skilled and supervisory positions and, therefore, had greater opportunity to earn extra cash and to hire themselves out. They also could have leadership positions as drivers, overseers, foremen, and head craftsman that women systematically were denied.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 192.

⁶⁸ The height and diet of slaves have been studied by historians, economists, and archeologists. Such studies collectively suggest that slaves generally received poorer quality meat, however, there are variations in diet that could be attributed to inter-plantation differences and/or intra-plantation differences – that is, slave-owners may have provided different diet regimens to their slaves and/or slave-owners provided better diets to slaves who were prized. Moreover, differences between gender appear to be less of a factor relative to differences in occupations and skin tone. For example, “Domestics and semi-skilled slaves were approximately 0.4-0.6 inches shorter than skilled slaves or fieldhands,” and lighter-skin slaves were generally taller and heavier than darker-skin slaves, regardless of gender. See Robert A. Margo and Richard H. Steckel, “The Heights of American Slaves: New Evidence on Slave Nutrition and Health,” *Social Science History*, v.6, no.4, Trends in Nutrition, Labor, Welfare, and Labor (Autumn, 1982), 525. For a helpful overview, See anthropologist Diana C. Crader, “Slave Diet at Monticello,” *American Antiquity*, v.55, no.4 (October, 1990), 690-717.

⁶⁹ According to Arkansas slave Mose Banks, “the womens’ job was to cook, attend to the cows, knit all the socks for the men and boys, spin thread, card bats, weave cloth, quilt, sew, scrub and things like that.” See Rawick, v.8, part 1, 101. For commentary on possible nutritional effects on slave women’s fertility rates, see Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 246. Just like male slaves, female slaves reported being underfed. For example, slave Sarah Laws Hill recalled “vividly how hard she was forced to work and how little she was fed. The main ‘vittles’ she ate were cornbread three times a day, salt pork about once a month and eggs once a week.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 399.

⁷⁰ Arkansas slave Mose Banks also recalled that “splitting rails, bushing, [and] plowing” was “work...for men.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 101.

⁷¹ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 100. According to slave Frank Bell, “all I had to eat was old stuff those people left, all scraps what was left.” See Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 21-22.

⁷² Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 283-284.

⁷³ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 57.

⁷⁴ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 33.

⁷⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 20; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 105; Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 14. Rawick, v.8, part 1, 75.

⁷⁶ Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O’Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National*

Archives of the United States; Series 3: Vol. 1, *Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 163.

⁷⁷ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 28. For a similar example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 80.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 42.

⁸⁰ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 196, 158, 163. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 24

⁸¹ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 30.

⁸² Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 64.

⁸³ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 81 and 80, respectively. Also see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part1, 150, 246.

⁸⁴ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 36.

⁸⁵ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 78. For some women, stealing food may have had a gendered meaning of maternal care. Historian Brenda Stevenson explains that single mother, “Marrinda Jane Singleton, stole food for her children. “Dis pig was now divided equally and I went on to my cabin wid equal share,” remembered Marrinda. “All de chillum was warned not to say nothin’ ’bout dis. If dey did, I tole’em I would skin’em alive, ’cause dis pig was stole to fill their bellies as well as mine.”” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 235-236.

⁸⁶ Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The ‘Invisible Institution’ in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 296.

⁸⁷ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 53. According to historian Kenneth Stampp, “the imbalance of the average slave’s diet resulted from ignorance more often than penuriousness.” Regardless of the reason, the effects poor diet had on the body remained the same. See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 289.

⁸⁸ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 159. Not all masters punished slaves for stealing. According to historian Eugene Genovese, some masters looked the other way. Even so, Genovese notes that some enslavers acknowledged that underfeeding resulted in theft. “‘The very best remedy for hog stealin,’ wrote a planter in Virginia, ‘is to give the rougues a plenty of pork to eat.’...The law in Tennessee made its own admission when it held masters who underfed their slaves responsible for any stealing they might do from others.” Genovese, *Roll*, Jordan, *Roll*, 600, 603.

⁸⁹ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 57.

⁹⁰ The cat-o’-nine-tails could be particularly damaging to the body. According to Texas slave Ellis Williams, “one nite I stayed way from me master and he whipped me wid a cat nine tails, he whipped me so bad I had blood all over me. Look at de ridges on me back from dem lashes.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 359. See also Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 1, 108.

⁹¹ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 116, 57, 71. Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 34, 31.

⁹² Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 116.

⁹³ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 59.

⁹⁴ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 79. Just as slaves stole food in response to inadequate rations, slaves also responded to beatings by either running away or hiding the whip. See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 116. Enslavers usually beat their workers for such infractions as leaving the boundaries of the plantation without a permit, or attempting to run away. See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 79 and 75.

⁹⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 8, part 1, 34. According to Taylor, as an alternative to the stocks, the overseer and the driver would punish runaways with a whip called “the Black Snake.”

⁹⁶ Charles B. Dew, “Disciplining Slave Ironworkers in the Antebellum South,” Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men’s History and Masculinity*, vol.1, “Manhood Right”: The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 220.

⁹⁷ Frank Bell recalls his master subscribing to a nineteenth century “sentimental” approach to beating. “When he had to whip a slave he would always cut himself a cherry sapling, cause a cherry sapling don’t make no soar on a slave’s back.” Whether this weapon caused less physical suffering or damage is questionable. See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 27.

⁹⁸ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 58-59.

⁹⁹ Interview of Samuel Scomp (1826) in John. W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*, annotated edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 180.

¹⁰⁰ Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 37.

¹⁰¹ According to historian Eugene Genovese, “As early as the 1820s agricultural journals like Legare’s *Southern Agriculturalist*, published in Charleston, were running a steady stream of articles to encourage better treatment, although other journals – *The Southern Planter*, for example – did not pick up the theme until much later.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 55. In an 1836 publication, the author of *Farmers’ Register* reminded enslavers that “men, like animals, cannot work unless there is furnished them the necessary comforts which by nature they require.” See Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 279

¹⁰² Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 56.

¹⁰³ Interview of Jack Frowers (1864) in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 451. The use of dogs appears in other slave interviews. For example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 78; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 5-6.

¹⁰⁴ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 67. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 160. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 31.

¹⁰⁵ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

¹⁰⁶ According to a historian of runaway slave advertisements: “In more than one thousand fugitive slave notices advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* during the period from 1730 to 1790, fewer than 10 percent were for women.” See Lathan A. Windley, ed., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: Volume I, Virginia, North Carolina* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983). Just as black males did their share of plowing and heavy lifting, it was the black male that generally ran away because of several reasons: he was unencumbered by the constant dependence of small children, he couldn’t bear to see his family enslaved and abused, he had more freedom of movement and thus more opportunity, or he sought freedom for himself in the hopes of saving enough money to purchase his family. See White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman?*, 70, 72.

¹⁰⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 23.

¹⁰⁸ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 78.

¹⁰⁹ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 161. Mississippi slave Levi Ashley recalled that his “first master” “was hard on the Negroes, and whipped them often. Friday night was known as ‘whipping night.’” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 84. Georgia slave Jefferson Franklin Henry recalled frequent whippings “for most anything. “They was tied , hand and foots, to a certain tree, and he beat’em with a heavy leather strap...and it was ’most allus in the mornin’s ’fore they went to wuk.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2,185.

¹¹⁰ Perdue, et. al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, 165-166.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

¹¹² Frederick Douglass, *Liberator*, February 27, 1846.

¹¹³ Physical abuse of slaves was by no means the only factor that belied enslavers’ pretensions to paternalism. As historian Peter Kolchin has noted, “forced separation...also indicated the fragility and elasticity of their paternalistic pretensions...even under the best of circumstances, paternalism was often indistinguishable from petty tyranny...If absolute power proved essential to the paternalist’s sense of duty, the loss of that power threatened to turn benevolent paternalists into domineering bullies.” See Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 126.

¹¹⁴ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 163. Euphemisms for whippings published in Confederate Virginia newspapers included: ‘teasings,’ ‘to pass under the lash,’ ‘a dressing,’ ‘hug the post,’ ‘to hug the widow,’ ‘kiss the cowhide,’ ‘strap-hopping,’ ‘dance the cowhide tune,’ ‘paddling,’ ‘jump and twitch,’ ‘corrections,’ ‘floppings,’ ‘nigger desserts,’ ‘leather-lessons,’ ‘dressings,’ ‘disciplinings,’ ‘ordered to be thrashed,’ ‘ordered to stripes,’ ‘hand-sawings,’ ‘flagellations,’ ‘switchings,’ and ‘ticklings.’” See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 359.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

¹¹⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 71.

¹¹⁷ Perdue, et.al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 274. Rawick, *American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives), 6. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 60-61.

¹¹⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 55. The punishment of the slave body was not exclusively a male experience by any means. As Georgia slave John Brown has written: “it may be thought that the female slaves are perhaps, as a rule, less badly treated. This is not the case. Men and women, boys and girls, receive the same kind of punishments, or I would say rather, that the same kind of tortures are inflicted upon them. I know full well that women in a state of pregnancy are not spared from the infliction of the most dreadful scourgings, with the cow-hide, the bull-whip, and the cobbing-paddle.” See John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* (London: W. M. Watts, Crown Court, Temple Bar, 1855), 68.

¹¹⁹ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*.

¹²⁰ Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game*, 19.

¹²¹ Scheiber, “Black is Computable,” 669. For further reactions to Fogel and Engerman, see Paul A David and Peter Temin, “Slavery: The Progressive Institution?” *Journal of Economic History*, XXXIV (September 1974), 739-83; Sutch, 335-438.

¹²² Whippings, for instance, did not suddenly end with emancipation. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 63.

¹²³ Charles S. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi* (Louisiana State University Press, 1933).

¹²⁴ Reeser’s “resistant bodies” concept does not explicitly recognize self-imposed injuries, however, it does return corporeal agency or balance to the Foucauldian concept of “docile bodies.” Reeser’s examples of resistant bodies include the “moderate homosexual body, strong Asian body, composed female body, law-abiding black male body or bodies in between docility and resistance/power: soldier, businessman.” “As these examples suggest, [the] body is both docile and empowered,” writes Reeser, “and in the end, the male body could be considered as located somewhere between docility and power, never fully one nor the other.” See Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 96-97.

¹²⁵ Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 196. Suicide may be considered the ultimate “resistant body.” When Mary James’ grandmother heard that her husband was going to be sold, “grandmother drowned herself in the river.” Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 38. In another example, a slave wife drowned herself after being separated from her husband and children. See Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown*, 4.

¹²⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 77.

¹²⁷ Perdue, et. al, *Weevils in the Wheat*, 125.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 324-325.

¹²⁹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 69.

¹³⁰ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 127.

¹³¹ Biddle is known to be one of the first soldiers to be bloodied on behalf of the Union Army. Reportedly, President Lincoln welcomed Biddle’s “Washington Artillerists” that evening and recognized Biddle for his service. See Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 9-10.

¹³² Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” 33. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 109.

¹³³ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 222.

¹³⁴ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 24.

¹³⁵ The molasses punishment was performed on Lt. Col. A.W. Benedict of the 4th Regt. Corps d’Afrique. See Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” 33. For an example of a black soldier receiving twice the jail sentence as a white soldier for committing the same infringement, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 119. Moreover, fourteen of the twenty-four soldiers (58%) executed for rape were black, eighty percent of all soldiers executed for mutiny were black, and a total of twenty-five black soldiers were executed during the war – facts that are striking since black soldiers comprised only nine percent of all Union soldiers. See Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 208; Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 115; and Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 272; respectively.

Glatthaar makes a peculiar claim – that “all the transcripts of trials that resulted in executions indicated a surprising degree of fairness” and that in “almost every trial the evidence of guilt was overwhelming. Only in two cases does the evidence appear inconclusive.” Glatthaar fails to address the limitations of the transcripts, if the black defendants received adequate counsel, or if transcripts of white defendants were comparatively similar to black defendants. See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 118.

¹³⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 114. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 32.

¹³⁷ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 109.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 250.

¹⁴⁰ Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” 35. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 149-150.

¹⁴¹ General Seymour’s comments were recorded by Nathaniel Page – a special correspondent for the *New York Tribune*. See Aptheker, “Negro Casualties in the Civil War,” 37.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 36-37.

¹⁴³ Meade’s doubts concerning the readiness of black troops may have also contributed to his decision to reject Burnside’s original strategy. See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 759.

¹⁴⁴ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 247.

¹⁴⁵ Dated December 17, 1863, the *Richmond Enquirer* stated: “The Yankees are not going to send their Negro troops in the field...Should they be sent to the field, and be put in battle, none will be taken prisoners: our troops understand what to do in such cases.” See George Washington Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, Preceded by a Review of the Military Services of Negroes in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1888), 315; and Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 16.

¹⁴⁶ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 249.

¹⁴⁷ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 177.

¹⁴⁸ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 246-247.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 304.

¹⁵² For primary evidence regarding the details of the Fort Pillow Massacre, see William Wells Brown *The Negro in the American Rebellion* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1867), 135-142; Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion*, 263.

¹⁵³ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 76. Similarly, a black sailor George W. Reed recalled an incident where Confederate soldiers "put twelve bullets" into a captured black man, then "left him in the road." See George W. Reed, 1864, onboard the U.S.S. *Commodore Reed*, letter 123, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 275.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁵⁵ Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 177.

¹⁵⁶ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 43-44.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* After the din of battle, many USCT soldiers were murdered. After the Battle of Saltville, Confederate soldiers entered two hospitals and murdered the black wounded. At Charleston Harbor, prisoners were "literally shot down while...begging for quarter and mercy." In Arkansas, fourteen black soldiers were murdered in February of 1864. And that March, sixteen black prisoners were murdered in Mississippi. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 281; Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 141; and Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 44; respectively. For more examples, see Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 45, 77; and Aptheker, "The Negro in the Union Navy," 185. Moreover, regardless of race, Confederates often left prisoners of war in terribly poor condition. According to J.H. Payne of the 27 USCI, when a thousand Union prisoners were released, "I never saw any thing equal to the appearance of these suffering, famished, and half-starved men." See J.H. Payne, Sergeant, 27th USCI, 1865, letter 66, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 164.

¹⁵⁸ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 308-309.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 46.

¹⁶¹ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 466. According to historian Herbert Aptheker, black troops' late entry into the war (an eighteen-month delay) meant that they "were likely to meet battle-wise veterans while they themselves were still novices. There are several combat reports which emphasize this fact, and it may well have been a factor of considerable importance." See Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 16, 38. Disregarding these important factors, a cold comparative analysis between black combat-related deaths and white soldiers yields a rate of 16.11/1,000 in the USCT and 35.10/1,000 in white regiments. See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 322. However,

according to Aptheker, black men suffered a 35% greater mortality rate than white soldiers. See Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 16.

¹⁶² In comparison, one white body out of fifty-two cases died due to disease. See Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 13, 17. Historian Eric Foner states that "thirty-seven thousand blacks, the great majority from the South, perished in the Union army, as did tens of thousands more in contraband camps, on Confederate Army labor gangs, and in disease-ridden urban shanty-towns." See Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 125. I have chosen to cite Aptheker's conservative and more specific estimate. For more statistics on black Civil War deaths, see Joseph T. Wilson, *The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1775-1812, 1861-'65* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1882), 142; Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 322; and Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 16.

In respect to black naval personnel, Aptheker estimates that "at a minimum, about three thousand Union Negro sailors died – from disease and enemy action – during the War." See Aptheker, "The Negro in the Union Navy," 181. Although Aptheker admits that his calculations are "conjecture," he posits that black navy deaths were the result of "dangerous and punishing types of work" such as the duties of naval "firemen and coal heavers" – at least, according to a report by Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, to Rear Admiral Dahlgren, July 28, 1863. See Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 75.

¹⁶³ Anonymous "Sergeant," 55th Massachusetts Infantry, Folly Island, South Carolina, May 29, 1864; Letter 25; Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 64-65. Here, I do not intend to downplay the seriousness of injuries sustained via forced manual labor. During the war, for example, Governor Letch of Virginia expressed his dismay when twelve black convicts returned from public work duties with serious injuries including finger amputations, undressed wounds, and an untreated leg fracture. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 98.

¹⁶⁴ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 21. Confederates also deployed black men in unhealthy areas to build and reinforce redoubts, forts, and other military structures. See Charles H. Wesley, "The Employment of Negroes as Soldiers in the Confederate Army," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (July, 1919), 242. According to historian Ervin Jordan, "'a remarkably fine and athletic' 24-year-old Jacob was conscripted and was sent to Richmond fortifications in February 1863, worked for 51 days, fell ill with pneumonia and died." See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 92.

¹⁶⁵ According to Glatthaar, "black soldiers suffered a vastly higher proportional death rate from malaria and typhoid fever than did whites." See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 263.

¹⁶⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 188.

¹⁶⁷ Aptheker, "Negro Casualties in the Civil War," 19.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 189.

¹⁷⁰ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 466.

¹⁷¹ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 190-191.

¹⁷² Ibid. Historian Joseph Glatthaar also points to filthy hospital conditions for black troops relative to “model” white hospitals. “In Vicksburg,” writes Glatthaar, “after six months in service, the black hospital had treated 646 patients, 197 of whom had died, some 30.5 percent, while the white hospital had 415 deaths out of 2,963 cases, or 14 percent.” For more detailed reports, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 193-194.

¹⁷³ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 62.

¹⁷⁴ Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 316.

¹⁷⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 18.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁷ Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 302. Understandably, one can argue that Antebellum doctors were hardly a source for good. According to Stampp, “prior to 1860, such heroic remedies as bloodletting and violent purging were still popular... Many still believed that various diseases were caused by atmospheric ‘miasmata’ resulting from decaying animal and vegetable matter; few fully understood the hygienic value of a piece of soap. Add to this... the profusion of quacks – hydropaths, eclectics, and botanics, among others – and the picture of medical practice in the Old South is a depressing one for both whites and blacks.” See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 308. Some contemporary doctors held a different view; not only appreciating the benefits of cleanliness, but also arguing that inconsiderate masters ‘tamper[ed] with their sick negroes for one, two, or more days before applying for medical aid.’” See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 311 and 317, respectively. Brenda Stevenson also notes that enslavers “called in physicians when conditions seemed threatening.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 193.

¹⁷⁸ Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 303.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 299.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 301. According to Stampp, a litany of ailments and diseases plagued African Americans: dysentery, pleurisy, pneumonia, pleuropneumonia... sore throats, colds, thrush, measles, mumps influenza, whooping cough, dengue, scrofula, scarlet fever, rheumatism, typhoid, typhus, smallpox, diphtheria, and dropsy, all were mentioned frequently. Tuberculosis, or ‘Negro consumption,’ was prevalent.” See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 303.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 300.

¹⁸² According to the 1850 census, whites died at an average age of 25.5 years old, and a death rate of 1.2 percent by 1860. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 521. Stampp, *Peculiar Institution*, 318.

¹⁸³ Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 297.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 297-298.

¹⁸⁵ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 55.

¹⁸⁶ Foner also emphasizes that “for a largely illiterate constituency, in which political information circulated orally rather than through newspapers or pamphlets, local leaders were bridges to the larger world of politics, indispensable sources of political intelligence and guidance.... Their murder or exile inevitably had a demoralizing

impact upon their communities.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 442-443. Although Foner’s analysis centers on postwar death, the same principle applies in terms of male absence due to pre-Reconstruction death.

¹⁸⁷ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 341.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹⁸⁹ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 388.

¹⁹⁰ Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 64 (italics mine). AFIC interview of Harry McMillan (1863) in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 383 (italics mine).

¹⁹¹ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 97. The examples of slave injuries are numerous. Alabama slave Charles Hayes, for example, was working as a blacksmith when “a piece of hot iron” struck one of his eyes. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 4. As historian Kenneth Stampp explains, “few [slaves] were without a scar or two somewhere on their bodies.” See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 307.

¹⁹² Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 115

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁹⁴ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 243. Consider how the male body affected courtship. As South Carolinian slave Charley Barber explained, his beloved Mary Wylie “gonna want a man wid muscles on his arms and back and I had them. Usin’ dat pick and shovel on de railroad just give me what it took to git Mar.” Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, 32.

¹⁹⁵ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees*, 289.

¹⁹⁶ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 243.

¹⁹⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 4. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 243. For more on the physical afflictions from the Civil War, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 262-263.

¹⁹⁸ From 1870 to 1900, it was estimated that black male life expectancy was around forty years-old. Comparatively, white males averaged fifty years of age. See Sirag Eldin Hassan Suliman, “Estimation of Levels and Trends of the U.S. Adult Black Mortality during the Period 1870-1900 (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983), 170.

¹⁹⁹ Corporal Henry S. Harmon, Letter 13, Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 35.

²⁰⁰ The concept of “symbolic castration” can be attributed to gender theorist Todd Reeser. According to Reeser, “disability can be experienced as a demasculinization, and a missing arm or leg represented as a symbolic castration.” See Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 104.

²⁰¹ Hahn, et. al., *Freedom*, Series 3: Vol.1, 95.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 95. For many former slaves, poor food and clothing followed them into the postwar. Tennessee slave Betsey Robinson, for example, continued working for her master under false pretenses that she and her three children were still enslaved. “I have been kept at work Very hard, reported Robinson in an affidavit. “[My master] fed and Clothed us Very badly.” Ibid., 150.

²⁰⁵ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 56-57.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 79.

²⁰⁷ Towards the end of his life, Robert Smalls’s diabetes resulted in the amputation of one of his feet. This corporeal loss would surely have affected his manly abilities if suffered earlier in his life. Ibid., 220.

Chapter 4: More Than a Single Man: Black Cooperative Manhood in the Post-Civil War Economy

¹ George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972) v.8, part 1, 71.

² Slaves' economic "education" during slavery is subject to debate. According to historian Eugene Genovese, slavery failed to provide slaves with an industrial education, therefore retarding their progress. "The disadvantage [of slavery]," Genovese argues, "lay in its encouragement of a way of life that, however admirable intrinsically, ill prepared black people to compete in the economic world into which they would be catapulted by emancipation." See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 292. Genovese's argument restates the abolitionist argument of the nineteenth century which posited slavery as an inefficient labor system. As Frederick Law Olmsted declared: "slavery breeds unfaithful, meretricious, inexact, and non-persistent habits of working." See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 296.

³ Andrew Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free: Robert Smalls of South Carolina and His Families* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 35.

⁴ It is important to pause here and provide a historiographical commentary on the hegemonic reach of the self-made man. The concept derives from northern, white, middle-class "Victorian" culture during the transition and hardening of the Market Revolution of the nineteenth century. While historians tend to agree that this ideal was hegemonic or "dominant," some historians are tentative to extend the reach of self-made manhood to the South. A pioneering work on manliness by E. Anthony Rotundo, for example, explicitly states that self-made manhood was dominant for Northern "Yankees." See Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (1993), 297. Historians Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover also underscored the limited hegemonic reach of Self-Made Manhood over the South. According to Friend and Glover, white southern manhood consisted of two key markers of status: honor and mastery. Making use of W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* (1941), Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (1982), and Stephanie McCurry's *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (1995), Friend and Glover maintained that an honorable public status in the eyes of the community and a personal sense of mastery over dependents (wives, children, and slaves) generally defined southern white manliness. See Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (2004). Friend and Glover did admit that some southerners turned away from Old Southern manliness of "honor and mastery," preferring the self-made manly ideal via the New Southern market. However, in Craig Thompson Friend's follow-up reader, *Southern Masculinity: Perspectives On Manhood in the South Since Reconstruction*, (2009), Friend concluded that northern self-made manliness did not win hegemonic supremacy in the South.⁴ Rather, the traditional dyad of honor and mastery survived the Civil War, albeit in two different forms. The first postwar ideal was the "Christian gentleman" –modeled upon the chivalry of Robert E. Lee. According to this ideal, Lee embodied a Christian man of faith and piety, who defied effeminacy in defeat; while maintaining honor among many and mastery over his household. The South's second manly ideal was the "masculine martial." Surprisingly, Lee embodied this ideal as well. As a southern soldier and hero, Lee idealized the martial warrior who demonstrated his honor by violently protecting his "self, family, and region" from an external threat. Friend contended that these two ideals were far from exclusive. The Christian gentleman employed the masculine martial to advance his postbellum causes and "protect" his family from the fictive black rapist. Even so, Friend's manly concept of a violent Christian form of "honor and mastery" may have influenced white southern manhood, but it did not address any manly relationship to the economy, nor did it explain southern black men's inclusion. After all, how could black men "protect" their families against a fictive black rapist when they were the fictive black rapist? Friend did state that "black men [through the 1920s] subscribed to male identities quite similar to those in the white community," but given the exclusivity of the "honor and mastery" ideal, I am wary of its

application to black men. See Friend, *Southern Masculinity*, xix. Historian Peter Kolchin noted that slaves' values and beliefs regarding sexuality and exogamy differed from both Victorian culture and white southern culture, respectively, however, Kolchin was silent on slaves' relationship to Victorian gender ideals. See Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang; Revised and Updated edition, 2003), 140.

Friend and Glover's first framework that acknowledges the hegemonic reach of self-made manhood in relation to an incipient Southern Market parallels historian Daniel Walker Howe's position as well as historians Kenneth Stampp and Joel Williamson. Although the South was a "subculture" in relation to the "dominant" north, whose "tone... was set by the large owners of land and slaves," "the cultural ideals of the southern planter class had much in common with those of Victorians in the Northern states," including a shared Anglo-Protestant Heritage, didactic rhetoric, and self-righteousness, especially during an increasingly "national" market culture after the Civil War. See Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture" *American Quarterly* 27 (December 1975), 510, 519, 520. Kenneth Stampp argued that "Southern masters more or less conformed to" northern white middle-class self-made manhood. Stampp extended self-made manhood to male and female slave religious leaders as well. See Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 334-336. According to Joel Williamson, freedmen's roles were "deeply and persistently Victorian." See Williamson, *A Rage For Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Abridged edition, 1986), 45; while historian Barbara Fields argued that slaves were "precapitalist" and did not subscribe to bourgeois work ethics. See Barbara J. Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁵ W.J. Gaines, *The Negro and the White Man*, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1897, reprinted 1969), 136. A litany of freedman also remembered their utter destitution upon emancipation. "W'en freedum wuz declare' we wuz tu'n loose wid nothin'." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 64. "I dunno ob but one slave dat got lan' er nothin' w'en freedom wuz 'clared. We didn't git nuthin at freedom." *Ibid.*, 43. "I heered dem sez dat de slaves wud git lan', hoss, money or sumpin' but I neber heerd ob nobody gittin nuthin'." *Ibid.*, 41. "De slaves wuz tole dey would git forty ak'rs ob groun' en a mule w'en dey wuz freed but de nebber got hit. W'en we wuz free we wuz tuned out widout a thing." *Ibid.*, 35.

Prior to Emancipation, slaves who had managed to escape from slavery could boast of little material possessions as well. The famous escapee, William Wells Brown, indicated that his possessions included "some provisions and a single suit of clothes, about half worn." See William W. Brown, in George State, ed. *The Great Escapes: Four Slave Narratives* (New York: Barnes and Nobles Classics, 2007), 54.

⁶ Robert Higgs, "Accumulation of Property by Southern Blacks before World War I, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 72, No.4 (Sep., 1982), 728. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, 1976), 13.

⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois, "Georgia Negroes and Their Fifty Millions of Savings," *World's Work* (May, 1909), 11, 550.

⁸ Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 309.

⁹ Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 148 (italics not mine).

¹⁰ Thomas Hedgebeth in Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee* (Boston, 1856), 276.

¹¹ William Brown in Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee* (Boston, 1856). Freedwomen made the same observation. “I earned money, but nebber got it,” recalled Virginia slave Catherine Slim. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 79.

¹² AFIC interview of Joseph Smith (1863) in John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*, annotated edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 410.

¹³ Benjamin Quarles, *Frederick Douglass* (Cambridge: De Capo Press, 1968), 1-6.

¹⁴ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 203 (italics not mine).

¹⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 51.

¹⁶ Even critical white southerners questioned the paternalistic basis of slavery. “For what purpose does the master hold the servant?” rhetorically asked a Southerner. “Is it not that by his labor he, the master, may accumulate wealth?” See Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 5.

The profitability of slavery has a heated historiography. As far back as the eighteenth century, philosophers such as Montesquieu, Benjamin Franklin, and Adam Smith questioned the fiscal cost of slavery in relation to free labor – a topic of debate that continued well into the Antebellum discourses of abolitionists and pro-slavery proponents. Social science cliometricians reinvigorated the debate in the twentieth century. Cliometricians Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer fired the first salvo with “The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South,” *Journal of Political Economy*, LXVI (April 1958), 95-130, and *The Economics of Slavery and Other Studies in Econometric History* (Chicago, 1964), where they quantified that slavery was profitable – that is, from the standpoint of the enslaver – with evidence of increasingly high slave prices, a growing slave population, and a profitable cotton crop. Economists Douglas Dowd and M. Leiman questioned the Conrad-Meyer thesis for ignoring the impoverishing effect of slavery on poor white and black southerners in Douglas Dowd, “A Comparative Analysis of Economic Development in the American West and South,” *Journal of Economic History* (December, 1956); Dowd, “Communication,” *Journal of Political Economy* (October, 1958); M. M. Leiman, “A Note on Slave Profitability and Economic Growth: An Examination of the Conrad-Meyer Thesis,” *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 16, No.2 (June, 1967), 211-215. For additional criticism of the Conrad-Meyer thesis, see Hugh G. J. Aitken, ed., *Did Slavery Pay? Readings in the Economics of Black Slavery in the United States* (Boston, 1971).

Cliometricians Robert William Fogel and Stanley M. Engerman’s arguments went much further in *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston and Toronto, 1974); and Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods – A Supplement* (Boston and Toronto, 1974). Fogel and Engerman argued that the slave economy was efficient and profitable because slavery was a mutually beneficial system for all parties. See also Robert William Fogel’s later work, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York and London, 1990); and Peter Kolchin, “More *Time on the Cross*? An Evaluation of Robert William Fogel’s *Without Consent or Contract*,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 58, No.3 (Aug., 1992), 493.

For a systemic refutation of Fogel and Engerman’s study, see Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); and Herbert Gutman and Richard Sutch, “Sambo Makes Good, or Were Slaves Imbued with the Protestant Work Ethic?” in Paul A. David, Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin, Gavin Wright, *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). Specifically, historian Harry N. Scheiber responds to Fogel and Engerman’s claim that masters “expropriated” about 12 percent of slave incomes. “This computation depends upon charging against the slaves the expenses of their upbringing as children,” argues Scheiber, “(and also the expenses incurred by masters for slaves who did not survive childhood), discounted at a rate of 10 percent annually. The procedure is so heavily skewed to produce a low ‘expropriation’ rate that if

such discounting of childhood expenses is removed, the calculation would show that some 49 percent of the value of slaves' labor was taken from them! Moreover, this is a *lower-bound* estimate." See Harry N. Scheiber, "Black Is Computable: The Controversy over *Time on the Cross* and the History of American Slavery," *The American Scholar*, Vol. 44, No.4 (Autumn, 1975), 667.

¹⁷ Just as I explained in note 3 above, historians have argued over the hegemonic reach of self-made manhood in the white South. My analysis, however, examines black gender identity in relation to their *perceptions* of white enslavers in the economy rather than the gender identities of white men themselves. White men in the South may have subscribed to various gender identities including an "honor and mastery" manhood, a communal manhood, or a self-made manhood; but regardless of their gender identities, white southern manliness is germane to my study only in relation to black men's perceptions of white men.

¹⁸ Interview of Richard H. Parker (1866) in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 466.

¹⁹ Freedwomen, such as former Virginia slave Catherine Slim, formed similar views of their masters' dependence on their earnings. "I earned money," Catherine recalled, "but nebber got it." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16, (Ohio Narratives), 79.

²⁰ Dean C. Brink, "What Did Freedom Mean? The Aftermath of Slavery as Seen by Former Slaves and Former Masters in Three Societies," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, The Reconstruction Era (Winter, 1989), 41.

²¹ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 70.

²² *Ibid.*, 105.

²³ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁴ Rawick, v.8, part 1, 127.

²⁵ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 103. Many slaves shared these sentiments. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 69, 99. See also Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 28, 43, 196. Likewise, according to an anonymous soldier of the 11th USCHA (heavy artillery): "Is it possible that we, who even in bondage supplied the nation with cotton, sugar, tobacco and other products too numerous to mention, and have made the United States rich by the sweat of our brow, are not capable of taking care of ourselves? I say *that we are, and we have proved it.*" See "A Citizen of Geneva, now a Soldier" 11th USCHA, 1865, letter 100, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 226-227 (italics not mine).

²⁶ *New York Times*, January 3, 1863, cited in Foner, *Reconstruction*, 50.

²⁷ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 229. Richard T. Henry of the 11th USCHA (heavy artillery) recorded similar sentiments. "The enemy of emancipation cries that the negroes will not work, that the government will have to support them, or they will become pests to the country...I believe that that cry is false – false as slavery." See Richard T. Henry, Corporal, 11th USCHA, 1865, letter 81, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 194.

²⁸ Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States*; Series 3: Vol. 1, *Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 136-137 (italics not mine).

²⁹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 102.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, 22 (italics not mine). Hahn, et. al., *Freedom*, Series 3: Vol. 1, 126. The argument was a common one. See also Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 248. It was our masters who "lived in idleness" responded a former slave, since "all their lives" they have relied on our "stolen labor." See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 102. W.E.B. Du Bois continued this line of thought. "The Southern planter... was too lazy and self-indulgent... The planter wanted results without effort." See W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1935), 37. Even President Lincoln framed the Civil War in terms of "the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil." See Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 126.

³² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 72.

³³ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁴ Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes 1861-1865* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 73-74.

³⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement 2, v.3, 877.

³⁶ Janet S. Hermann, *Pursuit of a Dream* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1981), 35-87.

³⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 202.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15. A similar argument could be found in the Colonial Era. According to one Colonial observer, slaves made the point that "as we work and raise all, we ought to consume all... Massa does not work; therefore has not equal right: overseer does not work; he has no right to eat as we do." See Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 366. Freedmen were not the only ones who believed that the fruits of slave labor belonged to the slave. According to Virginia slave George White, "Yankee soldiers... went in de smoke house an' got hams an' cut dem up, took what dey want an' give us some an' said, 'Dis is your labor an' not deirs.' Dey went in de house an' got some of Lucy Young's best dresses an' dipped dem in de slop barrels, an' thew dem out in de yard, an' told us dat it was our labor an' not hers." See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 311. Similarly, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 247.

Criticism of northern self-made manhood was not empty rhetoric. Northern interests such as the textile and trading industries – particularly in the urban centers of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York – depended on southern cotton, and in effect, slavery. Related to these industries was a cadre of businessmen including "lawyers, bankers, insurance brokers, and ship owners" whose livelihoods were based on cotton. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 220. W.E.B. Du Bois made the same point: "Black labor became the foundation stone not only of the Southern social structure, but of Northern manufacture and commerce." See Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 5.

⁴⁰ Historian Jacqueline Jones cites a “historical ‘ethos of mutuality’ developed under slavery” that manifested itself as a “postemancipation cooperative impulse.” See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1986), 65. Historian Philip Morgan has identified a “communal ethos” amongst slaves as far back as the earliest Colonial settlements in the Chesapeake, and particularly in the Lowcountry where large slave populations lived a respectable distance from their masters. See Philip Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 121, 123-124. Historians Peter Kolchin and Brenda Stevenson’s analyses of antebellum slave communality are in line with Morgan’s analysis. See Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 149; and Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 255.

⁴¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, 2.

⁴² Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 340.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 622.

⁴⁴ Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The ‘Invisible Institution’ in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 297.

⁴⁵ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 269. Another slave reasoned that “the respect that the slaves had for their owners might have been from fear, but the real character of a slave was brought out by the respect that they had for each other.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 255.

⁴⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives),16.

⁴⁷ Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (Savannah: Thomas Purse, 1842), 130-131 (italics not mine).

⁴⁸ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 583.

⁴⁹ Whitemarsh Seabrook, quoted in Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, 143-144. According to C.W. Gooch’s “Prize Essay on Agriculture in Virginia,” the act of slaves betraying one another was tantamount to a crime. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 622.

⁵⁰ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 323. According to historian Herbert Gutman, Freedmen Bureau officer John Alvord observed in 1866 that slaves “love[d] to congregate in families, in groups, in villages,” which Alvord believed was practiced during slavery which “always had some *social* features which, in a measure, alleviated the negro’s bondage. To this they are habituated, and for it they show a fondness.” See Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, xxi-xxii.

⁵¹ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 656.

⁵² AFIC interview of Octave Johnson in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 395. It is important to recognize that an ethos of cooperation was not universally espoused by all slaves. As slave J.W. Lindsay explained in his AFIC interview, “there were some who, if they knew a man was coming [running away], would tell it directly, to curry favor with their masters.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 388.

⁵³ The ban on slave funerals dates back to as far as 1687, when northern Virginia authorities believed funerals constituted fertile grounds for conspiracies. Similar reactions ensued in 1800 after authorities learned of the inclusion of a black child's funeral in the Gabriel Prosser Plot. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 194, 259. Former Maryland slave James V. Deane recalled seeing "many colored funerals with no service. A graveyard on the place, only a wooden post to show where you were buried." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 7. However, there were exceptions. Georgia slave Elisha Doc Garey recalled funerals where "evvybody in de country would be dar." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 5. Independent worship was not universally proscribed. Tennessee slave Andy Odell was allowed to go to a white Baptist Church, and "nebber knowed any slave dat had ter hide ter sing er pray." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 60.

⁵⁴ Norman R. Yetman, *Voices From Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1999), 58, 56-57.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 53, 37.

⁵⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 49.

⁵⁷ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 79. Patrollers – or "paddyrollers" as many slaves called them – were local white enforcers who policed the activities and movements of slaves, punishing runaways or itinerant slaves without permits. The proscription of slave worship was by no means universal. Slave John Brown, for example, remembered his master's wife conducting prayer meetings and singing "the old timey songs;" however, Brown also noted that "on the next plantation" there was "no praying there, and no singing." See Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 45-46.

⁵⁸ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 262, 266.

⁵⁹ Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 161.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁶² This does not mean freedwomen fit neatly into the entire ideal of white middle-class womanhood. Far from it. Black women confronted gender complexities of their own in meeting the hegemonic idealism of womanhood in relation to the economy. While postwar black women, out of necessity, worked outside the home as domestics and laundresses for white families, the hegemonic "cult of domesticity" proscribed women to serve as a "moral beacon" inside the confines of their own homes – a feminine "sphere" if you will that functioned as "a restorative haven from the anxieties and adversities of public life and commerce." For more on this feminine "canon," see Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, xvii. Also, see the pioneering article, Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* (1963). It is important to note that the "cult of domesticity" was not intended to apply to free blacks or slaves. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 85.

⁶³ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 4. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 165.

⁶⁴ Rotundo, 19-20, 179-180. The nineteenth century lexicon was indicative of the promotion of the individual rather than the community, with such additions as “self-improvement, self-control, self-interest, and self-advancement.” See Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 20.

⁶⁵ According to historian Erica L. Ball, by the 1830s reformers conflated dependence with servility, degradation, male poverty, intemperance, immoderacy, and immorality – a set of beliefs that free blacks also espoused. See Erica L. Ball, “To Train Them for the Work: Manhood, Morality, and Free Black Conduct Discourse in Antebellum New York,” in Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster, eds., *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature, 1820-1945* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2011), 61, 66.

According to Rotundo, interdependence had previously been a key component of manliness during the Colonial Era – or what Rotundo has coined “the communal man.” Unlike the self-made man of the nineteenth century – which defined a man as a single unit – communal manhood stressed the identity of man in relation to the collective unit, where the individual owed his “duty” to others. See Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 18-19.

⁶⁶ The hegemonic concept of self-made manhood was an ideal, and thus, had its limits on white middle-class men as well. As Rotundo makes clear, white middle-class men did engage in “a world of profound interdependence,” and yet these “dense networks of collaboration, contest, and mutual influence” took place within a competitive economic environment. “A man,” writes Rotundo, “had to maintain a judicious balance between cooperation and competition.” See Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 204. I am arguing that black men’s “ethos of mutuality” was not the same rivalry-centered relationship that white middle-class men practiced. Rather than merely engaging in a competitive, fraternal world of “sociability” as white middle-class men did, black men belonged to a cooperative, historically enslaved world where interdependence did not simply mean fraternity, but survival.

⁶⁷ Heather Andrea Williams, “‘Commenced to Think Like a Man’: Literacy and Manhood in African American Civil War Regiments” in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 210.

⁶⁸ Historian Jacqueline Jones has made the same point albeit without a direct application to black manliness. “[Freedmen’s] attempts to provide for each other’s needs appear to have been a logical and humane response to widespread hardship during the 1860s and 1870s.” See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 65.

⁶⁹ Some freedman entered the postwar era with enough money to purchase land. Beatrice Black’s father, for example, “had some money he made in the war and bought forty acres of land. It was....Government land.” See Rawick, v.8, part 1, 166. Fraud and chicanery committed against freedmen also limited their postwar pursuits of landownership. For example, see Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 72. According to a commissioner of agriculture, about one black family in twenty were landowners by 1876. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 175.

⁷⁰ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 246-247. According to the Militia Act of July 17, 1862, black Union troops were to be paid \$10 per month with a deduction of \$3 for clothing expenses. White men were paid \$13 per month with an additional \$3.50 for clothing. See James M. McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (1965; reprint, New York: Vintage, 2003), 196-197. The Union Navy also paid black sailors \$10 per month and one daily meal. See Aptheker, “Negro in the Union Navy,” *JNH*, XXXII (April, 1947), 176. Free and enslaved black men in the Confederate Army ironically received higher pay than the USCT in the latter years of the war. On June 28, 1861, for example, Tennessee authorized the payment of “eight dollars a month with clothing and rations” for black troops. See Charles H. Wesley, “The Employment of Negroes as Soldiers in the Confederate Army,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (July, 1919), 244. According to the Confederacy’s “General Orders No. 32” of March 1864, “An Act to increase the Efficiency of the Army by the

Employment of Free Negroes and Slaves in certain Capacities.” “The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, that all male free Negroes, and other free persons of color... shall receive rations and clothing, and compensation at the rate of eleven dollars a month.” See George Washington Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, Preceded by a Review of the Military Services of Negroes in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1887), 84-85.

⁷¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 106.

⁷² Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 246-247.

⁷³ According to an 1805 Virginia law, slave-owners were prohibited from “permitting their slaves to go at large and hire themselves out, under a promise of paying their masters or owners a certain sum of money in lieu of their services.” According to historian Brenda Stevenson, the practice of hiring out slaves was so prevalent that citizens in Warrenton, Virginia protested what was to them, an illegal practice that was “so very much in vogue in many of the towns and villages of the State.” “[It] is expressly contrary to law,” they complained, “ruinous to the negro as a slave, and at war with public polity.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 185. Genovese estimates that “between 5 and 10 percent of the slaves of the South could expect to be hired out during any given year in the late antebellum period,” however his estimate remains unsubstantiated by evidence. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 391. Data from Loudoun County, Virginia, suggests a much higher rate of hiring out. “In 1860 alone,” writes Stevenson, “census records indicate that approximately 516 Loudoun residents hired the services of at least 34 percent of the county’s adult slaves and almost one-fifth of the entire Loudoun slave population.” See, Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 184. Hiring out was one of several proscribed activities that were sometimes informally permitted. “In 1771,” according to Peter Kolchin, “a grand jury presentment in Georgia revealed that ‘Slaves are permitted to Rent houses in the lands and Invirons...of Savannah,’ and that ‘in said houses meetings of Slaves are very frequent, Spirits and other licquors are sold, and Stolen goods often Concealed.’” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 61-62.

⁷⁴ According to Brenda Stevenson, hiring fees “could vary substantially. In 1843, Robert Conrad expected to rent out his slave Jesus for \$60, John for \$50, and Jasper for \$20. Slave blacksmiths and other skilled personnel commanded as much as \$100 annually, while female domestics usually brought \$25 to \$40 per year. Some paid in advance, while others paid quarterly or at the end of the year. Contracts stipulated that renters provide the slaves with adequate food, clothing, shelter, and sometimes medical attention.” One Virginia enslaver hired out her three enslaved blacksmiths for more than \$500 a year. See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 184 and 199, respectively. Even so, Stevenson reminds us that hiring fees belonged to the pockets of enslavers only. Skilled slaves such as blacksmith Thomas Harper “netted his owner in excess of \$100 per year, [but] he could not keep any of his earnings for himself.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 186.

⁷⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 30.

⁷⁶ David W. Blight, *A Slave No More Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom, Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (Chicago: Mariner Books; Reprint edition (2009), 185. Although slaves like Washington were the minority, Washington wasn’t alone. According to the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission Interview of Mrs. Lewis Bibb, “I just worked round first at one place and then another,” reported Bibb. “I didn’t pay my master any hire while I was working to earn the money to pay for myself.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 386.

⁷⁷ Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 186.

⁷⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 39.

⁷⁹ Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 30.

⁸⁰ Tredegar Iron Works famously casted artillery, railroad equipment, torpedoes, and submarines including 1,600 cannon and 90 percent of the South's shot and cannonballs. At the beginning of the war in 1861, slaves were paid \$1.25 per day. See Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 51. Comparatively, free blacks in the North and South could receive wages between \$1.00 to \$3.00 per day. For instance, a private of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment complained to his sister that had black soldiers "staid at home... we could have received from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per day;" while free black miners at the Dover and Tuckahoe Pits were paid a daily rate of \$3.00. See McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 199, and Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 50, respectively.

⁸¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 106.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ There was one successful land program during Reconstruction – the South Carolina Land Commission – which provided favorable homestead prices to freedmen. Ultimately, it established homes for fourteen thousand black families, but this program only applied to the state of South Carolina and was abolished when the Democrats reasserted their control in 1877. Subsequently, some freedmen were unable to afford their mortgages and were evicted. See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 117. Many freedpeople expressed disappointment with their limited access to land or with unfulfilled promises of land grants. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 169, 257.

⁸⁴ Sharon Ann Holt, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900* (Athens: University of Georgia Press (2003), 66.

⁸⁵ According to Sharon Ann Holt, "old mules could be had for ten dollars, but a good one could cost as much as forty dollars. Young, strong horses ran upward from there." See Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 66.

⁸⁶ Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 66.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* "Cooperative accumulation" was also institutionalized in the form of General William T. Sherman's settlement program of February 1865, stating that when four freedmen families settled together, they were to be given forty acres per family and a draft mule to share. President Johnson quickly put an end to the program in April 1865, and the Republican could not override his veto. See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 88-89. An exceptional example of "cooperative accumulation" could be found in the "Davis Bend" Plantation. Considered by Ulysses S. Grant as a "Negro paradise," this former property of Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his brother housed "seventy-five free Negro heads of families, representing a total population of some six hundred." According to a report, these freedmen produced "12,000 bushels of corn worth \$12,000, a quantity of vegetable and melon produce worth \$38,500, and 1736 bales of cotton worth \$347,200." As historian Benjamin Quarles explains, "of the total amount brought in by this diversified crop (\$397,700), the expense amounted to \$238,500, leaving a profit balance of \$159,200 for the black farmers." See Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 285.

⁸⁸ Richard M. Reid, *Freedom For Themselves: North Carolina's Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 241. The nineteenth-century lexicon of "the self" not only informed an individual relationship to the economy; it also went hand in hand with the political discourse of "free

labor” – “that is, for a man to be truly free, he must have the chance to achieve economic independence by his own efforts.” See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 228.

⁸⁹ Ball, “To Train Them for the Work,” 63 (italics not mine).

⁹⁰ Horace James was dismayed with the policy of providing freedmen with free aid. “It was far better, James wrote, to provide essential goods to the freedmen of North Carolina ‘at prices within their reach, putting it in their power to live within their scanty means,’ than to give them goods free of charge. An inexpensive store, rather than donations, ‘promotes their *manhood*, instead of inviting them to be mendicants.’” See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 228 (italics not mine).

⁹¹ McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, 287.

⁹² Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 211.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁹⁴ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 289.

⁹⁵ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 84-85. Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 341. In subsequent years, Yager performed cooperative manliness by helping his friend get to work both day and night, see Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 338-339. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 8.

⁹⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 1.

⁹⁷ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 65-66. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 38. Apprenticeship laws were part of the despised Black Codes of the immediate postwar era which attempted to limit freedmen’s power. Apprenticeships were, in fact, re-enslavement of black children. According to Foner, “these laws allowed judges to bind to white employers black orphans and those whose parents were deemed unable to support them. The former owner usually had first preference, the consent of the parents was not required, and the law permitted ‘moderate corporal chastisement.’” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 201.

⁹⁸ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 522. Such was the case with Lucindy Allison and her husband who “kept” an old slave woman named “Aunt Mandy Buford till she died.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 42. For an example of helping elderly freedpeople, see the AFIC interview of J.W. Lindsay in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 401. For an example of extended kin living together, see the deposition of Harriet Booker, Civil War Pension File of Glenn Booker, Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer, eds., *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (New York: New York University Press, 2008),145. For a look at the fragmentation and reformation of a slave community due to the economic needs of the enslaver, see Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 221.

⁹⁹ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 65-66.

¹⁰⁰ See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 96, Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 4. According to Foner, “in some areas, such as a poverty-stricken corner of West Virginia, black organizations contributed money to aid suffering poor whites.”

¹⁰¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 95, 283.

¹⁰² AFIC interview of Washington Spradling in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 385.

¹⁰³ Hahn, et. al., *Freedom*, Series 3: Vol. 1, 157.

¹⁰⁴ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 95.

¹⁰⁵ Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 284.

¹⁰⁶ Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 309. In addition to muster and annual fees, veterans were required to purchase a GAR uniform. In 1883, a Women's Relief Corps (WRC) was also established; functioning as the official women's auxiliary to the GAR. See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 309. In addition to organizations, freedmen collectively participated in the funding and building of schools. For example, see William P. Woodlin, 8th USCI, 1865, letter 97, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 223.

¹⁰⁷ Erica L. Ball, "To Train Them for the Work," 63, 72. Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982), 99-102. Among the many nineteenth-century organizations, Frances Willard's Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) – offers the most poignant example of organization membership.

¹⁰⁸ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 140-141. Mother Nature's destruction was not limited to the army worm of 1866. According to freedman Bill Simms, grasshoppers destroyed the crops in Lawrence, Kansas in 1874, resulting in a huge loss and delayed wages. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 10-11.

¹⁰⁹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 140-141.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141-142. B.J. Butler of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry also reported much suffering and near starvation for freedmen in South Carolina. "The colored people inform me that the majority of them get four quarts of meal or corn for one week, and nothing else, and that their task is one acre of ground to work over in a day. If some of the soldiers did not give them meat to eat they would not get any...I saw a very old man who told me that he had not had a pair of shoes for five years." See B.J. Butler, Private, 55th Massachusetts Infantry, 1865, letter 76, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 185.

¹¹¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 141-142. According to historian Harold D. Woodman, postwar cotton prices "tended downward," from the high prices of 1865, however, they "remained higher than prewar levels." See Harold D. Woodman, "Sequel to Slavery: The New History Views the Postbellum South," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 43, No.4 (Nov., 1977), 542. Of course, freedmen were not the only ones to suffer the consequences of the 1873 Panic. "By 1880, writes Foner, "one third of the white farmers in the cotton states were tenants renting either for cash or a share of the crop, and a region self-sufficient before the Civil War was no longer able to feed itself." See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 393. By the end of the nineteenth century, cotton prices were dismal. The price of a bale of cotton fell to ten cents in 1887 and five cents in 1894. See Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996). 65.

¹¹² Freedmen generally received ten to twelve dollars per month, whereas women received eight dollars. See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 54; Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 5, 15; Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 280. According to Foner, "the average earnings of unskilled Massachusetts factory operatives

amounted to some \$600 per year, a sum on which a family could not make ends meet.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 475. Compare the majority of freedmen’s wages in relation to skilled middle-class black men in 1866: “grocers in New Bern had annual incomes of \$678; barbers were earning \$675, and carpenters, \$510.” “Masons... were making more than \$400 per year;” blacksmiths \$468 per year and coopers \$418 annually.” See Reid, *Freedom For Themselves*, 366, 387. Slave Lucretia Alexander believed that during the immediate postwar, “twelve dollars wasn’t enough.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 38.

¹¹³ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 166.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹¹⁵ Rawick, *American Slave*, v.11, part 7, 205.

¹¹⁶ According to Foner, “localities added poll taxes of their own, sometimes, in black belt counties, raising the bulk of their revenues in this manner. Mobile levied a special tax of \$5 on every adult male... With state, county, and local levies, blacks might find themselves paying \$15 in poll taxes alone.” Foner also provides a comparative analysis of property tax in relation to craftsmen’s income taxes. Property owners “paid less than town craftsmen, whose earnings were taxed at rates far higher than real estate,” writes Foner. “In Mississippi’s Warren County, the three largest landowners each paid less than \$200 in taxes, while the owner of a livery stable paid nearly \$700, a butcher over \$200, and a shoemaker \$75. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 206.

¹¹⁷ Liens and taxes only constituted two unfair components of Presidential Reconstruction. Under his time in office, President Johnson also favored business interests – including railroads, factories, mines, and manufacturers – in the form of aid and tax exemptions, at the expense of freedmen’s access to affordable land. Moreover, the infamous Black Codes were established during Presidential Reconstruction which reinstated slavery in all but name by restricting freedmen’s physical movement, narrowing definitions of vagrancy, forbidding sale of produce at night, forcing black children into “apprenticeships,” and reintroducing corporal punishment and chain gangs. Although Congressional Reconstruction overturned the majority of Presidential Reconstruction, the years of economic damage could not be reversed. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 328, 372-373, 390.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 372-373.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 409. Stanley L. Engerman, “The Economic Response to Emancipation,” Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher, eds., *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics, and Culture After Slavery* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 56.

¹²⁰ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 512, 535. According to Peter Kolchin, “agricultural prices (especially cotton) fell faster and further than non-agricultural prices. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 233.

¹²¹ According to cliometrician Stanley L. Engerman, slave labor produced 90 percent of all cotton in 1860 and 60 percent in 1876. Although still constituting a majority of the labor force, “resident white farmers” impinged upon freedmen’s hold on labor, while planters sought supposedly more tractable laborers from abroad. See Stanley L. Engerman, “The Economic Response to Emancipation,” 60, 67. Since cash crops trumped the profitability of food crops, freedmen centered their agrarian stakes where they counted the most, and thus took a serious fall during the 1870s. See Pieter C. Emmer, “The Price of Freedom: The Constraints of Change in Postemancipation America,” in Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher, eds., *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics, and Culture After Slavery* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 34. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 536-537.

¹²² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 393, 408-409. The Panic of 1873 did not initiate a decline in land prices, but it did much to further depreciate the worth of land. Even so, according to cliometricians Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, the postwar “withdrawal” of women, children, and the elderly from the fields resulted in a labor shortage that “made land a redundant resource.” “Consequently,” writes Ransom and Sutch, “the price of land dropped considerably.” See Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, “Capitalists Without Capital: The Burden of Slavery and the Impact of Emancipation,” *Agricultural History*, Vol. 62, No.3, Quantitative Studies in Agrarian History (Summer, 1988), 147.

The declension of cotton prices in the late nineteenth century took place against the backdrop of further industrialization and mechanization. Surprisingly, mechanization did not greatly influence the labor side of cotton picking (or the cutting of sugar cane). According to historian Pieter C. Emmer, technological “innovations were limited to that part of the production process that started once the cane, the coffee beans, and the cotton had been cut or picked.” Specifically in regard to the sugar industry, “new technology was aimed at increasing the amount of sucrose through the use of more effective cane crushers and new refining equipment... The possibility of mechanizing fieldwork in the production of coffee and cotton was even more limited than in producing sugar.” See Emmer, “The Price of Freedom,” 29.

¹²³ Jacqueline Jones makes a similar argument: “The former slaves’ attempts to provide for each other’s needs appear to have been a logical and humane response to widespread hardship during the 1860s and 1870s.” See Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 65.

¹²⁴ Indeed, as South Carolina freedwoman Adeline Grey explained, “after freedom was de time when dey suffered more dan before. Dese chillum [today] don’t know how de blessed.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 2, 205. North Carolina freedman Jacob Thomas bitterly expressed similar postwar conditions. Abraham Lincoln must have “had a heap of faith in de [freedman],” explained Thomas, “ter think dat he could live on nothin’ at all.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.15, 351. “I been farmin’ all my life,” explained George Benson, “and what have I got? Nothin’.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 154. Freedman Henry Blake recalled having “just overalls and something to eat” to show for his postwar work. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 178. According to Virginia freedman Arthur Green, “Fer yeahs an’ yeahs niggers worked fer only dey board. Dat’s why baby, us niggers ain’ never got to progress – jes’ was kep’ down an’ back workin’ fer white folks fer nothin’.” See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 126.

¹²⁵ My argument is in direction contention with historians Joel Williamson and Eugene Genovese. Williamson argues that “the black family patterned itself on the Victorian model. The father ruled in worldly matters, the mother in things spiritual. Fathers were the breadwinners, mothers were the conservators of morality. Men generally went into the broad world, women stayed home.” See Joel Williamson, 47. Genovese agrees with Williamson, arguing that “postwar black men and women followed a black man breadwinner framework.” “Almost everywhere in the South the freedmen demanded wages high enough to allow them to support their families. They wanted their women home with the children, and the women supported the demand vigorously. Many women may have preferred housekeeping... [T]hese tough women... displayed... a desire to defer to their husbands both at home and in the new political world they were entering together.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 490.

¹²⁶ During slavery, economic imperatives demanded cooperation between married free blacks and slaves. Consider the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission interview of free black Elizabeth Thompson. “My husbands is a slave,” reported Thompson, and “I have five children. I wash and iron, and my husband helps me some by his extra work. His old master hires him out for \$7.00 a week, and requires \$2.50 a week from him.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 387.

¹²⁷ Emily Herring Wilson, *Hope and Dignity: Older Black Women of the South* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 42.

¹²⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, 6.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁰ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 77.

¹³¹ For more on the demand for laundresses, see Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Reprint edition, 1998).

¹³² Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 64.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 85.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Williamson, *A Rage For Order*, 47.

¹³⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 86.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

¹³⁹ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 60 (italics not mine).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁴² Rawick, v.8, part 1, 126.

¹⁴³ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 87-88.

¹⁴⁴ During her 1939 interview, freedwoman Mariah Barnes revealed that she had continued to work alongside her husband in the cotton fields until 1937. "I and de old man worked as long as we could," said Mariah. Up to two year ago I picked cotton when fall come. Year 'fore last I'd put on a pair o' de old man's overalls under my dress and crawl up and down de cotton rows." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 1, v.11, 5.

¹⁴⁵ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 86, 405-406.

¹⁴⁶ Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 10.

¹⁴⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 86 (italics mine). Nordhoff was not alone in his assumption of freedmen's patriarchy. According to Louisiana planters, "whenever [freedmen] wanted their wives to work they would tell them themselves; and if [they] could not rule [their] own domestic affairs on that place [they] would leave it." See

Foner, *Reconstruction*, 86. Such assumptions were bolstered by freedmen's false claims that men were the sole decision-makers. As freedman James O'Hara stated: "the way a colored man treats his land is this: he will buy it, the first year he will cut down more trees, dig a little ditch... and it cost him nothing except his labor." Rather than "O'Hara's boastful sketch of his manly prowess," historian Sharon Ann Holt reveals that "accumulation in fact involved both men and women, and success certainly required years of labor by the whole family." See Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 63.

¹⁴⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.14, 298-99.

¹⁴⁹ Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 6, 10, 14, 33.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁵¹ South Carolina Narratives, Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 2., 278 (italics mine). In addition to home-based production serving as payment and collateral at local country stores, home-based goods could be consumed directly by the family, thus relieving the family of having to purchase those items at the store. See Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 11.

¹⁵² Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives), 26.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁵⁴ Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 1, v.11, 11.

¹⁵⁵ Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 63.

¹⁵⁸ Just as freedmen depended on their children's economic contributions, it could be argued that male children were educated in cooperative manhood by contributing to their parents. For example, as a boy, Alexander Kenner helped his mother's laundress duties by "carr[ying] out the clothes." See the AFIC interview of Alexander Kenner, Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 392.

¹⁵⁹ Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 21.

¹⁶⁰ As historian Sharon Ann Holt, explained, the Scales family "built a substantial life out of a miscellany of low-skill, low-return, highly various occupations." See Holt, *Making Freedom Pay*, 21.

¹⁶¹ Unlike the construction of white manliness, homeownership, or the lack thereof, was not indicative of black emasculation. According to historian Neil Foley, "home ownership, according to one contemporary, required that white men make sacrifices necessary to 'make a man of yourself' and liberated the tenant from feminine dependency as a 'mere hewer of wood and drawer of water, to do somebody else' bidding all the rest of your life." See Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 157.

¹⁶² Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 1, v.11, 12.

¹⁶³ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 107.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 95. According to Baker, “hiring out” during the postwar meant wage work. Working thirds or fourths referred to the ratio or “share” of the crop that laborers received at the end of the season. According to a Freedmen’s Bureau estimate, less than 10% of freedman who worked on plantations in 1866 “realized enough to support their families.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 63. For a detailed example of available postwar jobs, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 170-173; Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 42.

¹⁶⁵ AFIC interview of Joseph Smith in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 410.

¹⁶⁶ AFIC interview of George Ross in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 408.

¹⁶⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 104. The exception was Louisiana where sugar plantations still demanded gang labor. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 218.

¹⁶⁸ Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 27.

¹⁶⁹ For an exception to the rule, Mississippi freedman Cyrus Bellus recalled that “right after emancipation, the boss man told [my folks] they could work by the day or sharecrop or they could work by groups. A group of folks could go together and work and the boss man would pay them so much a day. I believe they worked for him a good while – about seven or eight years at least. They was in one of the groups.” See Rawick, v.8, part 1, 143.

¹⁷⁰ Historian John Blassingame has interpreted freedmen’s rejection of gang labor as evidence of slaves distaste for “collective work.” See John Blassingame’s untitled book review of Eugene Genovese’s *Roll, Jordan, Roll* in the *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 9, No.3 (Spring, 1976), 405. Economist and historian Gerald D. Jaynes adopted a similar perspective. “In accepting family-based farming,” argued Jaynes, “the workers relinquished much of the social cohesiveness that had been supported by the collective work group.” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 227. I believe that collective work under enslaver’s directions and collective work during the postwar were two different things entirely. The first was a method of survival and group identity during slavery while the second harkened back to enslavement after emancipation.

The concept of freedom influenced other aspects of freedman’s economic decisions. As Foner has suggested, “the desire to escape from white supervision and establish a modicum of economic independence” prompted freedmen “to prefer tenancy to wage labor, and leasing land for a fixed rent to sharecropping.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 104. In 1863, Sgt. Prince Rivers of the 33rd U.S. Colored Infantry, believed that “every colored man will be a slave, and feel himself a slave until he can *raise his own bale of cotton and put his own mark upon it and say Dis is mine!*” See Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 246-247 (italics not mine). Indeed, the sharecropping system was, according to an 1870 Department of Agriculture report, “an unwilling concession to the freedman’s desire to become a proprietor.” Although a wage system was preferred by white planters as a mechanism for greater control, freedmen rejected wages, according to one planter, out of their “desire to be masters of their own time.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 405.

Freedom altered freedwomen’s economic decisions as well. According to Foner, “in both cities and rural areas, black women also proved reluctant to labor as domestic servants in white homes, and those who did frequently refused to live in their employer’s residence. ‘House servants are difficult to get out here,’ wrote a resident of upcountry Georgia. ‘Every negro woman wants to set up house keeping.’” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 85. No doubt, freedwomen preferred working in their own home-based economies rather than working for white households.

¹⁷¹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 227.

¹⁷² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 405.

¹⁷³ Rawick, *American Slave*, v.14, part 1, 320 (italics mine).

¹⁷⁴ Dean C. Brink, "What Did Freedom Mean?", 40.

¹⁷⁵ Rawick, *American Slave*, v.15, 353-54.

¹⁷⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 259.

¹⁷⁷ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 90, 102.

¹⁷⁸ Robert Smalls's biographer, sociologist Andrew Billingsley, refers to the *Planter* affair as an endeavor carried out by a "family of liberation" who were "all being responsible to and for each other." See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 51, 52, 56, 57, 184, 224. The planter's value was actually \$70,000, which Smalls later received an additional \$3,500. For a full breakdown of the federal award, see Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 65. Although Smalls's wife Hannah did not receive a portion of the monetary award, her willingness to support and stand with her husband was beyond reproach. "I will go," Hannah reportedly answered when Smalls told her of the plan of escape, "and where you die, I will die." See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 54.

¹⁷⁹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 221. In fact, Billingsley demonstrates that at every step of the way, Robert Smalls's life was one of interdependence – that is, from the time his wife Hannah worked as a hotel chambermaid, to his successful elections by loyal constituents, to his reliance on his daughter Elizabeth's help with his congressional correspondence and speeches, to his reliance on his daughter Sarah's help in his old age – Smalls's life demonstrates that even an exceptional life such as his was based on interdependence and cooperation. For more, see Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 43-45, 109, 214. To underscore this point, Billingsley cites the English poet John Donne who wrote: "No man is an island entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." See Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 225. During an 1863 interview, when asked why black men "took" a wife, Robert Smalls responded: "to have somebody to do for me and to keep me. The colored men in taking wives always do so with reference to the service the women will render." See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 374-375.

Chapter 5: Without Permission: Black Manliness in the Family and Community

¹ James W.C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith; or Events in the History of James W.C. Pennington, Pastor of a Presbyterian Church, New York, Formerly a Slave in the State of Maryland, United States* (London: Charles Gilpin, 5, Bishopsgate Without, 1849), 7.

² Andrew Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free: Robert Smalls of South Carolina and His Families* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 73-74 (italics mine).

³ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴ According to historian E. Anthony Rotundo, “If a man is not a man,” in the nineteenth century, “he must be like a boy”. “That ‘stigma of boyishness’...had to do with frivolous behavior, the lack of worthy aims, and the want of self-control.” See E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 7, 20-21,

⁵ It may appear redundant to situate a slave within a world of circumscription, but when it comes to the gender constructions of male and female slaves, it is more accurate to emphasize the restraints that delimited slaves rather than overestimate their agency.

⁶ This discourse of paternalism was reified in historiography by historian Ulrich B. Phillips who argued that the slave plantation was an edifying “school constantly training and controlling pupils who were in a backward state of civilization...On the whole the plantations were the best schools yet invented for the mass training of that sort of inert and backward people which the bulk of the American negroes represented.” See Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (1918), 342-343; and Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Little Brown & Company; First American Edition, 1929). For more on southern paternalism, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “The Ideal Typology and Ante-bellum Southern History,” *Societas*, V (Winter 1975), 1-29. Enslaved men and women were infantilized as “boys” and “girls” until they reached old age, whereupon they were referred to as “uncles” and “aunties.” See Brenda Stevenson, *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 201; and Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 328.

⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1935), 5.

⁸ John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972; rev. and enlarged edition, 1979), xi. Although historians such as Ulrich B. Phillips and Kenneth Stampp made references to the stereotype of the uncivilized, child-like sambo, this caricature constituted the primary thesis of Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

⁹ For more on white manhood in terms of Southern “honor” and “mastery,” see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). For a critical presentation of white Southern manhood that includes honor, profligate sexuality, and consumption, see Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 35, 43, 52.

¹⁰ Fanny Kemble described the incident in her own gendered-economic framework of that of a “fine lady for her lapdog.” See Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 327.

¹¹ Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 190.

¹² Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class And the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 128.

¹³ John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* (London: W. M. Watts, Crown Court, Temple Bar, 1854), 71. It is important to note that the southern discourse of slavery held hegemony over some enslaved blacks as well. North Carolina slave Pierce Harper recalled that her mother was considered the best field hand on the plantation whereas her father was considered the worst. “My mother worked in the field, too,” recalled Harper, “right ’longside my daddy, so she could keep him lined up...My mother used to say he was chilesome.” See George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), v.4, part 2, 109.

¹⁴ According to Evelyn Nakano Glenn’s concept of “hidden resistance,” “If...resistance is hidden from the master’s eyes, the oppressed may appear acquiescent and unresisting.” See Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 257-258. For more on the concept of “weapons of the weak,” see political scientist James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); and James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 490. Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 179. Robert W. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 49-52.

¹⁶ Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 179. See also AFIC interview of Alexander Kenner in John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*, annotated edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 393. Also see the gifts of one Florida slave. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 22.

¹⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.14, part 1, 3.

¹⁸ Blassingame, *Slave Community*, 179. In some cases, a sexual division of slave work was cultivated by a master. The plantation rules of Mississippi enslaver William Ervin, for example, required male slaves to provide fire wood for their families while females were required to cook and wash. “Failure on either part when proven,” wrote Ervin, “shall and must be corrected by words first but if not reformed to be corrected by the Whip.” Alabama enslaver Hugh Davis ordered his male slaves to “feed and perform all [animal] lot work” at the end of the day, whereas women were required to “sweep their houses and yards and receive their supper at the call of the cook.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 489. Arkansas slave Carrie Bennet also described a sexual division of labor on her master’s horse ranch. “Ma cooked, washed and ironed...and went to the field in busy times,” whereas “three of the men drove horses, tended to ’em.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 149. The mother of Minnie Folkes, rather than her master, instructed her to “cook, clean up, wash, an’ iron” for her husband.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 238.

¹⁹ Norman R. Yetman, ed., *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution,"* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1970) 116-117. Also see a fight between a Florida slave "Big Charlie" and a Native American. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 29.

²⁰ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 2, part 1, 14.

²¹ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 482.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. See also Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 342.

²⁴ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South," *American Historical Review* 93 (December 1988): 1228-52.

²⁵ Jeff Forret, "'He was no man attall?'" Slave Men, Honor, Violence, and Masculinity in the Antebellum South," in Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster, eds., *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U.S. History and Literature, 1820-1945* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2011), 27, 32. According to Forret, slave men constructed their manly honor by protecting and defending slave women, guarding the reputations of themselves and their families, and employing violence on other slave men over "possession of property, theft, repayment of debts, dominance, [and] vengeance over sexual claims." For more on slave "honor" see Jeff Forret, "Slave-Poor White Violence in the Antebellum Carolinas," *North Carolina Historical Review* 81 (April 2004): 144-46. Sandra Lauderdale Graham, "Honor among Slaves," in Lyman L. Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, eds., *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 201-228. Jeff Forret, "Conflict and the 'Slave Community': Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 74 (August 2008): 551-88. John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). T.J. Desch Obi, *Fighting for Honor: The History of African Martial Arts Traditions in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

²⁶ Forret, "He was no man attall?," 31.

²⁷ Plowing was designated a gendered act of manliness due to the musculature required to either plow-by-hand or control a draft animal. See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 103. When black women engaged in plowing, they were usually noted for their exceptionality. For example, former slave Adeline Grey remembered that after emancipation, "Ma plow many a day, same as a man." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 2, 207. See also Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 1, 113-114; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 33. For an exceptional example of a man performing women's work, see former South Carolina slave Kato Benton who recalled doing little field work, however, "I washed and ironed and cleaned up the house for the white folks," after the war. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, 155.

²⁸ Forret, "He was no man attall?," 28. According to his testimony, Simon confessed to killing Norvall "because the deceased had told lies on him." See Forret, "He was no man attall?," 31.

²⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 97. For a similar example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 20.

³⁰ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 484.

³¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives), 71.

³² Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005), 183.

³³ *Ibid.* (italics not mine).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 186, 187 (emphasis not mine). Although uncommon, Frederick Douglass's manly act of aggression was not an isolated event. In 1681, when two white men named John McCarty and Edward Thomas refused to give "an audience" to a slave named Frank, a brawl ensued, whereupon Frank took up a fence stake and overpowered McCarty. An eighteenth century slave named Venture Smith employed brute force as well. According to Smith's slave narrative, when Smith refused to comply with the directions of James Mumford (his master's son), Mumford "[flew] into a great rage, snatched a pitchfork and went to lay me over the head therewith." In response, Smith grabbed a pitchfork in defense, whereupon Mumford "put his pocket handkerchief before his eyes and went home... to tell his mother." And in the early nineteenth century, a white overseer and a slave named Jim engaged in a heated debate regarding the shelling of corn. After an exchange of words, Jim "picked up a tobacco fork and brought it down on the white man's head, fracturing his skull." See Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 184; Robert E. Desrochers Jr., "'Not Fade Away': The Narrative of Venture Smith, an African American in the Early Republic," in Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds., *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity*, vol.1, "Manhood Right": The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 77-78; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 193.

In addition to these manly acts performed by slave men, the act of running away has sometimes been considered by scholars – including historians Darlene Clark Hine, Earnestine Jenkins, and Edward Baptist – as an act of manliness. However, running away was often a consequence of black men's increased opportunities for escape and their inability to perform their manhood as protectors of the family. Although studies of runaway advertisements by scholars such as Paul Gaston and J.B. Sellers indicate that roughly 81-85% of Antebellum runaways were men, more slave men than women had skilled jobs that "brought them into wider contact with the larger society." See Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds., *A Question of Manhood*, vol.1, 9; and Edward E. Baptist, "The Absent Subject: African American Masculinity and Forced Migration to the Antebellum Plantation Frontier," in Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, eds., *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 136-73. For percentages of male runaways, see Genovese, endnote 2, 798; and J.B. Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 293. Moreover, male runaways who remained within the vicinity of their families often relied on their families for survival.

The intention of running away to visit family members or to later free them could be considered manly acts as well. According to Genovese, "newspaper advertisements frequently contained such words as 'He is no doubt trying to reach his wife.' Slaveholders had great trouble with newly purchased slaves who immediately left to try to find parents or children as well as wives." See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 650. Brenda Stevenson cites several examples of male slaves who successfully freed their loved ones. See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 239. Even so, these manly acts of running away had punitive repercussions.

³⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 31. Fannie is unclear whether the closing of her father's shoe shop on Sundays occurred during slavery or the postwar. Regardless, a postwar restriction further highlights the contingency of black manly performance.

³⁶ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution.*, 359.

³⁷ Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 229.

³⁸ The punishment of slaves by black overseers also contributed to a zero-sum game of manhood. “Uncle” Ben Horry of South Carolina remembered a “colored oberseer” who took his mother “to the barn and strapped [her] down on [this] thing called the Pony.” As Horry explained, my mother’s feet and “hands [were] spread...and strapped to the floor...and she been give twenty five to fifty lashes till the blood flow. And my father and me stand right there and look and ain’t able to lift a hand!” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 2, part 1, 311.

³⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 33.

⁴⁰ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang; Revised and Updated edition, 2003), 160.

⁴¹ Stevenson also references “a slave man belonging to local planter Sanford Ramey” who assaulted his overseer. In return, the overseer shot the slave in the leg. See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 196.

⁴² Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman; Embracing a Correspondence of Several years, While Resident of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West* (Rochester: William Alling, 1857), 97.

⁴³ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Backcountry, 1853-1854* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), 82. Historian Eugene Genovese concludes that “in view of the risks, the wonder is not that more black men did not defend their women but that so many did...With children and each other to consider, the slaves had to strengthen each other in a course of acceptance of what could be prevented only at too high a price.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 485.

⁴⁴ Butler’s definition of gender also acknowledges that this “improvisation” is a type of “doing” with others. “One does not ‘do’ one’s gender alone,” writes Butler, “one is always ‘doing’ *with or for another*, even if the other is only imaginary.” This doing “with or for another” constitutes Butler’s “scene of constraint,” since “the terms that make up one’s own gender are, from the start, outside oneself,” writes Butler, “beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author.” See Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

⁴⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 12 (italics mine). For more examples, see the pension file of Isaac Shorter in Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer, eds., *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 116, 119. According to Arkansas slave Henry Blake, slaves who visited women without permission were jailed in a “log hut.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 176.

⁴⁶ Tom Epps, Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 89. Also see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 1, 197. According to one South Carolina slave, permission was also required of the girl’s parents in addition to the consent of both masters. See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 468.

⁴⁷ According to Brenda Stevenson’s analysis of the 183 slaves owned by George Washington, “81 percent of married men had abroad wives,” while “72 percent of all those who were identified as married, had abroad spouses.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 211.

⁴⁸ As Brenda Stevenson demonstrates, “while it is certain that [George] Washington was opposed to destroying slave families through sale, it also is obvious that he routinely determined the residences of his slaves based on his labor and production needs, not his concern that slave couples or families share the same homes.” See Stevenson, 211.

⁴⁹ Bennet H. Barrow, “Rules of Highland Plantation” (1838), in Edwin Adams Davis, ed., *Plantation Life in the Florida Parishes of Louisiana, 1836-1846, as Reflected in the Diary of Bennet H. Barrow* (New York, 1943), 408-409. Barrow’s rationale holds some merit. According to Virginia slave Tom Epps, “slaves always wanted to marry a gal on ’nother plantation cause dey could git a pass to go visit ’em on Saddy nights.” See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 89.

⁵⁰ Moses Grandy, *Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy; Late a Slave in the United States of America*. (London: Gilpin, 1843), 25.

⁵¹ John Anderson, *The Story of the Life of John Anderson, a Fugitive Slave* (London: W. Tweedie, 1863), 129.

⁵² Yetman, ed., *Life Under the “Peculiar Institution,”* 221-222.

⁵³ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 101. Cliometrician Robert W. Fogel calculates the “median size of tobacco plantations” to be 35 slaves in 1860. See Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract*, 31.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Kolchin estimates that roughly “one-quarter [of all slaves] lived on large estates of 50 or more.” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 101.

⁵⁵ Yetman, *Life Under the “Peculiar Institution,”* 164. “Jumping the broom” was a common ceremonial practice, but did not always have gendered connotations. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 344; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 17, 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid. By no means was Saturday the only day enslavers allowed husbands to visit their wives. According to one slave, “every Sunday Marster let Uncle Moses take a horse an’ ride down to see his wife an’ their two chillum, an’ Sunday night he come riding back; sometimes early Monday morning just in time to start de slaves working in de field.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 251. According to Kentucky slave George Thomas, “a man could not visit his wife, living a mile from him, scarcely once a week, and the infringement of any rule was followed by at least a hundred lashes.” See George Thomas, Corporal, 12th USCHA (heavy artillery), 1865, letter 79, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 189.

⁵⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 132. For more examples, see Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 119, 123.

⁵⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 12.

⁵⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 64.

⁶⁰ The reason for his master’s stringency probably was due to the physical distance between Garland and his wife – a substantial 45 miles. See Ervin L. Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 126. On the other end of the spectrum, slave Will Allen was

allowed to “wo’k in the fields all day,” but returned to his wife’s plantation on a nightly basis. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives) 43-44.

⁶¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16, (Ohio Narratives) 45. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 39. However, when slaves such as Dora Brewer of Mississippi were asked if they were allowed to visit other plantations, Brewer responded: “No more’n you’d let yo hosses out of the pascher to roam aroun nother man’s place” since passes were “infrequent and hard to obtain.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 201. Consequently, “sum uf de niggers wud slip off an’ go to de nex’ plantashun to see udder slaves,” recalled Mississippi slave Barney Alford. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 38.

⁶² Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 39.

⁶³ Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O’Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States; Series 3: Vol. 1, Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 92.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶⁵ Steward, *Twenty-two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman*, 18.

⁶⁶ AFIC interview of J.W. Lindsay in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 400.

⁶⁷ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 207. According to the AFIC interview of Harry McMillan, sexual relations with their slaves “was considered a stain on the [master’s] family, but the young men did it. There was a good deal of it, They often kept one girl steady and sometimes two on different places; men who had wives did it too sometimes, if they could get it on their own place it was easier but they would go wherever they could get it.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 382.

Historian Kenneth Stampp has correctly stated that “when the effects of miscegenation upon all groups in southern society have been measured, one can hardly escape the conclusion that the principal victims were the colored females who were directly involved in it.” See Stampp, *Peculiar Institution*, 360. Even so, it is also important to recognize that physical and sexual abuse has more than one victim. Abuse of a slave wife uniquely affected her husband, children, parents, and friends.

⁶⁸ The repercussions for female resistance could be severe. Slave J.W. Lindsay described an enslaver who “generally carried a white oak cane, one end very heavy, and if the women did not submit, he would make nothing of knocking them right down...He was the worst man I ever saw.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 400. Kentucky slave Henry Bibb described similar conditions. “A poor slave’s wife can never be...true to her husband...she can neither be pure nor virtuous” See Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written By Himself* (New York: Published by Author, 1849), 191-192.

⁶⁹ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 400. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 67.

⁷⁰ Josiah Henson, *Truth Stranger Than Fiction: Father Henson’s Story of His Own Life, 1789- 1883* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Co., 1888), 6-7.

⁷¹ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 207.

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- ⁷² Henson, *Truth Stranger Than Fiction*, 6-7.
- ⁷³ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 207.
- ⁷⁴ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 354.
- ⁷⁵ Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 231.
- ⁷⁶ Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written By Himself*, 42.
- ⁷⁷ For motives that prompted male slaves to run away, see note 29 above.
- ⁷⁸ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 127.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ⁸⁰ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 96.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 126. Married slaves reported the dissolution of previous marriages due to the slave trade and/or death. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 20-21.
- ⁸² Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 20-21. With annual profits ranging from 15 to 30 percent, slave trading was both a common and highly lucrative enterprise. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 98. Profit was not the only motivation for slave trading. According to historian Brenda Stevenson, four factors contributed to the growth of the domestic slave trade: “the invention and widespread marketing of the short-staple cotton gin, the availability of land in southwestern territories for cotton production, the shift in the Upper South from tobacco culture to large-scale grain production, and the official closing of the international slave trade.” See Brenda Stevenson, 175. Often times, the death of a slave owner resulted in the sale or inheritance of slave “property.” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 126. For detailed examples of the effects of masters’ deaths upon slave communities, see Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 213-216.
- ⁸³ Lorenzo reasoned that it was “cotton fever” that prompted his master to divide slaves without regard to familial bonds. “Dere was a fever goin’ round er lestways it was lak a fever. Everybody was dyin’ to git down sough an’ raise cotton to sell.” See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 152.
- Some white contemporaries held more empathetic views of slave separations. “I never saw such profound grief as the poor creatures manifested,” recorded John A. Quitman, whereas Mary Boykin Chestnut warned a traveler that “if you can stand [the slave auction block], no other Southern thing need choke you.” See Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 456. However, according to Mississippi slave George Washington Albright, “a plantation owner thought no more of selling a man away from his wife, or a mother away from her children, than of sending a cow or a horse out of the state.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 10.
- Southern state laws did indicate an uneasiness regarding the domestic slave trade. According to Kolchin, “Georgia banned the commercial importation of slaves from 1817 to 1853, and Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana imposed similar bans for much briefer periods. Upper South states, too, passed laws against the importation of slaves from other states, although only Delaware prohibited exporting slaves to those states... Several states discouraged the separation of families, and in 1829 Louisiana forbade the sale of children under the age of eleven apart from their mothers.” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 129.

⁸⁴ The debate regarding the division of slave families by the domestic slave trade centered on the cliometric work of Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman. According to Fogel and Engerman, ostensibly benign masters generally respected family bonds. “Most slave sales were either of whole families or of individuals who were at an age when it would have been normal for them to have left the family,” argued Fogel and Engerman, and for enslavers who forcibly divided family members, they constituted a mere 1 out of 11.6 slave trading transactions (compared to Blassingame’s 1 out of 3 or 4 slave marriages). See Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, (1974), 5. Reactions to Fogel and Engerman’s claims focused on their faulty assumptions. According to historian Herbert Gutman, Fogel and Engerman failed to consider slave sales where spouses were not the property of the same owner (abroad marriages), where slave women sold to New Orleans may have left children behind; and where slave trading occurred via inheritance or gifts. See Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975). Harry Schieber makes the important point that, even given Fogel and Engerman’s dubious data that *only* 8.6 percent of slave marriages were “broken up by economic transactions,” it still results in the separation of some 2.7 million men, women, and children. See Harry N. Scheiber, “Black is Computable: The Controversy over *Time on the Cross* and the History of American Slavery,” *The American Scholar*, Vol.44, No.4 (Autumn 1975), 668. Both Kolchin and Gutman agree that “a disproportionate number of slaves sold west were youths and young adults” – ranging in age from fifteen to their mid to late twenties. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 97; Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 145. Historian Donald Sweig’s study of Northern Virginia places the age of most traded slaves at a slightly higher scale between twenty and forty-nine years of age. See “Donald M. Sweig, “Northern Virginia Slavery: A Statistical and Demographic Investigation” (Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1982), 206.

⁸⁵ Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 346.

⁸⁶ Norman R. Yetman, *Voices From Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives* Dover (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1999), 58.

⁸⁷ AFIC interview of J.W. Lindsay in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 403-404.

⁸⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 33.

⁸⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 40 (italics mine).

⁹⁰ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 576.

⁹¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives), 38-39.

⁹² The day he was to sell the children from their mother he would tell that mother to go to some other place to do some work and in her absence he would sell the children. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kentucky Narratives), 38-39.

⁹³ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 166.

⁹⁴ Barbara J. Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁹⁵ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 481. Of course, female slaves made similar statements. According to slave Susan Hamlin, “No minister nebber say in readin’ de matrimony ‘let no man put asunder’ ’cause a couple

would be married tonight an' tomorrow one would be taken away en be sold." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 2, 234.

⁹⁶ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 126-127 (italics mine). For some slave marriages, no formal ceremony took place. Rather slaves simply "took up" with their partners. For example, see the Civil War Pension files of Henry Jackson and Octave Jessie in Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 122 and 124, respectively.

⁹⁷ According to Susan Hamlin, "de gal ma got in in de street an' cursed... 'Dat damn white, pale-face bastard sell my daughter who jus' married las' night... The white man t[h]reaten' her to call de police if she didn't stop, but de collude woman said: 'hit me or call de police. I redder die dan to stan' dis any longer.' De police took her to de Work House by de white woman orders an' what became of 'er, I never hear." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 2, 236.

⁹⁸ Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 120.

⁹⁹ According to Alexis de Tocqueville: "There exists, indeed, a profound and natural antipathy between the institution of marriage and that of slavery... It is easy to perceive that every motive which incites the freedman to a lawful union is lost to the slave by the simple fact of his slavery." See Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, xxi. Kenneth Stampp goes further: "Chattels were not severely disturbed by forced separation and soon found new husbands or wives in their new homes." See Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 345.

The argument that slave marriages and families were weak and pathological has a long and storied historiography. As far back as the eighteenth century, in his opus *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), moral philosopher Adam Smith proclaimed that "among our slaves in the West Indies there is no such thing as a lasting union. The female slaves are all prostitutes, and suffer no degradation by it." And as late as the 1990s, historian Pieter C. Emmer's article, "The Price of Freedom: The Constraints of Change in Postemancipation America" (1992) argued that enslaved blacks and freedmen failed to establish strong familial and communal ties. See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976; originally published 1776), 451. Pieter C. Emmer, "The Price of Freedom: The Constraints of Change in Postemancipation America," in Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher, eds, *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics, and Culture After Slavery* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 23-47.

Modern academic theories on the black family were pioneered by sociologist E. Franklin Frazier. In his famous works, *The Free Negro Family: A Study of Family Origins Before the Civil War* (1932), *The Negro Family in Chicago* (1932), and *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), Frazier argued that slavery severed the cultural links between Africa and North America, including the cultural heritage of African kinship and family ties. Combined with laws that proscribed legal marriage, plantation practices that impaired family contact, and a domestic slave trade that impinged upon family cohesion, Frazier argued that slaves developed alternative family patterns that were matriarchal, unstable, and sexually promiscuous. See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Free Negro Family: A Study of Family Origins Before the Civil War* (New York: Arno Press, 1968, 1932), *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1932); and *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, 1939), 15, 17.

Sociologist and Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan drove the Frazier thesis in a new direction in *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965). Making use of contemporary census data, Moynihan's "Moynihan Report" understated the economic, cultural, and historical factors – such as segregation and discrimination – that contributed to African American family structures and impoverishment. While sharing Frazier's argument that the black family was pathologically matriarchal, frail, and replete with out-of-wedlock births, Moynihan posited the black family as the central reason for black poverty and welfare rates. For works that follow Moynihan's thesis, see sociologist Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls: Negro Families in a Federal Slum*

(Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970); sociologist Jessie Bernard *Marriage and Family Among Negroes* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Robert Staples, "Towards a Sociology of the Black Family: A Theoretical and Methodological Assessment," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol.33, No.1, Decade Review, Part 2 (Feb., 1971), 119-138. Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese went further, arguing that the black family was nonexistent in Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Not all scholars deemed the black family a pathological institution. Andrew Billingsley's *Black Families in White America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) argued that the black family was a strong unit that functioned as a bulwark against economic deprivation.

This pathological thesis has not stood unchallenged. Historian John Blassingame's studies of New Orleans and Savannah demonstrated that female-headed families were the exception in both white and black families (around 20 percent of households were headed by females) in *Black New Orleans: 1860-1880* (Chicago Press: The University of Chicago Press, 1973); and "Before the Ghetto: The Making of the Black Community in Savannah, Georgia, 1865-1880" (1973); respectively. In his book-length work, *The Slave Community* (1972), 79, 172, 179, Blassingame argued that in the face of "insurmountable odds," slaves established a "strong stable family" that aided slaves in their survival. Moreover, Blassingame explained *how* men gained familial "status" while contributing to their families. By constructing family furniture, providing "delicacies" via hunting and fishing, by obtaining coffee, sugar, scarves or dresses, and by directing their wives to garden or raise hogs, black men "provide[d]" for their families." One scholar has even reduced the black male to two possible roles: either as financial contributor or exploiter of black women, as if this dichotomy represents the sum-total of black men's relationship to their partners. See Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966). Historian William Harris came to a similar conclusion as Blassingame in "Work and the Family in Black Atlanta, 1880," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 9, No.3 (Spring, 1976), 319-330. Blassingame's work has been criticized for its lack of originality. According to reviewer Orville Taylor, Blassingame regurgitated Kenneth Stampp's presentation at the 1970 Southern Historical Association meeting in Louisville. See Taylor, "Journal of Negro History" Vol. 58, No. 4, (Oct., 1973). Reviewer Marion D. Kilson also questioned Blassingame's claim of originality for employing slave autobiographies. See Kilson, "The American Historical Review," Vol. 78, No. 4 (Oct., 1973), 1132-1133.

Historians Eugene Genovese and Herbert Gutman challenged Frazier's "pathological" thesis as well in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1972) and *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (1976), respectively. While conceding that enslavement exacted a "terrible toll" on the family, Genovese maintains that slaves resiliently established "a nuclear family norm" through a dialectical conflict between master and slave over the concept of paternalism. This Gramscian understanding of culture and power tempered Genovese's thesis, for he argued that the black nuclear family was idealized "as conditions permitted." "My claims must be read within limits," warned Genovese, since slaves valued a "two-parent, male-centered household, no matter how much difficulty they had in realizing the ideal." Historian Herbert Gutman provided a much more prolonged and staunch refutation of Frazier's "pathological" thesis. Making use of plantation birth registers and post-emancipation marriage records, Gutman argued that Frazier underestimated the "adaptive capacities" of slaves. According to Gutman, intergenerational slave "experiences and beliefs" included a nuclear family ideal. As a result, "three-fourths of the [slave] households" had a "father or a husband," wrote Gutman, "with most children raised in a [long-lasting] two-parent structure. See Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1972.), 452, 492. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 10, 13, 308. Unlike Frazier, who only acknowledged black nuclear families amongst "elite" slaves (who were ostensibly imitative of white masters because of their proximity to white culture) Gutman argued that whether domestic or field slaves, skilled or unskilled, members of large plantations or small, slave families were far from "shattered" by slavery. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 13, 17. Gutman's work encompasses a broad range of responses to previous historians. While Frazier remained Gutman's main foil, Gutman criticized Kenneth Stampp, Stanley Elkins, and Eugene Genovese for overemphasizing the role of masters to explain the beliefs of slaves. "Too much attention is given in their works to slave 'treatment'; too little attention to slave culture and the development of distinctive slave feelings, beliefs, and especially institutions." Specifically in response to Genovese, Gutman argued that black culture developed prior to the plantation ethos of paternalism,

and was thus, not a concession of hegemonic power in the nineteenth century. In other words, slave beliefs about the family predated the time period of Genovese's argument. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, chapter seven, especially pages 303-319. Gutman's work has been criticized for overemphasizing the autonomy of slave culture while underestimating the power of slave-owners. Gutman's emphasis on slaves' cultural autonomy parallels the work of Paul Escott who argues that slave-owners' cultural and psychological influence on slaves was minimal. "Physical proximity" between master and slave "only heightened the sense of mental separation." See Paul Escott's *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 20, 22. Whether cultural "autonomy" necessitates a disregard for power is doubtful. Clearly, Brenda Stevenson's argument that an "expansive cultural gap" divided white and black lives does not preclude recognition of the uneven power structure between masters and slaves. See note 98. Gutman's discussion of "forced" separations was somewhat muddled. Initially, Gutman contended that "single" slaves "between fifteen and twenty-nine years of age" were the typical victims of the intrastate slave trade, and yet, Gutman also contended that two in five, one in six, or one in ten slaves were forcibly separated from their spouses. While Gutman rightly acknowledged that such numbers cannot truly express the harshness of slavery, such evidence does lend doubt to the strength of a black nuclear family structure. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 20-21, 145-149. Moreover, the terms "pathological," "unstable," "weak," and "disruptive" are confusing when intermixed. When Gutman contended that the black family was "unstable" yet "long-lasting," one is left wondering if he merely referred to unstable parent-child relationships but long-lasting spousal ones. Paul Escott made a similarly enigmatic argument when he contended that the black slave family was stable despite the disruptive nature of slavery. See Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, 46-53.

While Blassingame, Genovese, and Gutman successfully challenged Frazier's "pathological" thesis, questions about the black family structure remain. Gutman, for example, offers the counterintuitive claim that black families were nuclear albeit "unstable," because of "forced" separations due to death and sale. But what does it mean for a family to have an unstable structure? Gutman also failed to acknowledge the common practice of "hiring out" slaves, thereby separating family members for months or years at a time. Thus, Gutman's history may cogently demonstrate that the black family was not pathological, but it hardly proves that black families were nuclear in structure.

Brenda Stevenson challenged Gutman's nuclear family thesis. In *Life in Black & White* (1996), Stevenson demonstrated that most slave families in Loudoun County, Virginia were not nuclear in structure. "Instead, there was an array of household types," wrote Stevenson, "a few nuclear and nuclear-extended types, but also single-parent (mother) groupings, same-sex single adolescents living together, and single or widowed elderly folks who lived in their owners' homes or alone." Stevenson identified seven factors that contributed to these household types: 1.) gender imbalance between available adult slaves (including exogamous considerations) regardless of plantation size. 2.) slave and enslaver "deaths, births, marriages, and migrations." 3.) debt of an enslaver and inheritance claims. 4.) legal codification of matrifocality beginning in 1662. 5.) possible West African influences from pre-colonial and colonial contexts. 6.) intra- and interstate slave trading of slave spouses/parents. 7.) peripatetic black male slaves who impregnated multiple black women. Combined with her recognition of abroad marriages – where husbands spent significant time living apart from their wives and children – Stevenson's study seriously questioned the strength and ubiquity of supposed nuclear slave families. See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 208, 213, 222-223. Although one could question Loudoun County's representativeness of the entire South, Stevenson's analytical logic and her recognition of the systemic forces that impinged upon the slave family are applicable beyond Loudoun's borders. Even Gutman acknowledged in his sample of a Louisiana sugar plantation owned by Lewis Stirling that "nearly one in five children...grew up in households headed by women who had all their children by unnamed fathers." Gutman referred to this data as "a significant number," "a statistically significant fact," and a household pattern that "occurred...frequently enough to deserve additional comment." Indeed, Gutman's data reified Stevenson's recognition of various household structures. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery & Freedom, 1750-1925*, 115-117. Furthermore, Gutman undercut his thesis of a nuclear slave family when he acknowledged the effects of "abroad marriages." "Historians describing such marriages," wrote Gutman, "often

emphasize that the distance created more powerful affective bonds between the mother and her children than between the father and his children. A father who visited his family once, or perhaps twice, a week had a less powerful presence than a resident parent. But such marriages also strengthened extended consanguinal ties. In the father's absence, other kin – maternal parents and the mother's sisters and brothers – probably played significant roles in the daily lives of a mother and her children. Away from their immediate families much of the time, fathers, in turn, probably retained ties to their families of origin, taking meals and even possibly living with married or unmarried brothers and sisters and with one or both parents.” Again, Gutman's analysis bolstered Stevenson's conclusions. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 137. It should be noted that Gutman and Stevenson differed in the degree to which slaves lived independently of their masters. Whereas Gutman emphasized slave's “adaptive capacities” under the slave system, Stevenson identified “choices” made “within the context of the rigid constraints that masters imposed.” See Stevenson, 230.

Historian Jacqueline Jones also situates the black family within a larger context of household patterns. “The nuclear family (consisting of two parents and their children) frequently cohabited within a larger, rather flexible household,” wrote Jones. “Moreover, neighboring households were often linked by ties of kinship...indicating that kinship clusters, rather than nuclear families, defined women's and men's daily labor.” See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 84. Brenda Stevenson's analysis of the black family was part of a broader argument regarding the bifurcation of Virginia life along racial lines. In this way, Stevenson paralleled the work of historian Paul Escott who argued that a “wide chasm” existed “between the mental world of the master and slave.” “Southern plantations encompassed two worlds,” wrote Escott, “one white and one black, one the master's and one the slaves.” See Escott, *Slavery Remembered*, 28, 95. Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese took an opposing view. According to Fox-Genovese, only one world existed, where slaves and their owners “belonged to one household, and even one family, broadly construed.” See Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household* (1988).

¹⁰⁰ On large plantations or in urban areas, slave relationships were even more difficult to control for slave-owners. According to Baltimore slave Noah Davis, for example, he wielded “entire control” over his family. See Noah Davis, *A Narrative of the Life of Rev. Noah Davis, A Colored Man. Written By Himself, at the Age of Fifty-Four* (Baltimore: John F. Weishampel, Jr., 1859), 32.

¹⁰¹ In the South, the concept of manly “mastery” not only applied to the control of dependent slaves and wives, but to southern children as well. Comparatively, northern middle-class fathers did not generally espouse a “mastery” ideal, particularly since land control and inheritance became less significant modes of control in a “modern” industrializing society. Even so, northern fatherhood did continue to “influence” their children via “physical strength, intellect, love, religious belief,” and societal authority. For more on northern antebellum fatherhood and power, see Shawn Johansen, *Family Men: Middle-Class Fatherhood in Early Industrializing America* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁰² Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.19, Fisk University, *God Struck Me Dead*, 161. Fisk University referenced the anonymous slave under the title: “Preacher From a ‘God-Fearing’ Plantation.”

¹⁰³ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 158. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 131.

¹⁰⁴ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 55. By no means was this strategy practiced only by fathers. According to slave Cora Armstrong, “ma did not allow us to sit around grown folks. When they were talking she always made us get under the bed.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 75. Ghost stories were also employed as a means of protecting children from harm. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 63.

¹⁰⁵ Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball* (New York: Published by John S. Taylor, 1836), 211. James Mars, *Life of James Mars, a Slave Born and Sold in Connecticut* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Company, 1864), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Although in some instances, enslaved fathers played with their children after a long day of labor, less evidence exists that would support such a broad generalization of their paternal manliness. For one example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 4, part 1, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Yetman, *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution,"* 310-311.

¹⁰⁸ According to Brenda Stevenson, uncles and grandfathers were prominent kin in the absence of slave fathers. See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 251.

¹⁰⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 1.

¹¹⁰ Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, From a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River in Louisiana* (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1853), 253.

¹¹¹ As Brenda Stevenson has pointed out, "'surrogate' fathers were much more available within large communities than smaller ones, especially since those holdings with ten or fewer slaves had a decided absence of males in their population." See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 222.

¹¹² Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 310.

¹¹³ Benjamin Drew, *A North-Side View of Slavery. The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by Themselves, with an Account of the History and Condition of the Colored Population of Upper Canada* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1856), 358.

¹¹⁴ W.H. Robinson, *From Log Cabin to the Pulpit, or, Fifteen Years in Slavery* (Eau Claire: James H Tiffit, Publishing Printer, 1913), 25.

¹¹⁵ Some slave fathers were able to embody positive attributes. Virginia slave Austin Steward, for example remembered his father to be "a kind, affectionate husband and a fond, indulgent parent." See Austin Steward, *Twenty-two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman*, 126.

¹¹⁶ Robinson, *From Log Cabin to Pulpit*, 25.

¹¹⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 328.

¹¹⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 16 (Maryland Narratives), 66. Indeed, sometimes it was children rather than fathers that attempted to protect the family. See Rawick, v.8, part 1, 282.

¹¹⁹ Rawick, v.8, part 1, 212.

¹²⁰ Rawick, *American Slave*, v.12, 72. Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 309. For another example, see Rawick, v.2, part 1, 98.

¹²¹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, vol.4, part 1, 88. For some children, playtime of any kind was either truncated or restricted. “When I was a chil’ at home,” recalled slave Albert J. Burks, we never had no time to play. When we came in from the cotton fields we’d have to start quiltin’.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 347-348. “As a child,” recalled Mississippi slave Ebenezer Brown, “I played in de yard wid another black boy named Thom Hardin; but de didn’t’ ’low fur us to play much.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 241.

¹²² Although exceptional, children could enter the workforce as early as age 3 or 4. See Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract*, 53. According to Stevenson, enslaved children performed a variety of jobs including “picking up stones and trash,” or helping to “stack and bind wheat, pull weeds, worm tobacco, and carry water. Additional tasks included caring for livestock and picking fruit, nuts, and berries. Other slave children,” according to Stevenson, “delegated as the next generation of domestics, sometimes were companions to young masters and mistresses, but mostly assisted cooks, maids, and baby nurses.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 187. Virginia slave West Turner, for example, “had to go roun’ stickin’ slabs and branches in de fences where de hogs done pushed dey heads threw.” See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 288.

¹²³ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16, (Kentucky Narratives), 5. As an enslaved child, Perry Sid Jemisen also worked for his master in order to offset the cost of his meals by toting “water...to de [field]hands” and helping his master plow the field. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 51. Other slave children separated the seeds from the bolls of cotton. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 49, 59.

¹²⁴ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 288.

¹²⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.6 (Indiana Narratives), 27-28.

¹²⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 99.

¹²⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8., part 1, 25. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.2, part 1, 119.

¹²⁸ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States; With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards; Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1856), 424.

¹²⁹ Boys are also missing from these scenes. While gender roles may shoulder some responsibility here, boy’s work duties in the field may have also contributed to their absence. Even so, the structure of the slave system often buttressed the maternal role relative to that of the father. See note 128. For more examples of children taking care of each other, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.19, Fisk University, *God Struck Me Dead*, 171. In other instances, mothers worked while children were placed in nearby baskets. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 124.

¹³⁰ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 327.

¹³¹ Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South* (Salem: Salem Observer Book and Job Print, 1885), 19.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 20. Of course, slavery undermined the authority of black mothers as well. As Virginia slave Caroline Hunter recalled, “during slavery it seemed lak yo’ chillum b’long to ev’ybody but you.” See Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 149-150.

¹³³ In 1820, a slave child’s “cumulative chance of being ‘sold South’...might have been something like 30

percent.” See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 97. By 1861, according to Chandra Manning, “in the Upper South...about half of all slave children were separated from at least one parent.” See Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 49.

¹³⁴ As Brenda Stevenson has maintained, “many masters...frowned upon separating mothers from their young children, but refused to act similarly for fathers, Slave owners’ preferential treatment of slave mothers made it difficult for slave men to have equal influence in the day-to-day activities of their families, particularly since many of them did not live with their children.” See Stevenson, *Life in Black & White*, 222.

¹³⁵ Regosin and Shaffer, eds., *Voices of Emancipation*, 115.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹³⁷ Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 144. From the perspective of an 1834 slave child, the father-child relationship was equally tragic. Dear Master [Beverley Tucker]: “the grand & principal object [of this letter] is to get Master to be so kind as to inquire...wither my father is living or dead & if dead how long since his decease...& wither my old godfather Robin Edmonson is still alive.” See Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 12-13.

¹³⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Ohio Narratives), 12.

¹³⁹ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Written by Himself* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 30. Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 208. Similar to Douglass’s recollection, Georgia slave Estella Jones recalled that, as children, “our milk wuz put on de floor in a big wooden tray and dey give us oyster shells to eat wid. All de chillum would gather ’round dis tray and eat.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 346.

¹⁴⁰ Hunter retells this story to demonstrate the one instance in which his master whipped the children, however, his order to wrestle one another speaks to the brutishness of white “mastery” over black children. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 380.

¹⁴¹ Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 3.

¹⁴² Rawick, v.8, part 1, 75.

¹⁴³ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 512. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.14, 9. George Fleming recalled during his boyhood days that “Marse [was] de daddy of ’em all.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 129. Florida slave Mary Minus Biddie recalled the slave children referring to their master as “Pa.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 32.

¹⁴⁴ Rawick, v.2, part 1, 101.

¹⁴⁵ Other slave-owners overrode black men’s authority by granting slave children different names, schooling them with their own preferred interpretations of Christianity, or giving them gifts such as marbles from the local store. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 141-142, and Rawick, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 127, respectively. For examples of favorite slave “pets,” see Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 54-55; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 83.

¹⁴⁶ While it is true that President Lincoln announced a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation after the Battle of Antietam in late 1862, the official proclamation began on January 1, 1863.

¹⁴⁷ “Mastery” and “honor” could also be defined relationally. The ability to “master” one’s dependents was an honorable trait within Southern society, just as a man’s honorable reputation bolstered his power to dominate those below him. Even so, their distinctions rest on the bifurcation of private/public or domestic/communal boundaries. For more on “mastery” and “honor,” see Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, viii-xi; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Humanitarianism, Death, Slave Rebellions, The Proslavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 14-18, 21-23, 34.

¹⁴⁸ With the slave regime’s surveillance system – including permits and patrollers – “honor” performed outside the slave quarters was severely limited. For example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 254. With permission, however, slaves did congregate in “frolics” and cornshuckings. See Rawick, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 127-128.

¹⁴⁹ Historians W.J. Cash and Grady McWhiney have both situated the yeoman farmer under the hegemonic influence of the southern elite. See W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (1941; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1991), and Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988). A prime example of white manly “mastery” could be found in the narrative of Florida freedman Samuel Simeon Andrews, also known as “Parson.” According to his interviewer, “‘Parson’ tells of a white man persuading his mother to let him tie her to show that he was master, promising not to whip her, and she believed him. When he had placed her in a buck (hands tied on a stick so that the stick would turn her in any direction) he whipped her until the blood ran down her back.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 13.

¹⁵⁰ For more on black men’s relationship to their families, see my previous chapter, “More Than a Single Man: Black Cooperative Manhood in the Post-Civil War Economy.”

¹⁵¹ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 289.

¹⁵² Jordan, *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, 127. In addition to the expression of black manliness, several reasons prompted freedpeople to marry, including: freedmen and women’s desire to have a valid marriage, promptings by religious officials who doubted the moral standing of slave marriages, and freedwomen’s pursuit of greater social, moral, and protective standing. See the pension files of Henry Sexton, James Dallas, Solomon Sibley, and Phillip Bellfield in Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 130, 131, 140. Also see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 37.

¹⁵³ Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 289.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* According to Florida freedman T. Thomas Fortune, when Union soldiers entered the area, “they remarried all of the Negro men and women who had contracted slave unions and desired to have them legalized. Few, indeed, failed to avail themselves of the chance to do this.” See Dorothy Sterling, ed., *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 10.

¹⁵⁶ Observers noted the seriousness in which freedmen entered the bonds of marriage. A black soldier of Thomas Wentworth Higginson's unit, for example, asked the colonel for a loan of \$1.75 to purchase a wedding outfit; whereas Union officer Joseph Warren reported: "marriage is not treated as a light matter" amongst freedmen. See Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 289, and Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 22, respectively.

Though female slaves were rendered dependent "girls" by their masters, exactly how a dignified, legal marriage affected their femininity or womanliness remains to be examined. Based on primary source material, it is probable that marriage granted freedwomen status as a "moral" woman – at least from the perspective of middle-class values – and elevated them from the trope of the sexualized "Jezebel." For an example, see four Civil War Pension Files published in Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 135-139.

¹⁵⁷ Georgia slave Lina Hunter, for example, recalled a slave named Norman Green who had two wives. According to Hunter, "his fust wife, Tildy, was sold off from him in slavery time. He got married again, and after freedom come Tildy come right back to him." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 269.

¹⁵⁸ Susan Eva O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 141. The reasons for the Peterson's divorce are not clear. Like other freedpeople, slavery and the domestic slave trade forcibly split slave marriages, resulting in the forging of new ties. During emancipation, it was not uncommon for slaves to have been married multiple times, thus placing freedmen and women in the position of deciding which spouse they wanted to remain with. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 221.

¹⁵⁹ Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 572, n.17. Penalties for divorce during slavery were neither universally applied nor effective. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 123; and Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 158-159.

¹⁶⁰ As masters of their own lives, some freedmen dissolved marriages entirely on their own. Florida freedman Taylor Gilbert, for example, separated from his wife after she allegedly committed adultery. "My wife get to messin' around with another man," claimed Gilbert, "so I sent her home to her mother." See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 56.

¹⁶¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 82; Richard R. Reid, *Freedom for Themselves: North Carolina's Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 223.

¹⁶² Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12 (Ohio Narratives), 63; O'Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 139-140; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 82.

¹⁶³ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 84. There were exceptions to these conditions. According to Louisiana freedman Henry Adams, "after they told us we were free – even then they would not let us live as man and wife together. And when we would run away to be free, the white people would not let us come on their places to see our mothers, wives, sisters, or fathers." See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 8.

¹⁶⁴ Captain Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment: History of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1863-1865* (New York: 1992), 23, 335.

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Riverside Press, 1869), 35-36, 51, 128, 134, 244. For more examples of white officers' beliefs about black soldiers, see Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 83. Keith P. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: The Camp Life of Black Soldiers During the Civil War* (Kent: The Kent

State University Press, 2002), 59, 90-91.

And though in one sense, black soldiers refuted these inveterate beliefs by proving their manliness on the field of battle, in another sense, they did so under the aegis of white authority. Constrained manhood, then, was not fully absent within the martial climate of civil warfare. As Civil War soldier Elijah Marrs explained: as a soldier “I had quit thinking as a child and had commenced to think as a man,” even though “I do march in line to the tap of the drum.” See Heather Andrea Williams, “‘Commenced to Think Like a Man’: Literacy and Manhood in African American Civil War Regiments” in Friend and Glover, *Southern Manhood*, 200.

The Civil War constrained black manhood in several ways. Not only were thousands of black men still enslaved during the war, black soldiers of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) were unable to protect their families from a number of horrible conditions; including but not limited to exposure to military raids, unhealthy “contraband camps,” exploitive labor camps, disease, destitution, hunger, and abuse. For a sample of hardships that black families endured in the absence of military husbands and fathers, see Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35-36; Reid, *Freedom for Themselves*, 30, 58, 217, 221, 222, 226, 240, 242, 245, 248, 367, 368; Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War, 1862-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 253; Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 181-145, 192; Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 48-49, 50-51; Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 23.

¹⁶⁶ Sharon Ann Holt, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900* (Athens: University of Georgia Press (2003), 118.

¹⁶⁷ Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 59.

¹⁶⁸ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 305.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 69. Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 156. Alexander was in the rare position of owning his own dry goods store, as well as being the first to hold the office of Arkansas’s first black justice of the peace. See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 155.

¹⁷¹ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

¹⁷² Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 7.

¹⁷³ Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 69.

¹⁷⁴ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 485. Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, 60.

¹⁷⁵ O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 202-204.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 204. Although I explore the contested landscape of Reconstruction below, it is important to note here that Jessie’s actions resulted in violent retribution. According to Jessie’s friend who reported the incident to a federal official, since Jessie “[took] the part of his wife,” the white man named “Culpepper shot him.”

¹⁷⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 122-123.

¹⁷⁸ The performance is also noteworthy because, as the *Daily Tribune* reported, “Women burst into tears as they saw this tableau and forgetting that it was a mimic scene, shouted wildly: ‘Give me back my children! Give me back my children!’” See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 3-4.

¹⁷⁹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 1.

¹⁸⁰ For the vast responsibilities of the Freedmen’s Bureau, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 210. For more on freedmen’s education and northern missionary work in the postwar South, see Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

¹⁸¹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 156.

¹⁸² Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 170. See also Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 60.

¹⁸³ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 14-15. The father of Mississippi slave F.H. Brown also built the school that his son attended. See Rawick, v. 8, part 1, 278. By no means did all freedmen send their children to school. According to Florida freedman Robert Meacham, even though his father was white, some of his classmates’ parents balked at his attendance, prompting Meacham to quit school. See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 161. And according to Tennessee freedwoman Ann Matthews: “I didn’t go ter schul, mah daddy wouldin’ let me. Said he needed me in de fiel wors den I needed schul.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Tennessee Narratives), 44. “I aint been to no school ’cept Sunday School since srender,” recalled Mississippi freedman Jim Allen. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 63. For many freedmen, education was a goal infrequently obtained, usually as a response to time-consuming labor. “Folks had to wuk so hard to make enough to keep alive dat dey didn’t git to go to school much.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 2, 144.

¹⁸⁴ Rawick, v.8, part 1, 132. According to an anonymous “Southern Colored Woman,” “my father said after the war his ambition was first to educate himself and family, then to own a white house with green blinds, as much like his father’s as possible, and to support his family by his own efforts. . . He succeeded.” See David W. Blight, *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2007), 8. Likewise, according to former North Carolina slave William Bethel, “I was the father of six children, and I put forth every effort possible to educate them.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 374.

Still, though some freedmen pursued an education for themselves and their children, those that remained illiterate were still subjected to abuse and “outright fraud.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 176. According to historian James McPherson, an estimated “70 percent or more of the black [Civil War] soldiers...could not read or write.” See James McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1994), 36. In a population register of Princess Anne County, Virginia, the Freedmen’s Bureau reported that 98.5 percent of blacks were illiterate in 1866. See Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 140. Jacqueline Jones stated that by 1870, “more than eight out of ten southern blacks were illiterate,” while a decade later, historian Eric Foner cited that “70 percent of the black population remained illiterate” by 1880. See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 77; and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 366, respectively. By the early twentieth century, literacy rates for African Americans grew to as much as “50-80% between 1890-1910 in large cities” according to sociologist Evelyn Nakano Glenn. See Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 139. Historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham cited similar rates, with black literacy growing from “5 percent in 1860 to 70 percent in 1910.” See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “The Black Church: A Gender Perspective” in Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau, eds., *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 212.

According to Evelyn Nakano Glenn, planters prohibited education for their slaves because they saw it as “interfering with family authority, church authority, and a paternalistic owner-labor relationship.” See Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 138.

¹⁸⁵ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 168-169.

¹⁸⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 13. Freedmen’s actions were all the more impressive considering that tuition ran as high as one dollar per month in an era when freedmen’s wages averaged twelve dollars per month. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 222.

¹⁸⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 89.

¹⁸⁸ Deposition of Mary Jane Taylor in Civil War Pension File of Samuel Taylor, Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 159.

¹⁸⁹ Deposition of Rebecca Saulsbury, in pension file of Calvin Saulsbury, Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 142.

¹⁹⁰ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Kansas Narratives), 15. For Mississippi slave Liddie Boechus, her second husband was faithful to her, however, her first husband – with whom she had twelve children with – was “trifling.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 195.

¹⁹¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 120.

¹⁹² O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 195.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁹⁴ South Carolina and Mississippi were the first to formulate Black Codes, however, all southern states pursued some form of codified discrimination. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 200. See also O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 152-153; Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Gilded Age or, The Hazard of New Functions* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997), 17-18. In respect to black manliness, the “apprenticeship” and vagrancy laws directly challenged the “mastery” of freedmen. According to these state laws, southern courts had the power to return orphans and impoverished black minors to their previous white slave-owners without the consent of their parents; whereas lawmakers broadly defined “vagrants” as disorderly individuals, tax-evaders, or workers who “mispend what they earn.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 200-201, 206. In one Georgia county alone, local officials removed 35 black children from the custody of their parents, whom they rendered unfit for parenthood. See O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 155.

¹⁹⁵ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 167.

¹⁹⁶ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 199.

¹⁹⁷ Summers, *The Gilded Age*, 18. White vigilante violence also impinged upon freedmen’s “mastery.” For two poignant examples, see Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 48-49; and Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 58.

¹⁹⁸ Even so, as Eric Foner states, “Southern courts continued to enforce vagrancy, breach of contract, and apprenticeship statutes that made no direct reference to race, and tax policies, the militia system, and the all-white judiciary remained unchanged.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 209. And “as late as 1872, Kentucky still barred blacks from testifying in court.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 421.

¹⁹⁹ Perdue, et. al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 300. However egregious, the Black Codes did not rob freedpeople of their agency. Black men and women bristled at white Southerners’ attempts to re-enslave them, and employed various tactics to carve out their own notions of freedom. For example, freedpeople resorted to laboring at their own determined pace, shortened their workdays, took dinner breaks and holidays as they saw fit, and refused to perform undesirable tasks. See O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South*, 133.

²⁰⁰ Performances of public “honor” during slavery were also constrained. As mentioned in my previous chapter, slaves were generally restricted from formally gathering as a community for funerals. When slaves were permitted to gather in public, it was usually on special occasions such as dances, candy pulling, hog killing, and chicken cooking. See Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 35; Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 11. According to historian Thomas L. Webber, “nearly all quarter communities organized their own clandestine congregations without the sanction or participation of plantation authorities.” See Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 191-192.

²⁰¹ Bertram Wyatt-Brown defined “honor” as “the determination of men to have power, prestige, and self-esteem and to immortalize these acquisitions through their progeny.” See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 17. Kenneth Greenberg added that “many cultures concerned with honor value appearance highly. Their members project themselves through how they look and what they say. They are treated honorably when their projections are respected and accepted as true.” See Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Honor & Slavery*, 7. For more on southern “honor” and the syncretic relationship between the individual and the community, see Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 14-15.

It is important to differentiate between the concepts of southern “honor” and northern “respectability.” While each refers to the confirmation of one’s appearance of esteem within the public arena, northern “respectability” involved “skill at intellectual tasks,” moral uprightness, abstinence from alcohol, and aversion to duels and lynching, whereas Southern “honor” consisted of the attainment of power and prestige regardless of intellectual prowess, moral rectitude, or violence. Moreover, northern “respectability” was concomitant with the “crass, impersonal” pursuit of money as its chief end, whereas southern “honor” was pursued as an end in itself. See Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 20 and 21, respectively.

²⁰² Philip Dray, *Capitol Men: The Epic Story of Reconstruction Through the Lives of the First Black Congressmen* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 80.

²⁰³ “Southern men of honor were ‘superficial,’” wrote Greenberg. “They were concerned, to a degree we would consider unusual, with the surface of things – with the world of appearances.” See Greenberg, *Honor & Slavery*, 3.

²⁰⁴ According to Kenneth Greenberg, “. . .The men who achieve the most honorable positions in such a culture are statesmen – men whose vision of themselves and their world is confirmed by popular acclamation.” See Greenberg, *Honor & Slavery*, 7.

²⁰⁵ According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, southern “honor” existed “before, during, and after” slavery. See Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 16, 28.

²⁰⁶ Rawick, v.8, part 1, 278. Virginia slave Joseph Holmes also constructed an honorable reputation by building several churches in two states. After moving to Georgia, Holmes “built a plenty ob churches dere,” then “I cum on tuh Alabamy, an’ lived in Evergreen fer ’bout twenty mo’ years, an’ I built a two story brick church dere.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 11-12.

²⁰⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 2, part 1, 87. See also Civil War Pension File of Thomas Wilbert in Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 85.

²⁰⁸ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 121. Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.19, *God Struck Me Dead*, 72.

²⁰⁹ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.19, *God Struck Me Dead*, 167-168.

²¹⁰ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.16 (Maryland Narratives), 43.

²¹¹ For example, in 1774, “the governor of Massachusetts received ‘The Petition of a Grate Number of Blacks of this Province who by divine permission are held in a state of slavery within the bowels of a free and Christian Country’ – a document which protested the evils of slavery without direct reference to male authorship. See Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 290. Historian Julius H. Bailey referred to female “exhorters” in the Methodist church. See Julius H. Bailey, “Masculinizing the Pulpit: The Black Preacher in the Nineteenth-Century AME Church,” in Timothy R. Buckner and Caster, *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men*, 80-101. While the scripture of Malachi (2:10) had gendered undertones of egalitarianism “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” as the nineteenth century progressed, black men in Baptist and Methodist denominations laid claim to leadership positions, particularly with the passage of education requirements, as well as rules proscribing women’s access to the pulpit. See Bailey, “Masculinizing the Pulpit,” 80-101.

²¹² Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 260. Genovese was one of many scholars who indirectly recognized the authority of black male slaves. For instance, historian Albert Raboteau underscored the authority of male preachers when he referred to them as “crucial mediators between Christian belief and the experiential world of the slaves.” See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 136-137.

²¹³ For an example of the “invisible” (clandestine) nature of worship, see Mississippi slave Dora Brewer’s description of “Brush Harbor meetings” where “great secrecy was necessary in conducting...crude [religious] services.” See Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 202.

Following the work of historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and for the sake of brevity, I have deliberately reduced the many important distinctions between North and South, Baptist and Methodist, into a convenient historical narrative of black female declension within the “black church.” See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “The Black Church: A Gender Perspective” in Fulop and Raboteau, *African-American Religion*. For more nuanced histories of black denominations in the nineteenth century, see James M. Simm, *The First Colored Baptist Church in North America* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Col., 1888); and Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1891). Moreover, it may be argued that African influences were influential in privileging religious male authority in America. According to W.E.B. Du Bois, “The social history of the Negro did not start in America. He was brought from a definite social environment, - the polygamous clan life under the headship of the chief and the potent influence of the priest.” See W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 1903), 138.

Although the black church during slavery was an “invisible” gathering, some masters did allow their slaves to attend white churches. For example, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.12, part 1, 109; Rawick, *The American*

Slave, v.12, part 2, 85; Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 35; Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6; 58-59, 60; Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement, Series 2, v.1, 299.

²¹⁴ Not only was suffrage and officeholding a male prerogative, the second section of the 14th Amendment (1868) was the first time where the Constitution specifically referred to citizens as “male.”

²¹⁵ For example, see Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 128, 134, 155, 302-303. Dray, *Capitol Men*, 41, 48, 108, 208.

²¹⁶ Passage of the 15th Amendment was, indeed, revolutionary since Minnesota, Ohio, and Kansas elections voted down black suffrage in 1867, while only 8 northern states had granted black suffrage by 1868. Even so, the amendment only prohibited federal and state governments from denying citizens the right to vote based on race, thus leaving open the possibility for disfranchisement via literacy tests, property requirements, and polls taxes. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 315, 448.

²¹⁷ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 60-61 (italics mine).

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 64, 66 (italics mine). See also State Convention of the Colored People of South Carolina, *Proceedings of the Colored People’s Convention of the State of South Carolina, Held in Zion Church, Charleston, November, 1865* (Charleston: South Carolina Leader Office, 1865), 23–26.

²¹⁹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 108 (italics mine).

²²⁰ Here, I make reference to William Lloyd Garrison’s famed response to the passage of the 15th Amendment. “Nothing in all history [equaled] this wonderful, quiet, sudden transformation of four millions of human beings from...the auction-black to the ballot-box.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 448.

²²¹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 115. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 315.

²²² Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 123. According to Foner, “of the eleven states of the Old Confederacy,” Mississippi and Louisiana also “contained a black majority;” whereas “blacks constituted roughly one quarter of the population of Texas, Tennessee, and Arkansas, 40 percent in Virginia and North Carolina, and a bit less than half in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 294.

²²³ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v. 8, part 1, 172.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

²²⁵ “Colfax” refers to Ulysses S. Grant’s running mate, Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax. Roper’s veteran status and his refusal to give up his gun also prompted the white Southerner to shoot him. See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 168-169 (italics mine).

²²⁶ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 342.

²²⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 64-65.

²²⁸ Along with the Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871, the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, and the establishment of the Justice Department, Congress claimed federal jurisdiction over racially-motivated crimes

committed by individuals. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 455, 457. By 1872, the federal government effectively quashed the Ku Klux Klan, particularly in South Carolina where Attorney General Amos T. Akerman, under the direction of President Grant, declared a “condition of lawlessness” in nine counties. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 459.

²²⁹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 162-163.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 139. This estimate includes elected and appointed black officials from 1865 to 1877. See Eric Foner ed., *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction*, Revised Edition. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

²³¹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 154-155.

²³² *Ibid.*, 160 (italics mine).

²³³ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 78. As “Inspector of Bureau schools,” John Mercer Langston technically outranked Martin Delany, however, Delany held the field title “Sub-Assistant Commissioner in charge of the district of Hilton Head” until 1868. See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 81-82.

²³⁴ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 138-139.

²³⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.8, part 1, 172. For similar recollections, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.17, 29; Rawick, *The American Slave*, supplement, series 1, v.6, 13; and Jack Halliards, 1865, onboard the U.S. Gunboat *Kennebec*, letter 125, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 278-279. According to Foner, black officeholders derived mostly from South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Although the majority were freedmen, almost half of them were freeborn blacks who held skilled and prominent positions as ministers, teachers, carpenters, small businessmen, and storekeepers. Based on available data, Foner estimates that a majority of black officeholders were literate, with 138 black officeholders originating from the North. See Eric Foner ed., *Freedom's Lawmakers*.

²³⁶ For a biographical sketch of each figure, see the alphabetical directory in Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*.

²³⁷ For an important history of Currier and Ives lithographs, see, Bryan F. LeBeau, *Currier and Ives: America Imagined* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

²³⁸ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 174-175.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 194-196.

²⁴⁰ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 49-50.

²⁴¹ Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 198-199 (italics mine).

²⁴² Specifically, the Reconstruction Act of 1867 divided Confederate states into five military districts (except Tennessee), described steps for new state governments to be recognized by Congress, required new state constitutions to provide for manhood suffrage, and required new state constitutions to ratify the 14th Amendment. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 276-277.

²⁴³ In the *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873), the majority opinion guaranteed African Americans their federal

rights which only included: “access to ports and navigable waterways, the ability to run for federal office, travel to the seat of government, and be protected on the high seas and abroad.” In *U.S. v. Cruikshank* (1876), the majority opinion granted federal jurisdiction in instances when states violated civil rights, making violations between white and black citizens subject to local jurisdiction. And in the Civil Rights Cases (1883), the majority opinion declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional since it supposedly rendered the black race a “special favorite of the laws.” See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 529-530, 531, and 587, respectively.

²⁴⁴ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 315. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 231.

²⁴⁵ Of course, the concept of racial equality in Republican circles did not include the Chinese in California, Eastern European immigrants in the North, or Native Americans residing throughout the continent. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 446-447.

²⁴⁶ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 136 (italics mine).

²⁴⁷ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 576, 581-582.

²⁴⁸ The road to Democratic Redemption was neither linear, nor a foregone conclusion. Although “Georgia and the upper-South states” were “redeemed” by 1871, with Texas, Arkansas, and Alabama joining Democratic Redemption in 1874, and Mississippi and South Carolina in 1876,” Democratic power was challenged in the election cycle of 1872, particularly in Alabama where Republicans regained control from Democratic Redemption; as well as in Virginia and North Carolina in the late 1870s. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 234; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 508, 592. Historian Glenda Gilmore also argues that Jim Crow was an uneven state process in her exceptional study, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁴⁹ For a historiographical debate regarding the relationship between Jim Crow and Southern racism, see the works of C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Howard Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

²⁵⁰ The Colfax Massacre of 1873 and the Hamburg Massacre of 1876 could be considered violent precursors of Redemption and Jim Crow rule. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 422-424, 563, 594; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 232.

²⁵¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 581-582.

²⁵² Rawick, v.8, part 1, 258-259.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁵⁵ For examples of voter intimidation, see Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 137.

²⁵⁶ Considering that Peter Clark was a northern black man residing in Cincinnati, his statement was even more telling. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 471-472. Likewise, in 1865, USCT veteran William Gibson, protested

Indiana's "black laws" which he believed rendered free black men as "slaves." See William Gibson, 28th USCI, 1865, letter 98, Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 224.

It is important to note that black politicians during Reconstruction were not immune to public insult. According to black U.S. Congressman James T. Rapier, "in other countries than my own I was not a stranger. I could approach a hotel without the fear that the door would be slammed in my face. Sir, I feel this humiliation very keenly, *it dwarfs my manhood* and impairs my usefulness as a citizen." See Sterling, *The Trouble They Seen*, 181 (italics mine).

Moreover, the declension of black education only exacerbated African American's economic condition. For more on this critical point, see the cliometric work of Robert Higgs, "Accumulation of Property by Southern Blacks before World War I," *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 72, No.4 (Sep., 1982), 736. For more on the economic conditions of freedpeople, see my previous chapter entitled "More Than a Single Man: Black Cooperative Manhood in the Post-Civil War Economy;" and Foner, *Reconstruction*, 176.

²⁵⁷ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 107-109.

²⁵⁸ Okon Edet Uya, *From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls 1839-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 26, 36, 52, 66. Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 121, 125-126.

²⁵⁹ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 139-142.

²⁶⁰ Billingsley, *Yearning to Breathe Free*, 142-154. Although Robert Smalls was able to garner support and reclaim his congressional seat in subsequent elections, the political strength of Smalls, the black caucus, and the South Carolina Republican Party was effectively undermined.

²⁶¹ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003), 11.

²⁶² Rawick, *The American Slave*, v.11, Supplement, Series I, 65.

²⁶³ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 30.

²⁶⁴ The framework of my study supports the popular view that the Reconstruction Era was, ultimately, a tragic era. For a critical analysis of this view, see Peter Kolchin, "The Tragic Era? Interpreting Southern Reconstruction in Comparative Perspective" in McGlynn and Drescher, *The Meaning of Freedom*, 293-294.

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