

THESIS

CONFEDERATE MILITARY STRATEGY: THE OUTSIDE FORCES THAT CAUSED
CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

CONFEDERATE MILITARY STRATEGY: THE OUTSIDE FORCES THAT CAUSED CHANGE

When addressed with military strategy the first thought is to drift towards the big name battlefields: Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. Our obsession with tactics and outcomes clouds our minds to the social, cultural, and political factors that took place away from the front lines. Less appealing, but no less important to understanding the war as a whole, this study incorporates non-military factors to explain the shift of Confederate military strategy in the Western Theater. Southern citizens experienced a growth of military awareness, which greatly influenced the military policies of Richmond, and altered how Confederate generals waged war against Union armies. The geography of Mississippi and Tennessee, and the proximity of these states to Virginia, also forced Western generals to pursue aggressive military campaigns with less than ideal military resources. Finally, the emotions and personal aspirations of general officers in the Army of Tennessee, and the Western Theater as a whole, produced a culture of failure, which created disunion and instability in the Western command structure. Confederate generals pursued aggressive military campaigns due to a combination of social, cultural, political, and military factors.

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The first foray into uncharted lands will always be one worth remembering. The completion of a Master's Thesis creates strong feelings of accomplishment that stay with you for life. New excursions are not always easy. Along the path are numerous roadblocks, dead ends, and other struggles that emerge at every twist and turn; none that would have been possible without the help of a strong support group.

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own work helped me with my organization, my key terms and phrases, my overall argument, and my “so-what” factor.

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Introduction

Every year from May to September, thousands of Americans traverse the same grounds that witnessed some of the most dreadful carnage known to American citizens up to that point in history. We celebrate those grounds, taking note of the troop dispersal, tactics of Confederate and Union armies, the death and destruction, and the personal experience of those who once fought there. The public is enamored with such places. Some people go where their ancestors once stood. They attend to learn and retrace military tactics and decisions, but we all go to expose ourselves to the hell of American Civil War combat. But above all, we go to pay our respect to the men who sacrificed their lives.

The public's eye is consumed with these progressive narratives as a result of our close intimacy with the battlefields. At Shiloh, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg, the narrative begins with the first volley and ends with the last retrograde movement of the vanquished foe. The arc of military campaigns in the West, North, East, and South visually concludes that the "good guys" won. At the end of the war, Union armies triumphed over their Confederate enemies. The Union was restored, the question of enslavement was settled, and now the country only had to repair American relations between the North and South. In reality, social and cultural traits, such as enslavement, class division, and citizens rarely take center stage in the realm of National Military Parks. At military parks the vast majority of the discussion is dedicated to the events that took place at the exact location. Artifacts on display are there with the intent to tell the military narrative. Little interpretation, little of the museum exhibits, or artifacts are dedicated to the outside forces that affect, or were affected, by the war. This concern not only hampers how the Civil War is remembered in public memory, but how historians engage with the public about aspects of the Civil War away from the

battlefields. Since 1999, the National Park Service is better equipped when addressing outside sources in relation to the battlefield, yet the attraction of battlefields rests in military significance.¹

Typically, historiography is written for one of two audiences, the public or academia. Academia, typically vilified as the “ivory tower,” is usually reserved for intellectual conversations between historians about certain eras or historical topics. The American Civil War, in academia, has expanded over the past 30 years to include a deeper understanding about Northern and Southern societies and cultures, a reinterpretation of the political climate prior, during, and after the war, a refocus on the slave institution, and an introduction into the world of environmental history. Public audiences, typically, referred to as “history buffs,” read the most recent books about important figures—most notably Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, and Abraham Lincoln—military campaigns, or another topic that connects with the reader on an emotional level. The public audience rarely engages in the historic discussion, and instead chooses to gobble up the next narrative by more public historians. This division creates a gap between the buff and the historian that inherently causes a misunderstanding between the two parties. However, in one aspect of academia, historians are more inclined to close the gap and offer academic narratives that the public is more readily able to comprehend and enjoy through the combination of traditional military studies and war studies.

Historian Earl J. Hess defined traditional military studies as “campaign and battle studies, tactical and strategic histories, studies of weapons, and biographies of major commanders.” New military studies is the attempt to analyze the social and cultural aspects of the military experience, which include combat and campaigning in the field, while war studies is the study of

¹ Glenn Brasher, *The Peninsular Campaign & the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 1-2.

everything else.² Traditionalists typically target the public audience while the other two categories are reserved for more academic audiences, yet historians have started to incorporate military aspects in studies about society and culture. The incorporation of both historiographical trends not only shows that the war aspect did not happen in isolation but intends to create better knowledge about the past.³ Therefore, it is my intent to analyze the relationship between military decisions and outside forces. My objective is to show how those outside forces affected Confederate military strategy, in the Western Theater, during 1862 and 1863. I argue that military awareness altered Confederate military strategy due to Northern emancipatory acts, southern class division, and the movement of the Confederate capital. Second, I assert that military leadership and political relationships also played an important role in the dictation of military strategy. A combination of poor military leadership and southern disdain for the Western Theater, created a culture of failure that negatively affected the ultimate goal of Confederate freedom.

Throughout this analysis the term “military strategy” will be used frequently to depict overall military movements, not individual battles. Military strategy is thus the pre-planned objectives, movements, actions, and campaigns of the Confederate armies that led to major battles—Perryville, Stones River, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. The Confederate military strategy began as a defensive measure to protect the land already under southern control. In the early stages of 1862, Confederate strategy switched from a purely defensive strategy to an offensive strategy based on military necessity and numerous outside forces that interacted with Confederate military politics. My examination of military strategy

² Earl J. Hess, “Where do we Stand?: A Critical Assessment of Civil War Studies in the Sesquicentennial Era,” *Civil War History* 60, no. 4 (December 2014): 371-403, accessed April 28, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/562419>.

³ Jennifer Weber, “Reflections on ‘Where do we Stand?’,” *Civil War History* 60, no. 4 (December 2014): 404-406, accessed April 28, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/562420>.

will also highlight the mentality and objective of Confederate generals. Confederate strategy was not universal. In fact, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Lee shared the same military mentality in swift, aggressive movements to defeat the Union army in Virginia as quickly as possible. Generals P.G.T. Beauregard, Braxton Bragg, Joseph Johnston, and James Longstreet were less aggressive. Instead of immediately attacking a numerical superior force, the generals wanted to wait and amass as many soldiers as possible from different departments before an attack on larger Union armies in their front. As a result, military campaigns were tested and altered by the military awareness of southern citizens.

Military awareness is a byproduct of war, no matter the era, magnitude, or longevity of the conflict. Military awareness, as the term will be used, shows a heightened sense of recognition among citizens and the war that developed around them. This recognition came in the form of citizens' opinions on the war and the military and political leaders, views of military and political policies, and citizens' beliefs and hopes in the cause. In the Civil War, southern awareness was more positive in the early stages of the war, but as the war progressed and the Confederacy continued to face defeat in the Western Theater, southern hopes became more pessimistic. During the Civil War, military awareness became very prominent due to the communication between the front lines and the home front, and the proximity of military engagements to southern communities. Therefore, in letters, editorials, and public demonstrations southern citizens made clear their feelings on the war. While citizens took more notice on the battles around them, southern voices, in stating their opinions on the direction and outcomes of the war, affected Confederate military strategy.

In chapter one, slavery and the Northern emancipatory acts will be the central focus. Beginning with the Antebellum Era, southerner racial prejudice instilled a deeper resistance in

military effort. The war became less of a states' rights issue and developed into a conflict over enslavement. Southern attention to Northern contraband, confiscation, and emancipation played an important role in Confederate decisions for the necessity behind multiple offensive campaigns during the fall of 1862 and the winter of 1862-1863. While southerners refused to relinquish their firm grip on racial slavery, Union armies created multiple opportunities for enslaved blacks to access freedom. When blacks started to serve in the Union military, southern hatred of racial equality drove them to vicious military actions against black prisoners of war and white officers.

Chapter two complicates the narrative by introducing class conflict as a result of military favoritism given to elite slaveholders. This chapter will analyze the relationship between poor and wealthy whites and expectations of military service. As the Conscription Act of April 1862 made clear, the Civil War favored wealthy southerners because of the exemption acts affixed to the law. From that April until the end of the war, poor southerners battled conscription, substitution, exemption, and impressment as a means to regain an equal status in southern society. Resulting from a combination of class division and military failures, the Confederate government passed military policies to protract the war in the slim hopes of winning a war of independence. Instead, the actions of the government to extend the war helped bring down the Confederacy from within.

The third chapter becomes a turning point in the argument. Switching focus, the military aspect of the war takes center stage. This chapter analyzes the move of the Confederate capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, and the consequences of such a move. Richmond became the focal point of the war among politicians in both Washington D. C. and Richmond, which caused southern military focus to remain fastened to Virginia. Another result of such a move was the rise and predominance of Lee. Lee's personality and continued

successes in battle caused government officials and southern citizens to place their entire faith in military achievements in the Eastern Theater. Relegating the Western Theater to a secondary status, the western military strategy suffered immensely. Therefore, Bragg and Johnston were reduced to fight the war without help and support from Richmond.

In chapters four and five, general officer aspirations are highlighted. The objective of the last two chapters is to analyze the generalships of Bragg, Johnston, and Longstreet to highlight military failures in the Western Theater. In the case of Bragg and Johnston, both men had to compete for military resources and the ability to dictate military strategy with Lee. Already starting at a disadvantage because of the location of the Confederate capital, Bragg's failures in battle created defective military relationships. Crumbling relationships among his general corps caused Bragg to be a constant target for criticisms, which affected the military strategy of the Army of Tennessee. Johnston, on the other hand, received much praise from soldiers. Johnston's relationship with Davis hampered his success, and the success of the Confederate army in the West. Longstreet, not transferred to the Western Theater until fall 1863, let his personal aspirations get in the way of Confederate success. Wanting to command an army, Longstreet constantly disagreed with Davis and Lee and undermined Bragg in the West. Longstreet eventually irritated Davis and Bragg enough, which caused the general to receive an assignment to take Knoxville, Tennessee, in December 1863. Leaving Bragg outnumbered at Chattanooga, Longstreet's movement created an opportunity for the Union to take Tennessee once and for all.

The year 1863 ended in failure and the Confederate government was forced to reconsider military strategy for the next campaign season. Considering the last two years of the Civil War from a military perspective, the Confederacy fought desperately to prevent a foregone conclusion

from transpiring. Based on the military policies and the reactions from southern citizens, 1862 and 1863 were the best opportunities for the Confederacy to win the war and secure its independence. When defeats became a regular occurrence in the Western Theater, southern citizens started to predict the end of the war. This, therefore, is a look at the military realm through multiple observations, to show how the military aspect was affected and affected outside forces.

Chapter One

The election of Abraham Lincoln proved civil war was imminent. Southerners, seeing nothing other than a Republican administration that threatened the existence of slavery within the United States, seceded in December 1860. Compromises no longer held together a fractured country. After secession, the Confederacy needed a national military to protect southern interests and southern territory. Southern interests began and ended with the institution of slavery. Agricultural, social status, power, and almost every aspect of southern life were predicated on racial enslavement. To protect slavery, the Confederacy began the war on the defensive, which, in theory, provided enough protection to preserve slavery.

After the military disasters in Tennessee and Virginia in early 1862, southerners began to see the end of slavery on a greater scale than ever before. As a result of the black exodus to the North, the Confederates pursued a more aggressive and offensive military strategy. In one aspect, a more offensive strategy resulted from an altered military consciousness. Southerners started to see the importance of military campaigns for the protection of slavery. Therefore, the Confederacy started to devote more attention and resources for military actions to safeguard racialized slavery. This chapter will evaluate the altered military consciousness based on southern racial ideologies through three different aspects.

First, antebellum ideology will be evaluated. The objective is to show how racial subjugation not only justified secession, but existed as a device used to wage a more violent war from 1862 to 1863. Antebellum ideologies, thus, proved fundamental in the way southerners waged and thought about war. Second, northern emancipatory laws illustrate how southerners used the military to cling to slavery. Offensive campaigns became vital to preserve the slave institution. Last, the sight of blacks in Union ranks forced southerners to embark on a more

violent war in an attempt to protect southern racial ideologies. From recapturing runaway slaves to executing blacks in Union blue, the continued subjugation of blacks, free and enslaved, maintained white paternalism and white superiority in war. Antebellum ideology, emancipatory laws, and blacks in Union blue, all greatly influenced Confederate military consciousness and military strategy. The perceived constitutional right to own slaves convinced southerners to engage in an intensified resistance against the Union.

Antebellum ideology rested on the existence of a very clear distinction between free and slave, or white and black. Southerners' rights to own slaves stemmed from the economic importance of slavery. As a slave society—a *dependence* on enslaved blacks for economic stability, growth, and wealth—power derived from slave ownership.⁴ Every slaveowner who owned enslaved blacks possessed a form of control within their locality; however, the more slaves a male southerner owned, the more political influence he exercised. In a society where the majority of slaveowners owned less than five slaves the most powerful men held twenty or more slaves.⁵ Slave societies emphasized the dominance of the slaveholder class through the creation of a culture based on racialized slavery. Even though divisions among wealth occurred, southern distinction relied on the separation of black and white, slave and free. Therefore, slaveholder became synonymous with the ruling class. However, the ruling class existed as the wealthiest and most powerful, which held the most political and visual power. Slaveowners in the ruling class controlled every aspect of an enslaved black's life through fear and violence.⁶

⁴ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2000), 8-9.

⁵ Southerners who owned twenty or more slaves are defined as the planter class.

⁶ James Oakes, "Master-Class Pluralism," in *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 38, 52.

Experiences on small farms compared to plantation owners differed; however, the treatment of enslaved blacks on plantations symbolized the treatment of slaves throughout the South. Told when to rise, work, eat, worship, rest, and told whom to affiliate with, slaves survived within the structure created by planters.⁷ Outside plantations, planters extended their control over enslaved blacks by issuing slave passes. Historian Stephanie Camp described passes as a tool that “spoke for slave managers, acting on their behalf, directing and overseeing the movement of enslaved people,” and ensured enslaved blacks timely return from plantation errands. While performing plantation errands, any white male could ask enslaved blacks to show their plantation note of authorization. If the slave refused or did not have the proper permit, white males had the authority to administer punishment. Therefore, the power of the planter class extended to all white males in society. To ensure the obedience of the enslaved, the ruling class resorted to violence, which maintained racial subjugation.⁸

As many historians have noted, slavery and violence were inseparable. Ira Berlin explained that violence created control of the labor force as well as a show of hegemonic power among ruling whites.⁹ The acts of “normal violence”—punishment for work disobedience, laziness, or absenteeism—helped planters exert their dominance over enslaved lives. However, Berlin’s assessment only scratched the surface. Sexual abuse, jealousy, and anger created other structures of violence. Frederick Douglass remembered that one of his masters received “great pleasure in whipping a slave...The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest.” Violence created “the entrance to the hell of

⁷ Even though enslaved blacks lived within the confines of white oppression, slave resistance did occur on a regular basis. However, this research will choose to focus on slave resistance during the Civil War instead of during the antebellum period.

⁸ Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 15, 19, 26.

⁹ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, 98.

slavery,” through which slaves passed.¹⁰ Jacqueline Jones illustrated a slaveowner’s masculine dominance over enslaved women. In one instance a slaveowner forced a pregnant woman to remove her clothing and lay face down in a specially dug hole while he proceeded to whip her. Slaveholder’s dominance over the lives of enslaved blacks foreshadowed the treatment of blacks during the Civil War. The dominant nature of slavery generated an intense opposition to the aspect of black freedom.¹¹

Planters, as the most powerful slaveholders, voiced the strongest defense of slavery. When planters obtained government positions they used political power to advance white interests in slavery, most notably in the decade that lead up to the Civil War.¹² The slaveocracy—interests of slaveholders controlled political decisions from the Revolutionary period to the beginning of the Civil War—prevailed as a byproduct of southern political power and enforced southern dissent against any and all anti-slavery expressions. Thus, radical southerners detected a direct threat to slavery with the election of Abraham Lincoln as the sixteenth president. Concealed under the blanket of states’ rights versus a central government, southerners separated from the perceived tyranny of Abraham Lincoln. In a correspondence between Abraham Lincoln and Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, Stephens warned Lincoln that the sovereign states, if threatened by a “consolidated despotism” could declare secession from that government.¹³ Sam Watkins, a soldier in the First Tennessee

¹⁰ Frederick Douglass, “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,” in *Autobiographies*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr., (New York: The Library of America, 1994), 18.

¹¹ Thabolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 31; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 19.

¹² For a brief study of the power southern slaveholders held in nineteenth-century see Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

¹³ Thomas E. Schott, *Alexander Stephens of Georgia: A Biography* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 310.

Regiment, simply stated, “we only fought for our State rights, they for Union and power... We believe in the doctrine of State rights, they in the doctrine of centralization.”¹⁴ On the surface, southerners proclaimed their independence through states’ rights. Under the surface, racialized subjugation played a larger factor in the declaration of secession.

Southern whites considered blacks as inherently inferior, an idea Alexander Stephens presented in his “cornerstone” speech. Stephens claimed, “the negro is not equal to the white man.” Slavery was the “natural” position of blacks. In advancing this message, plantation owners issued messages stating slavery benefitted everyone, even poor farmers. Jefferson Davis said, “by the existence of negro slavery...the white man is raised to the dignity of a freeman and an equal,” an equal to all other whites no matter the wealth. Joseph E. Brown, Governor of Georgia during the Civil War, argued, “it is...the interest of the poor white laborer to sustain and perpetuate the institution of negro slavery.” In this way, concluded Brown, “every white man...feels and knows that he belongs to the ruling class.” Therefore, the protection of states’ rights equaled the protection of property—slavery—and the racial division free and enslaved.¹⁵

Two important factors point to the realization that planters used states’ rights as a means to protect slavery. First and foremost, the planter class dominated United States political power from 1789 through 1860. Ward McAfee presented an explanation to why proslavery supporters held power in Washington D.C. during the Antebellum Era: “Racial anxieties, northern fears of disunion, and American devotion to the principle of self-determination” contributed to the

¹⁴ Sam R. Watkins, “*Co. Aytch: Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*, (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1990), 49.

¹⁵ Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3; Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution that Transformed the South* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2013), 25. Jefferson Davis quotes are taken from pages 25 and 26.

connection between slavery and power politics.¹⁶ In major political actions—Missouri Compromise (1820), Texas Statehood (1845), the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), and the *Dred Scott* decision (1857)—slaveholders in power threatened political retribution if governmental decisions did not support the institution of slavery. In fact, the majority of presidents, up to 1860, either owned slaves or remained sympathetic to slaveholders. The other factor revolved around the election of Abraham Lincoln, and southern recognition that Republicans threatened slavery across the South.¹⁷

Edmund Ruffin, a Virginia slaveholder, said the election of Lincoln showed “whether the institution of negro slavery on which the social and political existence of the South rests, is to be secured by our resistance, or . . . abolished in a short time, as the certain result of our present submission to northern domination.”¹⁸ William Yancey, a prominent Alabamian, believed that Republican policies protected the ideals of abolitionists. Republicans thus planned to destroy slavery. Civilians in South Carolina believed Lincoln wanted to plant a Republican party in the South to pass antislavery laws and other Republican dictates, which would ruin the southern agricultural economy and political power. The Mississippi “Declaration of Immediate Causes” summed the fear of southern planters, “We must either submit to degradation and to the loss of property . . . or we must secede from the Union.” Lincoln’s election and his stance on slavery

¹⁶ Don W. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government’s Relations to Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), preface.

¹⁷ Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860*; Colin Edward Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 32-33.

¹⁸ As quoted in Maury Klein, *Days of Defiance: Sumter, Secession, and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 23.

directly challenged the racial ideology of southern whites, which pushed the South towards secession.¹⁹

Underneath all the pomp and speeches of states' rights and Lincoln as a despotic ruler, the root cause of the Civil War boiled down to the institution of slavery and southern planters Constitutional perception to hold four million enslaved blacks in bondage. Historian Charles Dew stated, "To put it quite simply, slavery and race were absolutely critical elements in the coming of the war."²⁰ Maintaining firm beliefs that blacks existed as an inferior race, southern leaders declared secession. The Confederacy built a government on the right to hold slaves and waged a war to protect that right.

From 1861 forward, the Lincoln Administration forced the Confederacy to wage an unexpectedly fierce war through emancipatory pieces of legislation. Per Lincoln's desire to hold federal forts and other military sites, the Union army marched to Hampton, Virginia, in 1861. Soon after, the Union held firm control of Fort Monroe under Brigadier General Benjamin Butler. While in command of the fort, Butler took in three recently escaped slaves from a nearby Confederate camp one May evening. The next day a Confederate officer came to reclaim his property and invoked the Fugitive Slave Act, which allowed southern planters to reclaim their property in the North. General Butler flatly refused him. Butler did not adhere to the Republican or abolitionist ideals but saw the value of slaves in a war where slavery contributed to the enemy's war effort. Under the current political climate, Butler said he would return the slaves only if the Confederate officer pledged allegiance to the Union government, laid down his

¹⁹ William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists Triumph 1854-1861* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 336-37, 367. For more speeches putting slavery at the forefront of secession see Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001). This specific quote taken from the Mississippi Ordinance of Secession is quoted from page 12-13.

²⁰*Ibid*, 81.

arms, and returned as a civilian under the Stars and Stripes. Upon refusal, Butler told the officer that his slaves would remain with the Union army; enslaved blacks aiding the Confederacy were liable to confiscation by the federal army. As a direct result of Butler's action, Congress passed the First Confiscation Act in August. This act allowed for all Union armies to confiscate southern property used in aid of the rebellion. The term "property" also referred to slaves but with a caveat; only slaves directly in aid to the rebellion could be confiscated as war property. Unless enslaved blacks escaped and told the Union army that they had been directly involved with military fortifications, or other military tasks, confiscation was not intended to emancipate any blacks outside Union military occupation.²¹

John C. Fremont, commander of Union forces in Missouri, further challenged southern ideologies in Missouri. Fremont, a Republican candidate in 1856, returned to military service as the Civil War began. Placed in the Western Theater, Fremont issued a proclamation in Missouri, declared martial law, and freed all the slaves of the state. Fearing reprisal from the Border States, President Lincoln revoked Fremont's statement in August 1861. Lincoln changed Fremont's proclamation to adhere to the policy of confiscation, but received backlash from abolitionists. As a result of abolition negative reaction, Lincoln argued for gradual emancipation. Gradual emancipation—issued by Congress in March 1862—allowed southern citizens the option to free their slaves in exchange for monetary compensation. This new policy attacked the southern way of life, which provided fuel for southern repercussions.²²

²¹ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Allegiance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Meridian Book, 1990), 4; James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Blacks Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1993), 28; Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, 68.

²² McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Blacks Felt and Acted During the War for the Union*, 41.

On the surface Butler, Fremont, and the policies that followed from their actions, appeared to have more bark than bite. Initially, Lincoln focused on the restoration of the Union, but very quickly the war changed to include the freedom of enslaved blacks. Contraband and confiscation aided the Union war effort and harmed the Confederate war effort. When the Confiscation Act only allowed an opportunity for enslaved blacks in aid of the rebellion to gain their freedom, historian Joseph Glatthaar said, “the Union government could not enforce such a restrictive rule.”²³ The Union army could not prevent enslaved blacks from escaping to Union lines. In fact, when Union armies penetrated into southern territory a wave of enslaved blacks made their way into Union lines. Second, as more slaves escaped to Union lines northern and southern civilians realized that the war revolved around the slave question.

The Union political actions and military successes in 1861 and spring 1862 allowed Lincoln the ability to suggest a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in the summer of 1862 to his cabinet. As a strong show of determination, the Emancipation Proclamation promised to free all slaves in the territory controlled by the Confederacy. Even though Secretary of State William Seward advised Lincoln to await a Union victory before the president issue such a vital piece of legislation, an ideological shift changed the purpose of war. “The whole nature of the war I consider changed,” mused an American resident, “the idea of a restoration of the Union under such circumstances is an impossibility.”²⁴ The war evolved from the preservation of the Union to the freedom of enslaved blacks if the Union won. The Confederacy could no longer lay absolute claim that independence was the sole purpose for war. Instead, the war forced southerners to acknowledge the conflict as a crusade for racial subjugation.

²³ Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Allegiance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*, 5.

²⁴ “A Yankee Abroad Giving the Affect of the Proclamation,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, November 12, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress (hereafter LOC).

Southern citizens risked their lives to preserve the slaveocracy. If blacks won their freedom, then white southerners feared they would be subjugated to the rule of “black Republicans.”²⁵ In the words of a Tennessee soldier, “submission has been made impossible by the conduct of our insolent foe...the only tolerable alternative left us is resistance to the bitter end.”²⁶ The *Memphis Daily Appeal* latched on to the messages of the President by stating the Confederacy “feel[s] perfectly authorised to retort these demon threats with bold defiance...we shall resist them with all the means.”²⁷ Jefferson Davis said the Emancipation Proclamation would have one of three outcomes; “The extermination of the slaves, the exile of the whole white population of the Confederacy, or absolute and total separation of these States from the United States.”²⁸ From January 1, 1863, to the end of the war, southern citizens found it necessary to fight, even if forever, in order to maintain their ideological, economic, political, and material hold on racial subjugation.

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, questions in Washington arose. How would the Union government enforce an act in the states outside the authority of the federal government? One answer depended on the success of Union military campaigns. If Union armies gained large tracts of Confederate territory through military victories, then the federal government controlled emancipation moving forward. The appearance of Union troops, therefore, offered a promise to enslaved blacks in seceded states. This promise assured blacks in bondage that the government in Washington intended the entire nation to progress towards racial

²⁵ Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, 28.

²⁶ Flavel C. Barber, *Holding the Line: The Third Tennessee Infantry, 1861-1864*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Kent, OH: The Kent University Press, 1994), 151.

²⁷ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, October 10, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²⁸ Jefferson Davis, *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy Including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, ed. James D. Richardson, X Vols. (New York: Chelsea House-Robert Hector Publishers, 1966), 276-97.

freedom. No more broken promises, no more band-aid solutions that plagued the political realm from the disastrous decision in 1820. The proclamation of 1863 assured a future of liberty for enslaved blacks; “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State,” declared the proclamation, “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”²⁹ Southern whites viewed emancipation as a threat to eliminate a society built on slave labor and a form of subjugation to a despotic ruler. Southerners feared emancipation created racial equality.

William Minor, a planter in Natchez, Mississippi, remembered the revolution begun by the Emancipation Proclamation. Leaving the area early in the war, Minor returned to his plantation in January 1863 under Union occupation, noting both the changes emancipation and Union armies brought. Minor noted that his slaves behaved as if the plantation belonged to them. Slaves started to disappear. Taking mules as transportation between plantations, slaves expressed their freedom by moving freely between spaces once restricted by plantation owners. But slaves did not need the physical display of Union troops to disobey plantation owners. The further Union armies traversed into southern territory, the more slaves defied owners. Enslaved blacks refused to work until owners met the demands of better work and living conditions.³⁰ From Europe, residents believed the effect of emancipation “can only be to make them [southerners] more and more desperate in their resistance.”³¹ Even though the Emancipation Proclamation provided a stronger resistance within the Confederacy, Lincoln’s proclamation damaged the Confederate war effort. Slaves, as contrabands, allowed the Union army to take

²⁹ *Alexandria Gazette*, January 2, 1863, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

³⁰ Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, 72, 74.

³¹ “A Yankee Abroad Giving the Affect of the Proclamation,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, November 12, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

enslaved blacks away from the southern armies and southern citizens. With every victory that the Union armies won, the promise of emancipation spread to enslaved blacks across the South.

The presence of Union soldiers brought news of abolition and freedom to southern slaves. When the plantation owners strove to keep the news from reaching the ears of the enslaved, blacks on plantations took it upon themselves to pass along stories and rumors of emancipation. Slave cabins transformed into private spheres, used to pass abolitionist views among the enslaved. Word of emancipation travelled from plantation to plantation, which caused slaves to become more active in seeking their own freedom. Emancipation, therefore, created an opportunity for enslaved blacks to legally revolt and act upon the promise of freedom obtained by the Emancipation Proclamation.³²

Revolutionary moments allow for subordinate groups to act and further challenge the power of the dominant class in society.³³ Running away allowed enslaved blacks to break away from the spatial control of the plantation owners. As the war developed into a racial conflict, the Union policies of contraband and confiscation paved a legal path to freedom from 1861 forward. Once the blue armies approached, many enslaved blacks in an area made their escape. Escaping slavery further emphasized the threat emancipation posed to southern society.

Furthermore, southerners continually claimed the Emancipation Proclamation was unconstitutional and a threat towards their liberties and rights as civilians under the protection of a centralized government. This argument reinforced the earlier arguments for secession. A Louisiana senator called Lincoln's proclamation "a gross outrage on the rights of private

³² Andrew Ward, *The Slaves' War: The Civil War in the Words of Former Slaves* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 108. Ward specified the "Lincoln's Legal Loyal League" as a group of underground networks passing the word of emancipation from plantation to plantation; Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, 116.

³³ *Ibid*, 119.

property, and an invitation to inaugurate a servile war.”³⁴ T. A. R. Nelson, a Union man in Knoxville, issued a statement to the people of East Tennessee declared Lincoln “now claims the prerogative to abolish slavery without our consent.” If Lincoln took slaves, Nelson reasoned, “may he not take our lands and everything else we possess.”³⁵ Confederate General Samuel Jones, commander of the Confederate forces in East Tennessee, approached Nelson in an attempt to convince the population of East Tennessee to join the Confederacy’s revolutionary movement. The general hoped to use the harsh statements of Union men to “promote peace and harmony” in East Tennessee. Through the creation of peace, Jones reasoned that Union troops would withdraw peacefully, which would give the Confederacy a successful victory in a vital region.³⁶ Providing military support thus seemed the only way to remedy emancipatory threats. The “proclamation itself were totally unconstitutional...illegal and mischievous” wrote Seth J. W. Lucky to General Jones. As a result, Lucky concluded, “all good citizens should cheerfully yield their support to the Government.” In other words, every Confederate citizen—men as soldiers and women as supporters—needed to maintain the Confederacy, and fight for “peace and security of person and property.”³⁷ A direct attack on slavery delayed peace until the exhaustion of Confederate resources. In 1862, with no end for the war in sight, Jefferson Davis adjusted the military consciousness to address the threats posed by the Emancipation Proclamation. Confederate independence and the continuation of slavery rested on Confederate military success. Thus, northern emancipatory acts furthered the Civil War, which hardened Confederate

³⁴ *American Citizen*, September 19, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

³⁵ “Address of Hon. T. A. R. Nelson to the People of East Tennessee,” October 3, 1862. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Ser. 1, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 909-11. (This work will hereafter be cited as *OR*.)

³⁶ Samuel Jones to Thomas A. R. Nelson, October 17, 1862. *OR*, Ser.1, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 957-58.

³⁷ Seth J. W. Lucky to Samuel Jones, October 11, 1862. *OR*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 946

resolve. In an attempt to protect southern racial ideals, the Confederacy pursued a vicious war to maintain racial hierarchy.

The Confederacy waged a defensive war to protect its territory from 1861 to midway through 1862. A defensive stance made the Confederacy appear as the non-aggressor while Union armies arrived as instigators. Almost immediately, Davis's strategy started to crumble. Multiple Union success at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and Shiloh in the West forced Davis, his advisors, and his generals to address flaws in southern strategy. Some flaws created with a defensive strategy included small, individual commands, little to no reinforcements, and too large an area to defend. Richmond and military commanders realized that offensive strategies needed quick implementation. Regaining lost territory, through offensive campaigns, would help the Confederacy reclaim fugitive slaves. Therefore, offensive campaigns allowed the Confederacy an avenue to protect, and potentially expand, southern slave interests. The Confederacy must now create a military society to achieve independence because the Confederacy would not submit to a government dedicated to abolishing slavery. Without a military victory, the Confederacy did not have sturdy ground to obtain political peace. Even though the Confederacy started to wage a more offensive strategy starting in 1861, after Union Confiscation and Contraband policies, the Emancipation Proclamation furthered the Confederate need to deliver lasting military victories through vigorous campaigns. Because of Davis's reluctance to negotiate peace with the Union, as long as the Emancipation Proclamation remained a federal priority, aggressive campaigns further advanced Confederate military tactics after January 1863.

From a political and military perspective, the south viewed the proclamation as a last ditch effort for the North to win the war. As an expansion to the Confiscation and Contraband

policies in 1861 and 1862, the Lincoln's proclamation was viewed as the "last resource of the baffled and enraged tyrant."³⁸ Therefore, the Confederacy needed to repel the invader then follow up the repulsion with an offensive thrust against the Yankees. Jefferson Davis understood Lincoln's proclamation as a way to "subjugate the South by force of arms."³⁹ With Jefferson Davis's booming rhetoric the South started to see the importance of an offensive military strategy. These beliefs on the proclamation created excitement in Confederate success even though the armies suffered defeats at Antietam and Perryville. A racial war developed as a consequence of military awareness, which permeated throughout the Confederacy after Lincoln issued his proclamation.

Another aspect of the Civil War as a racial conflict derived from slave insurrections. Even though large-scale uprisings did not happen on a regular basis, the few revolts that made headlines did enough to frighten southerners, which caused southerners to strengthen control over enslaved blacks. Fears of insurrection translated into slave patrols, the use of slave passes, and a dismissal of mass black meetings. The fear of insurrection constricted the movements of enslaved blacks.⁴⁰

Slave patrols did not create a separate branch of military service. Instead, all branches allocated men to prevent the escape of enslaved blacks to northern lines. Members of the cavalry, infantry, militia, and home guard rounded up escaped slaves. As the war progressed picket lines in the Confederate army started to carry responsibility. Primarily, picket lines warned the main bodies of the army of enemy movements. With the increase of enslaved

³⁸ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, October 10, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

³⁹ Davis, *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy Including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, ed. James D. Richardson, X Vols., 276-97.

⁴⁰ George S. Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007), noted the importance slave rebellions such as Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831 had on the southern psyche.

fugitives Confederate pickets watched enemy movements, and kept an eye out for any runaway slaves. Runaways concerned the Confederacy immensely, that one Union officer remarked, “they [Confederate Pickets] are disposed more with reference to internal than external approaches.”⁴¹ Away from the main lines, patrols tried to eliminate any dissent among slaves on the southern home front.⁴² If dissent continued to go unchecked, southern fears of insurrection would only mount. Consequently, men needed to address the fears of slave rebellion at home. Deserting, joining patrols or partisan units, left the front lines continuously deprived of manpower. To reverse the expanding desertion rate, due to rising anxiety about possible slave uprisings, the Confederate armies needed success through military offensives. Confederate armies needed to regain Middle Tennessee—lost through their defeats at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Murfreesboro—to prevent military focus on runaways and the home front. If the Confederate army recovered Tennessee and continued to hold on to the state, the theory held that slaves would be less likely to escape. Also, if the Confederacy pushed the Union invaders out of Tennessee, then the fears of slave insurrection would dwindle. However, fears of slave insurrection did not diminish. Instead, panic spread as Union armies marched through southern territory.

After reading the New York *Tribune* in January 1863, John B. Jones, a war clerk for the Confederacy, noted that the North thought victory would accompany the use of “negro soldiers...sent among the slaves to produce an insurrection!”⁴³ From this view, the proclamation declared freedom to all slaves in southern states, which encouraged “servile insurrection,” would

⁴¹ Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, 128.

⁴² Ward, *The Slaves' War: The Civil War in the Words of Former Slaves*, 77. Two slaves, Aunt Dice and Sarah Debo, reflected on the trickery of slave patrols. Both recalled that Confederate patrols dressed in Yankee uniforms to test the loyalties of enslaved blacks. Debo recollected that if a slave mentioned the desire to be free, disguised Confederates “shot them down” on sight maintaining the racial hierarchy during war.

⁴³ John B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 158.

punish the South. Northern political squabbles helped promote fear throughout the south. Northern Democrats insisted that the freedom of slaves created a space for slave revolts to thrive, which produced terror in southern citizens. Discovered Union plots to incite slave insurrection, further added to the tension between white and enslaved.⁴⁴

One such plot, discovered in July 1863, intended to “induce the blacks to make a concerted and simultaneous movement or rising” on August 1, in the southern states. Augustus Montgomery intended for southern blacks to rise up and help the Union armies sever Confederate communications, burn railroads and country bridges, and hide in the woods to participate as an irregular resistance, “as occasion may offer for provisions and further depredations.”⁴⁵ After the discovery of the telegram, Secretary of War James Seddon warned all southern governors of Union intentions. Seddon pushed the southern governors to support the military by supplying more men to combat Union armies. Governor T. A. R. Nelson of Tennessee followed Seddon's call to arms. In a call to Tennessee civilians, Nelson implored able-bodied men to “buckle on his armor, and...at once volunteer to aid in the struggle against him.”⁴⁶ If the Union conquered the Confederacy, Nelson continued, “a negro race of four millions are to be your equals in your own homes.”⁴⁷ To prevent the destruction of southern society the Confederacy needed military success through offensive campaigns. The offensive movements turned violent when blacks appeared on southern soil in Union blue.

⁴⁴ Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War*, 28.

⁴⁵ James Seddon sent a short telegram to the Governors of LA, SC, GA, AK, TN, TX, MS, and AL. Sent July 18, 1863, Seddon informed the governors that a plan had been hatched by the Union military to incite “general insurrection of the slaves” beginning August 1. The letter from James Seddon was sent to the governors on July 18, 1863, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LI, Pt. 2: 737-38. The Union letter Seddon referred to was from Augustus S. Montgomery, dated May 12, 1863, from Washington D.C., *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LI, Pt. 2: 738-39.

⁴⁶ “Address of Hon. T. A. R. Nelson to the People of East Tennessee,” October 3, 1862. *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 909-11.

⁴⁷ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, October 10, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

Emancipation did more than free enslaved blacks throughout the South. It also allowed all blacks an opportunity to join the Union army. “Such persons of suitable condition,” read the proclamation, “will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.”⁴⁸ Therefore, the proclamation not only hurt the southern economy, but also challenged the racial ideology of southerners. To ensure racial dominance, the Confederacy enacted the “black flag” policy. The black flag policy asked and gave no quarter to Union black soldiers or even white officers in command of black regiments.⁴⁹ As early as August 1862, the *Yorkville Enquirer* called for “every negro found in the ranks of the enemy” to be shot.⁵⁰ Emancipatory policies, enacted by the Union government, gave Union armies the right to destroy southern lifestyle through the seizure of southern slaves. As a result of northern attempts to free slaves, the Confederacy enacted policies to combat Union attacks on southern life.

During the antebellum period, slaves found in open rebellion against their states were executed. Citizens advised the Confederate Government to continue such policies during the Civil War. “We must at once inaugurate a counter policy,” argued an editorial, “and a system of penalties” for any insurrections that the Union armies intended to initiate. “Let Congress act at once,” the editorial continued, to ensure the protection and lifestyle of southern society.⁵¹ The Confederacy did heed the desire of the civilians when James Seddon told Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard, “slaves in flagrant rebellion are subject to death by the laws of every slave-

⁴⁸ *Alexandria Gazette*, January 2, 1863, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

⁴⁹ Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers, 101.

⁵⁰ *Yorkville Enquirer*, August 20, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

⁵¹ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 29, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

holding State.”⁵² However, Seddon acknowledged that to prevent against “possible abuse of this power” the decision to execute a prisoner of war (POW) relied upon the individual commander. “Officially, black Union soldiers taken as prisoners by the rebels were to be treated as rebellious slaves,” remembered one black soldier, “meaning that they could be put to death summarily and that their white officers were subject to some penalty for inciting a slave rebellion.”⁵³ A slaveholder, President Davis adhered to the laws that placed racial superiority of whites over blacks in the South. Davis, however, needed to tread carefully when he issued statements or orders that directed the execution of black prisoners, in case of federal reprisal. However, Davis did not waver when he issued General Orders No. 111 in December 1862.

In response to Union General Benjamin Butler in New Orleans, Davis issued a military law that condemned Butler's rule in New Orleans. Reports from New Orleans insinuated that Butler, since the capture of the vital port city for the Union in May 1862, had disregarded all laws of a civil military. This included insulting Confederate women, imprisoning Confederate civilians, plundering, unconstitutional impressment, and creating intensive labor conditions for Confederate civilians.⁵⁴ General Orders No. 111 criticized the abuses of the Union army under Butler and declared such men eligible for execution upon capture. Davis did not stop there. Seizing the opportunity of the black units Butler had created in New Orleans, Davis further stated that all negro soldiers in arms against the Confederacy are to be captured and returned to the States “which they belong to,” to be dealt in accordance of southern law. White officers, who led black regiments, also faced punishment if captured. If found guilty of leading black

⁵² James A. Seddon to P. G. T. Beauregard, November 30, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 2, Vol. 4: 954

⁵³ Regosin, Elizabeth A. and Donald R. Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction Through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 69.

⁵⁴ Butler also ordered the execution of William Mumford for participating in rebellious activities towards the Union. Chester G. Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie: Ben Butler in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1997), 134.

regiments into battle, white officers faced execution. The rhetoric of southern society and General Order No. 111 laid the groundwork for the enactment of the black flag policy. When Lincoln discovered such atrocities, the federal government offered very strong actions in return, which came as an extension to the Emancipation Proclamation.⁵⁵

In July 1863, Lincoln issued General Orders No. 253. General Orders No. 253 stated that all POWs, no matter the color of their skin, should receive equal treatment. Any conduct otherwise would be a “relapse into barbarism.” As reported in the *Yorkville Enquirer*, Lincoln advised his foe that “the law of retaliation will be fully carried out, and every soldier killed...a rebel soldier will be executed.” Maintaining his desire to stomp out black executions, Lincoln sustained his tough retaliatory language; “if black soldiers are taken prisoner and sold into slavery, rebel soldiers will be confined to hard labor...there to continue until the blacks are liberated.” Lincoln’s goal to protect all soldiers created an aspect of social equality within the ranks.⁵⁶ Even though blacks did not receive equal treatment or were allowed to serve as commissioned officers, the retaliatory act offered political leaders to further redefine equality within the Union. Confederate officers refused such an attempt at equality.

Brigadier General H. W. Mercer, commander of Confederate forces at Savannah, suggested examples be made of captured black soldiers. “They are slaves taken with arms in hand against their masters,” Mercer said, “and terrible punishment should be inflicted that their fellows may be deterred from following their examples.”⁵⁷ The *Daily Bulletin* stated, “the Southern people cannot treat as prisoners of war any slave found in arms against us,” or else

⁵⁵ General Orders No. 111, December 24, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 2, Vol. V: 795-97.

⁵⁶ *Daily Morning News*, August 10, 1863, accessed January 1, 2016, NewsVault.

⁵⁷ H. W. Mercer to Brigadier-General Jordan, November 14, 1862, *OR*, Ser. 2, Vol. IV: 945-46

blacks would be seen as equals to whites in the military.⁵⁸ Lincoln directly challenged the social hierarchy within the South. Freedom to slaves, freed blacks armed, and threatened retributions for southern mistreatment of black prisoners; the Republican administration questioned the role of race in the United States. As a result, southerners waged a vicious war against black soldiers and white officers to solidify white superiority over black slaves.⁵⁹

“Let...no officer in command of a black regiment or company [be] taken prisoner,” announced the *Camden Confederate*.⁶⁰ White officers exacerbated the social attack on southern society. Historian Colin Woodward noted that the presence of white officers leading black units into the South created an image of “criminals inciting insurrection.”⁶¹ The emancipation offered opportunities to “incite domestic insurrection for the massacre of millions of people, the greater portion of whom are non-combatants,” concluded an editorial in the *Memphis Daily Appeal*.⁶² To stop this invasion and preserve the southern way of life, white officers received harsh treatments for their encouragement of slave insurrections. These actions against black soldiers and their white officers not only proved the shift from a war to protect states’ rights to a war answering the question whether blacks should be forever free, but demonstrated the necessity for a shift in Confederate military consciousness. Before the Emancipation Proclamation, the Confederacy relied primarily on a defensive strategy, which protected southern territory and forced the Union to defeat Confederate armies. After the proclamation, Confederate armies needed more offensive campaigns. The direct attack on southern society demanded such attacks.

⁵⁸ *The Daily Bulletin*, October 5, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

⁵⁹ During the Civil War only white men led black regiments, due to the racial ideology that prevailed in the North. To read more, see Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Allegiance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*.

⁶⁰ *The Camden confederate*, June 19, 1863, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

⁶¹ Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, 133-34.

⁶² *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 29, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

When slaves ran away, historian Stephanie Camp wrote, “they shook the very foundation on which their owners’ conceptions of themselves and their freedom lay.” Fugitive runaways weakened the Confederacy from within.⁶³

“We can only live and exist by this species of labor,” a Mississippi cavalryman said, “this country without slave labor would be wholly worthless.”⁶⁴ The southern economy survived mainly through agriculture. The mentality that slaves “will be more content than ever...under the protection of their legitimate guardians,” thus endured as a common mentality for the Confederacy.⁶⁵ The racial ideology of the South escalated the Confederacy’s refusal to end slavery. Social classes divided along racial lines, and southerners wanted to maintain such antebellum ideologies.

The continued antebellum subjugation of southern blacks protected the rights southerners claimed when they declared secession. As the Civil War began and continued through 1862, black emancipation threatened to destroy southern society. As a result, President Davis and the Confederacy waged a war to defend the slave institution. Southern opposition to black freedom and equality created deeper resistance in southern society. The disregard for enslaved emancipation escalated into a racial war that created war atrocities on numerous occasions. From the perspective of the Confederacy, subjugation, imprisonment, and execution allowed the Confederacy to protect slavery. As Captain Ellis Davis of the 8th Alabama voiced, “I am willing to fight forever rather than submit to freeing negroes among us.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, 127, 135.

⁶⁴ As quoted in Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War*, 30-31.

⁶⁵ *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. 2: 965.

⁶⁶ Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War*, 35-36.

Chapter Two

Social divisions looked extremely different from the Antebellum Era to the beginning the Civil War Era. In the antebellum period, southern society survived on the philosophy of free versus slave, which created the two most noticeable social divisions in the South. Even though class separation existed among the whites in society, racial differences took predominance when distinguishing the southern class structure. However, as the Civil War approached and started, racial distinctions became one of multiple identifiers. Racial tensions, from the eighteenth-century forward, exacerbated the friction between classes that threatened to destroy the Confederacy from within. This chapter will explore the social divisions within the South and how the subsequent social conflict affected military policies. For clarification, this chapter is not claiming that class divisions did not exist in the South until the Civil War. This chapter sets out to express a growth of social tensions as a result of the Civil War and Confederate military policies.⁶⁷ In the last chapter, the discussion followed emancipatory acts—confiscation, contraband, gradual emancipation, and the Emancipation Proclamation—to show how military awareness created a deeper resistance to combat northern abolitionists and the freedom of enslaved blacks. This chapter intends to complicate the narrative by addressing the social tensions that developed as a result of Confederate conscription and impressment. Because of

⁶⁷ Andrew, Ward, *The Slaves' War: The Civil War in the Words of Former Slaves* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 12-13. William Yancey, a slave in NC, remembered three separate class distinction on the eve of the Civil War. 1) "First was the aristocratic class, the big slave holders, who gave shape to the government and tone to the society. They had the right of way in business and politics." 2) "The second and third classes were servants to the first class," and the success of the remaining two classes "depended on their obedience [to the aristocracy]... The second class included the small slave holder, the overseers, managers, and clerks." Lucinda Hall Shaw, a Mississippi slave, remembered "they [the other two classes] tried to be rich and class themselves with the rich white folks." 3) Yancey remembered the third class consisting of the "poor, ignorant dirty whites" that lived "from hand to mouth. No one cared for them; even the slaves were warned not to have anything to do with them." The first and second classes looked down upon poor white civilians.

these two policies, a greater sense of military awareness, from April 1862 to January 1864, arose in the South that threatened to destroy the Confederacy from within.

In a war declared for the rights of all citizens in individual states, Jefferson Davis and other Confederate officials favored the slave aristocracy. During the 1850s, wealthy planters and fire-eaters⁶⁸ fueled the animosity of the South towards a Republican government in the North, and declared the South independent from the tyrannical ruler in Washington. As the war progressed and Confederate officials passed more policies that favored the wealthy, more southerners began to advocate against wealth favoritism. The *Memphis Daily Appeal* stated that both the rich and poor had a “vital interest” to prevent the “demoralizing social system of the North” from forcing itself upon southern soil. Independence would not come from one class’s sacrifices; the entire southern population should answer the call to arms as to not become subjugated to northern rule.⁶⁹ If the Confederacy could not see the potential harm in social division, than Union invasions were the least of Confederate worries.

In the hope of quickly ending the war and to prevent a growth in class division, Richmond officials enacted conscription and impressment. However, conscription and impressment would create more problems than solutions for the Confederacy. Beginning in April 1862, with the passage of the First Conscription Act, southerners took more notice on how the government intended to wage war. Instead of the individual states providing defense for the nation, Davis transformed the Confederacy into a centralized government. A centralized government subverted the ideals behind states’ rights, which created a conflict between

⁶⁸ Those staunchly opposed to abolition policies.

⁶⁹ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, May 4, 1863, accessed May 25, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

individual states and Richmond during the Civil War.⁷⁰ Additionally, southern awareness on military policies generated a deeper resistance to the perceived unconstitutionality of Confederate war policies. Social tensions as a result of state versus central power became a byproduct of poor southerners challenge to the political favoritism of wealthy white planters.

Southern armies already lacked manpower, industry, agriculture, weapons, commerce, and everything else necessary to fight a war, compared to the Union armies. The months following the First Conscription Act, Confederate generals in the West continually wrote to state governors and Richmond officials to plead for conscripts to join their depleted ranks. General Edmund Kirby Smith wrote to Georgia Governor Joseph Brown to ask for the use of conscripts to replace soldiers on sick leave. General Sterling Price wrote to Mississippi Governor John Pettus in need of conscripts. Knowing the Union army threatened the state; Price asserted that the addition of conscripts “can quickly relieve your State of the presence of the foe if we will only be prompt, energetic, and bold.”⁷¹ Thus, the early Confederate strategy of defense proved a severe miscalculation because on the necessity of more men. In 1861, southerners joined the Confederate cause with a sense of fulfillment, adventure, and inspiration. By 1862, the romanticism that brought volunteers forward in 1861 waned as the war proved more costly than anyone anticipated. To continue the struggle against the Union for independence, the Confederacy enacted Conscription in April 1862 to fill troop quotas and provide for the defense of the nation.⁷²

To maintain the military effort, Jefferson Davis asked Congress in March 1862, to pass a law to provide manpower from white civilians who did not volunteer in 1861 or continued to

⁷⁰ Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), preface.

⁷¹ Edmund Kirby Smith to Governor Joseph Brown, June 20, 1862. *OR*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 694; General Sterling Price to Governor John Pettus, July 31, 1862. *OR*, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2:666.

⁷² Joseph T. Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 202.

evade military service. In April 1862, the Confederacy passed the first Conscription Act in United States history. Titled, “An Act to further provide for the Public Defense,” Richmond enlisted for “three years, unless the war shall have been sooner ended, all white men who are residents of the Confederate States.”⁷³ General Braxton Bragg noted the importance of such a measure. Preparing for his Kentucky invasion in August, Bragg wrote that some regiments resembled “mere skeletons.” The army needed more men to accomplish the “Kentucky Dream” outlined by the Confederacy.⁷⁴ Therefore, men between the ages of 18 and 45 were eligible for the draft. According to Davis, “youths under the age of eighteen require further instruction; men of matured experience are needed for maintaining order and good government at home and in supervising preparations for rendering efficient armies in the field.”⁷⁵ Besides the creation of a new fighting force to confront inevitable Union invasions during the next campaign season, Davis’s justification opened a conflict between state and central government. The President created a loophole through the legality of Home Guards. “While the emergency exist[ed],” stated Davis, Home Guards became essential to provide the armies with adequate supplies and a form of defense against inevitable Union invasions.⁷⁶ However, the president or the state governors never defined “emergency”. Therefore, as the war progressed, State Governments protected such militia units, which created a tension between individual states and national interests.⁷⁷

⁷³ “An Act to further provide for the Public Defense,” *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. I: 1095-1097.

⁷⁴ Braxton Bragg to Samuel Cooper, August 8, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 671-71.

⁷⁵ Jefferson Davis to the Confederate Congress, March 28, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. I: 1031.

⁷⁶ Jefferson Davis to the Confederate Congress, March 28, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. 1: 1031.

⁷⁷ The most notable tension created as a result of the state government versus a central government argument was the conflicts between President Davis and State Governors Joseph Brown—Georgia—and Zebulon Vance—North Carolina. Outside my scope, these two men argued constantly with Davis over the constitutionality of conscription and placed more importance on the protection of their home states because of the military supplies, infrastructure, and men both states sent to the Confederate cause.

Individual interests sparked more than a conflict between state and federal powers. From a citizen's perspective, Richmond passed laws that infringed on the freedom secession promised southern citizens. Through secession, citizens believed they had obtained rights that the Republican Party threatened to violate. Freedom of choice, thus, became a constant theme citizens in the South harped on continuously. However, military necessity drove the demand for more men within Confederate armies. By spring, the Confederate armies faced a massive reduction in military strength. Before conscription, Confederates faced the potential loss of 12-month enlistments. If the Confederacy did not find a way to maintain and grow the existent armies, then the Confederacy needed to recognize the potential for military disaster. The Confederacy had no other option but to draft men for the preservation of southern independence and the slave system southern society depended on. Davis, in a message to the Confederate Congress, implored all citizens to "pay their debt of military service to the country," to prevent the burdens from falling "exclusively on the most ardent and patriotic."⁷⁸ Davis told every citizen to protect his country when asked. The duty should not fall to one class but all classes. In response, citizens argued that a centralized government had no right to force any citizen into a war, a violation against a person's individual freedom. "From this time [passage of Confederate conscription] on till the end of the war, a soldier was simply a machine, a conscript," wrote Sam Watkins.⁷⁹ A Mississippi citizen wrote to Davis about the failure of conscription within the state. Instead of the creation of larger armies, the act has been "an utter failure." The measure that the Congress passed to save the country, "threatens to be the cause of its subjugation,"

⁷⁸ Jefferson Davis *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy Including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, ed. James D. Richardson, X Vols. (New York: Chelsea House-Robert Hector Publishers, 1966), 205-06.

⁷⁹ Sam R. Watkins, "*Co. Aytch: Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*" (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1990), 69.

however, at the same time conscription became a necessity to continue the war.⁸⁰ Conscription, in one aspect, became a micro-scale conflict over states' rights. This microcosm played out in the social tension among the government conceptualizations of exemption, substitution, and desertion. As a result of Confederate policies that protected the middle and wealthy classes in southern society, military offensives against Union armies suffered.⁸¹

Historian Emory Thomas stated that exemption caused a class conflict to erupt, one that may have spurred the promotion of, "a rich man's war, but a poor man's fight."⁸² Conscription, and the laws that branched from the draft, pitted the wealthy and the skilled versus the poor yeomanry. Section 1 of the exemption legislation included all "judicial and executive officers of the Confederate or State Government; the members of both houses of Congress, and of the legislatures of the several States and their respective officers, all clerks of the offices of the State and Confederate Governments allowed by law;" mailmen, ferrymen, those working in the marine or on the railroads, telegraphic operatives, religious ministers, workers in mines, furnaces, and foundries, and employees of papers. Essentially, exemption boiled down to a majority of government officials and civilians who held an "important" role in society for the war effort.⁸³

Bragg, in November 1862, continued to fill the government in on the lack of men for the western armies. "Our armies are gradually...melting away, whilst we are getting no re-enforcements." Laws that counteracted the purpose of the draft, such as exemption, only harmed the Confederate war effort. "Next spring the enemy will be able to bring against us an army

⁸⁰ James Phelan to Jefferson Davis, December 9, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 788-92.

⁸¹ Paul D. Escott, *Military Necessity: Civil-Military Relations in the Confederacy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 28; George C. Rable. *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 141.

⁸² Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865*, 155.

⁸³ "Exemptions Under the Conscription Law of Congress," *American Citizen*, May 9, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC; *OR*, Ser. IV, Vol. 1: 1081

vastly superior... We shall be less able to meet him than ever before.”⁸⁴ After the battle of Stones River, Bragg still received no reinforcements. Joseph Johnston implored Richmond to send more men. Bragg had reported that “Rosecrans has been re-enforced by 25,000 men,” and if Bragg could not be re-enforced or sent conscripts the Army of Tennessee was not likely to succeed in 1863.⁸⁵ Therefore, western armies needed to bring those avoiding service in the military themselves, without the assistance of Richmond. This involved the assignment of General G. J. Pillow to round up conscripts in the near-by area who avoided military service or were not yet drafted. The Confederate Bureau of Conscription was thus created in February 1863.

As early as 1862, southerners started to note the numerical advantage held by the Union. This helped justify the reason for the Confederacy to enact the unpopular Conscription Act.⁸⁶ The bureau was not limited to the West. In fact, conscription agents operated across the South, which expanded the power of a central government. The bureau’s task required the “strengthening of the Army of Tennessee and make it self-sustaining,” in order to hold Tennessee and prevent Union invasions from capturing the state.⁸⁷ Pillow’s command was isolated to the Western Theater and became a possible solution to the refusal of Richmond to send re-enforcements from the East. The bureau offered mixed results. Pillow claimed to have added 12,000 soldiers to the western army yet desertions became an issue that diminished the number of soldiers in the army. Therefore, Pillow proposed to have conscripts serve away from their homes. When soldiers were in the area of their home communities, Pillow found the

⁸⁴ Braxton Bragg to General S. Cooper, November 3, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 2: 386-87.

⁸⁵ Joseph E. Johnston to General S. Cooper, January 16, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXX, Pt. 2: 498.

⁸⁶ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 22, 1862, accessed April 19, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

⁸⁷ General Gideon Pillow to Secretary of State James Seddon, February 17, 1863. *OR*, Ser. IV, Vol. 2, Pt. 2: 403-04.

soldiers were more likely to desert and travel back to their families. When the conscript agents tracked down the deserters, small skirmishes broke out further diminishing the Confederate military strength. Therefore, the conscripts from Tennessee and Mississippi should be sent to the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee should get soldiers from the Eastern Theater, but the proposal was not accepted. In September 1863, Leonidas Polk wrote to Samuel Cooper noting that the promises behind conscription did not come to fruition—men avoided conscription officers and desertion rates rose—which would cause the Confederacy to eventually run out of manpower and lose the war because of attrition. The solution to create a Bureau of Conscription solved the problem momentarily.⁸⁸ However, Pillow’s assignment took men away from the front lines, either by enlisting conscripts or tracking down and arresting deserters, which further diminished the forces in the Confederate army. Also, Pillow still needed to abide by all the exemption laws. Exemption protected wealthy slaveowners from serving in the military.⁸⁹

With the introduction of the “Twenty-Negro Law,” the Confederate government further protected a slave-based economy. This exemption held two important aspects. First, the act called for the exemption of planters who owned twenty or more slaves. Sam Watkins said the new law gave men “the blues; we wanted twenty negroes.”⁹⁰ As a result, the law pushed two social divisions into the Civil War. The difference between rich and poor created lasting

⁸⁸ Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865*, 153.

⁸⁹ General Gideon Pillow to Assistant Adjutant-General Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell July 28, 1863. *OR*, Ser. IV, Vol. 2, Pt. 2: 680-81; Leonidas Polk to Samuel Cooper, September 21, 1863. *OR*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 921-22. Confederate armies, whether in the East or the West, faced numerical superior Union armies. Throughout the war Union armies usually outnumbered Confederate forces. In fact, only on rare occasions did a Confederate army outnumber a Union army. In the northern states the population numbered approximately 22 million, compared with only 9 million in the southern states. To compound the problem even more, of the 9 million southerners, approximately 4 million were slaves. Craig L. Symonds, *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 183.

⁹⁰ Sam R. Watkins, “Co. Aytch:” *Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*, 69.

dissension within southern society. Even though the Confederate Congress never repealed the slave exemption, officials did modify the law periodically throughout the war. In February 1864, the law reduced the number of slaves from twenty to fifteen, and forced the plantations to sell the government 200 pounds of meat per slave.⁹¹ Enslaved blacks, Watkins wrote, “suddenly became very valuable,” and the government placed more value on the small percentage of the population wealthy enough to own large holdings of enslaved blacks.⁹² James Phelan argued, “its influence [exemption] on the poor is most calamitous,” in a letter to President Davis. In fact, the act had “awakened a spirit and elicited a discussion,” of which spelled doomsday because of the favoritism expressed by Congress. Phelan feared that the importance placed on planters created a space and an opportunity for poor southerners to revolt. Thus, the Confederate government exacerbated a self-imposed social division, which generated tensions within southern society.⁹³

Second, the “Twenty-Negro Law” alienated slaveholders from non-slaveholders, stated historian Colin Woodward.⁹⁴ On a further level exemption did more than separate two classes in southern society, exemption placed the interests of slavery as the determining factor for war. The *Nashville Union* wrote that the South finally showed that “their determination to make their new-fangled Government essentially a *Slave Government*.” To further emphasize the status of slaveholders, the government placed those with the most slaves on “*the highest order of citizens*” above all others.⁹⁵ To justify exemption, and quiet the growing discontent with planter favoritism, Richmond made a clear indication that planters were to assist the war effort further

⁹¹ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 611-612.

⁹² Sam R. Watkins, “*Co. Aytch: Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*,” 69.

⁹³ James Phelan to Jefferson Davis, December 9, 1862. OR, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 788-92.

⁹⁴ Colin Edward Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 47.

⁹⁵ “Slave-owners the Favored Class, and Slavery the Badge of Honor in the Cotton Confederacy—The Slave-owners’ Conscription Act,” *Nashville Union*, October 26, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

by the transformation of a plantation cash crop system into a plantation of staple crops. In fact, the exemption law assumed that planters would shift their economic focus to a military focus. When planters maintained a reliance on cash crops, the planters maintained individualized wealth, thus protecting their political power. When planters refused to accept their new role as producers of staple crops, class tensions escalated. Thus, when planters declined to shift the majority of their crops to help sustain the armies in the field, southern armies suffered from a lack of food.⁹⁶

In the *Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, a writer asked, “What say you to the poor white man who has *ten children* all dependent upon him... Shall he be exempt? No, you answer, ‘go fight for the negroes of your neighbor, because it elevates you in society.’”⁹⁷ The *Nashville Union* added that if the purpose of the conflict was to determine the slave question then southern “*interest* in the preservation of slavery,” should influence wealthy slaveholders to enlist in the Confederate ranks.⁹⁸ The *Fayetteville Observer* called the conscription loopholes an “injustice.” Why should the poor man, “who has nothing to fight for,” enter a war while slaveholders with “great possessions are permitted to remain at home,” asked the editor. The answer lay with the “almighty dollar,” which created “worse enemies to the Confederate States” than the northern states.⁹⁹ In the protection of a slave system economically benefiting a small percentage of the

⁹⁶ Armstead L. Robinson, *Bitter Fruits of Bondage: The Demise of Slavery and the Collapse of the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 121, 193. Robinson termed this a commitment to the “preservation of the plantation system.”

⁹⁷ Quoted in, Colin Edward Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, 47-48.

⁹⁸ “Slave-owners the Favored Class, and Slavery the Badge of Honor in the Cotton Confederacy—The Slave-owners’ Conscription Act,” *Nashville Union*, October 26, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, *Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers*, LOC.

⁹⁹ *Fayetteville Observer*, September 15, 1862, accessed May 23, 2016, *NewsVault*.

southern population, slaveholders sent the yeomanry class to preserve the institution of slavery.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, southern policies favored the planter class.

Substitution offered another option for southerners to avoid the military. If drafted, wealthy citizens could hire another citizen, most likely a poor white male, to take his place. Over the existence of Confederate conscription, wealthy southerners used substitution to buy their way out of military service. Historian Albert Moore asserted that substitution provided greater discontent among southerners.¹⁰¹ Newspapers insisted that rich men fight for their property just as the poor men are forced to fight for their own homesteads along with the homes of the wealthy. “And though the rich man may have more property in amount than the poor man,” an article from the *Memphis Daily Appeal* iterated, “the loss of all by both will be equally felt—the small farm...of the poor, as the broad acres of the wealthy. The confiscation acts of the Yankee Congress make no exceptions as to these found in arms against the Yankee Government,” poor and rich are treated the same under the same wrath of the Union invaders.¹⁰² An article that appeared in the *Western Sentinel*, declared that the war was not only for the rich class but also for all classes. “This war is the war of all classes; it has been instituted for the defense and protection of all classes,” proclaimed the article. A true constitutional government, as opposed to the tyranny of Abraham Lincoln, created vested interests “in the wealth and

¹⁰⁰ “Slave-owners the Favored Class, and Slavery the Badge of Honor in the Cotton Confederacy—The Slave-owners’ Conscription Act,” *Nashville Union*, October 26, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

¹⁰¹ Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York: Hillary House Publishers LTD., 1963), 28. For a more in-depth study of Conscription, Moore offers a good analysis on the effects of the draft in the Southern Confederacy. Moore not only discusses the social ramifications of the legislation but the military reality behind exemptions and substitutions. Substitution “tended to incline persons liable to service to be ever on the search for substitutes, and consequently they were not imbued with the spirit of the soldier and could not buckle on the armor of service.” Additionally, Moore claimed, “a man snatched from the substitute chase was not psychologically equipped for service in the field (50).”

¹⁰² *Memphis Daily Appeal*, November 14, 1863, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

prosperity of the country,” but the importance placed on a slave economy by the Confederate government, inherently created class tension.¹⁰³

On the home front, class divisions played out in arguments for military equality. As poor southerners argued, wealthy and poor whites held an equal stake in the outcome of southern independence. Rich and poor, therefore, needed to work together. In the military ranks class divisions played themselves out in the form of desertion. The desertion rate of the Confederate armies has provided historians with multiple interpretations of desertion. First, desertions showed the political agency all men in southern society had, especially poor men who did not have an economic interest in slavery. The choice to step away from war, therefore, tells historians about different agendas of the wealthy and poor within southern ranks. Second, desertion showed a loss in the fighting spirit for southern men. When Confederates suffered defeats the men left in droves. On the reverse end, when Confederate armies accomplished victory the numbers in the army reached new highs. The fluctuation of desertions has helped historians measure morale and anxiety of an army. Desertions show the relation between military success and military failure. Family safety was a third component of desertion in the face of defeat. Once southern armies vacated lands in Tennessee or Mississippi, Tennessee and Mississippi soldiers would abandon the military in order to provide protection for their loved ones at home. The threat of Union retaliation against southern lands and communities compelled multiple men to desert in droves. As one soldier from Mississippi wrote the Governor in December 1861, “poor men have been compelled to leave the army to come home to provide for their families... We are poor men and are willing to defend our country but our families [come]

¹⁰³ *Western Sentinel*, March 27, 1863, accessed May 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

first.”¹⁰⁴ Fourth, desertion became the most common type of resistance to fight conscription.

Aggravated soldiers proved a disconnect existed among the idea behind secession and the reality of Confederate government as a more centralized institution.¹⁰⁵

From a military perspective, desertions created a breakdown of military organization and impeded military victory. In July 1862, Secretary of War, George Randolph, sent a circular to the armies. Noting the danger desertion created, Randolph told the country that “we are unable to reap the fruits of our victories and to invade the territory of the enemy.”¹⁰⁶ The protection of the country versus the protection of families became another dividing factor among classes. When poor southerners became drafted or volunteered for the military, their wives took the responsibility of the home. As a result, women constantly wrote to their husbands and sons in the military to ask for their return in order to look after the needs of the family. Receiving multiple letters from home compelled some southerners to desert and return to their families. As desertions rose, southerners began forming partisan units that caused a triangle conflict between the home front, deserters, and Confederate patrols under the Bureau of Conscription.¹⁰⁷

When the armies needed more men for the front, Congress passed the Conscription Act. This act gave Richmond the ability to enlarge the armies, but the legislation also created loopholes for citizens to stay out of the war. Substitution and exemption not only created a

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 440.

¹⁰⁵ Judith Lee Hallock, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat. Vol. II* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), 30; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 432.

¹⁰⁶ Circular from Geo. W. Randolph, July 18, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. II: 7

¹⁰⁷ General Gideon Pillow to Assistant Adjutant-General Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell, July 28, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. II: 680-81; Circular to all conscription commands, Colonel and Superintendent Jno. S. Preston, August 10, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. II: 703-04; To get a more in-depth discussion about Confederate desertion see, Mark A. Weitz, *More Damning than Slaughter: Desertion in the Confederate Army* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Daniel Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009) provides an in-depth analysis on the role of guerrilla warfare in the Civil War. Focusing on the military and societal impact of such warfare, Sutherland contended that guerrillas had numerous impacts on the Civil war, perhaps more so than the large, grand-scale battles historians and scholars are more associated with.

greater military awareness within the yeomanry and poor classes but created social division. As a result of social division and the rhetoric coming from the yeoman farmers, small conflicts erupted in southern communities. These conflicts pulled Confederate soldiers from the front line and forced the Confederacy to fight a war on two fronts. On one front the Confederacy fought Union invaders, on the other front the Confederacy fought dissatisfied citizens.

Further, impressment created class division. Impressment allowed Confederate armies to obtain goods from southern citizens through legal channels. In part, the Confederate armies participated in impressment as a means to acquire necessary supplies for the military. Also, impressment kept southern resources out of the hands of Union raiders. Impressment worked, in theory, as a simple exchange of goods for Confederate currency. This caused major problems within society especially as the war continued. When Confederate money no longer became accepted as a form of payment due to inflation, soldiers took citizen goods and provided I.O.U notes for the citizen to be compensated at a later time. Another issue with impressment after 1862, the inflation rate of Confederate goods mixed with the deflation of Confederate currency. The Confederate government allowed armies to purchase citizen goods based on market value, but when the Confederate market value did not rise with the economic inflation rate, tensions mounted.¹⁰⁸ As the war progressed, the Confederacy offered less than market value for goods. In another aspect, military impressment agents typically targeted the smaller farms before turning attention on large plantation owners.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ A noticeable example of such tensions can be seen in the Richmond Bread Riots in April 1863 when southern women confronted the Confederate government about the value of Confederate currency.

¹⁰⁹ The full law can be found in the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, February 14, 1863, for some of the citizen reactions, see *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, December 7, 1862, both accessed November 1, 2015, at <http://dlxs.richmond.edu/d/ddr/>; Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 57, 133.

In a case study about the division of rich and poor in Georgia, authors David Williams, Teresa Crisp Williams, and David Carlson argued the economic inequality of impressment. When agents traversed the countryside in search of supplies, the authors asserted that agents focused on gathering supplies from “the most vulnerable targets first—the farmsteads of the plain folk.” Only when agents exhausted the excess supplies of small farmers did the agents move on to the plantations. Planters tried to avoid impressment laws by hiding excess goods or bribing officials, yet planters were also more economically capable to handle the burdens of impressment.¹¹⁰ Confederate generals attempted to stop such mistreatment by impressment agents. In September 1862, General Orders No. 6 attempted to stop the destruction of civilian property in East Tennessee. A contentious place between Unionists and pro-Confederate forces, this order tried to create a better relationship among “alien enemies” and the Confederate government. Abuses by the Confederate army must be stopped. If the destruction and devastation of the land continued, a greater Unionist sentiment would be the response.¹¹¹ Further, as the war continued across Tennessee, impressment agents continually destroyed southern fields. Orders issued by Bragg attempted to get agents to treat citizens and their properties with more respect. “Fields of growing wheat had been left without fences, and property...has been needlessly destroyed.” The acts of the agents did more than ruin southern homesteads but created tensions between the military and the home front. “Such wanton acts of waste are unworthy of the character of Confederate soldiers, injurious to the holy cause they defend.”¹¹² The southern military effort needed the support of East Tennessee in order to

¹¹⁰ David Williams et. al, *Plain Folk in a Rich Man's War: Class Dissent in Confederate Georgia* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002), 45, 52.

¹¹¹ By command of Maj. Gen. S. Jones, September 29, 1862. *OR*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 890.

¹¹² By command of Braxton Bragg, January 9, 1863. *OR*, Vol. XX, Pt. 2: 396.

acquire more supplies and men, as well as routes to northern states for an invasion.¹¹³

Additionally, to show the tension created by class division, the impressment of slaves highlight another disparity of interests during the Civil War.

In March 1863, the Confederate Congress passed an Impressment Law, which allocated slaves for military work. Before this law slaveowners seemed willing to offer their slaves' services either as personal servants or military laborers. Wealthy slaveowners who did join the military, brought with them personal servants to complete tasks such as laundry, cooking, and other personal duties. The appearance of slaves in Confederate military camps adhered to southern antebellum ideology of the benevolent and content slave. In Confederate camps, especially those camps close to Union lines, enslaved blacks had an opportunity to run away and attain their freedom. However, as one North Carolina soldier noted, most did not flee towards enemy lines. "Look at the thousands who have had every chance of escape," wrote the soldier. "Of those who followed their masters to the war...how wonderfully few have deserted!"¹¹⁴ From a Confederate perspective slave resistance to flee showed, not only happiness with their lives, but also a show of loyalty.¹¹⁵ This feeling spread and made some southern soldiers question the use of blacks as soldiers.

Southerners utilized the idea of benevolence to justify slavery throughout the nineteenth century. The same philosophy was used as an argument to arm slaves in order to turn back the

¹¹³ Edmund Kirby Smith would use the Cumberland Gap during the Kentucky invasion.

¹¹⁴ As quoted in, Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 63.

¹¹⁵ For a brief discussion on the loyalty of slaves, see Thabolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 104-05. Glymph states that the term loyalty, as we know it today, means something very different than in the nineteenth century. As an example, Booker T. Washington said loyalty "reflected the slave community's commitment to values that disloyalty betrayed." Lee Ann Whites' explanation for this phenomenon rested with the trust placed by the masters with the slaves to protect the women. If the slave community violated this trust it "would entail an abdication of one's self-respect and sense of humanity." Another thought to consider is freedom as an unknown space for enslaved blacks. Both quotes are taken from Glymph's study on the plantation.

Union armies. Some southerners became adamant about arming slaves, but the slave aristocracy did not trust weapons in the hands of a supposedly inferior race. Robert Garlick Kean, Head of the Confederate Bureau of War, stated that if “we use them in the same way there will be nothing to induce them to remain faithful.”¹¹⁶ It was more likely, Kean argued, that if slaves became Confederate soldiers, they were more likely to run towards enemy lines, rather than serve in the Confederate army.¹¹⁷ Whether or not southerners believed that slaves would stay loyal or runaway, enslaved blacks proved an important aspect of Confederate military policy.¹¹⁸ General Pillow called on the planters to send their blacks to the army for the protection of the state. If the Confederacy lost more territory in the West, the Union would “seize all the negroes they can find.” Further, the help of slaves in the army protected the country by erecting and maintaining fortifications, performing menial tasks, and releasing whites for front-line duty.¹¹⁹ Pillow made this announcement in an attempt to get slaveholders to answer the call of the country. Historian Bruce Levine asserted that at the beginning of the war, planters willingly sent their slaves to temporarily help the armies. In the early stages planters did not have much to fear in property loss and maintained the thought of a quick and decisive war, but as the war progressed, planters became less likely to hire out their slaves.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Written August 16, 1863, Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 96.

¹¹⁷ Colin Edward Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*, 55, 70.

¹¹⁸ Another area where blacks became pivotal in Confederate military policy included the process behind the exchange of POWs. Along with freedom and giving blacks an opportunity to serve in the war, the Emancipation Proclamation implied that captured black Union soldiers would be treated as equal white prisoners—emphasized with Lincoln’s retaliatory act to the Confederacy’s “black flag policy.” With southern actions against black POWs, a breakdown of the prisoner exchange occurred. Robert Garlick Hill Kean stated that because of the “heinous conduct of that foul Government [Union]...the question has no solution.” Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger, 101-02.

¹¹⁹ General Gideon Pillow to the planters of Lauderdale, Lawrence, and Frankling Counties, March 6, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. II: 421.

¹²⁰ Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution that Transformed the South* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2013), 54-55.

The *Nashville Daily Union* took multiple shots at the slave aristocracy as the war progressed. Not only did the planters refuse to hire out their “negroes in the Confederate army,” but southern citizens took planters actions as an insult. Calling the decision “prejudice,” the *Daily Union* attacked the war as an unequal war for the benefit of a single class, not all classes. “As the war was originated and is carried out in part for the defense of the slaveholder and his property, rights, and the perpetuation of the institution,” argued the paper; slaveholders should take an equal part in the war.¹²¹ Even Pillow lambasted slaveholders who did not support the military. When slaveholders sent enslaved blacks to help the cause they strengthened the army and sustained the Confederate cause. “The poor men have given their sons, the rich men have given their sons, you, all of you...have given your sons,” continued Pillow, “and now you are unwilling to give a portion of your negroes to serve as teamsters to take the place of brave men who would do good service as soldiers, but who are now engaged in driving wagons.” Pillow believed that if slaveholders gave a proportion of their slaves to the Confederacy then southern militaries could turn the tide of war. The slave power created strength, but only if southern planters took advantage of the opportunity. If not, the slaveholders either forfeited their property to Union invasions or lost slaves as a result of defeat in battle and the Emancipation Proclamation. Either way the South faced a loss of four million enslaved blacks.¹²² The *Mobile Register* wrote an editorial, which blamed the fall of Vicksburg partially on the planters who refused to send slaves to build and maintain the fortifications around the city. John Forsyth blasted planters for sending “their sons, brothers and friends off to find a bloody grave,” but “would not permit their negroes to work on the defenses...Such men cling to the negro with the

¹²¹ *Nashville Daily Union*, October 3, 1863, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC. Italics are used in the source.

¹²² *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, February 28, 1863, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

tenacity of death, because...he may be worth a few hundred dollars to them.”¹²³ Pillow asserted that the slave power was a form of strength, if it were used, but a form of weakness if planters did not use enslaved blacks to southern advantage. Out of the fear of the loss of property and property value, slaveowners maintained their control over slaves on the home front. To ensure the continuation of wealth and power, planters combatted the use of slaves on the front line. As a result, planters became more reluctant to send slaves off to military camps. Planter’s reluctance forced Davis to request an updated impressment law.¹²⁴

November 1863, Davis argued for an extension of the impressment law to include slaves for non-combatant roles. Originally, impressment allowed the government to temporarily impress slaves for government use on construction and maintenance of fortifications. While an enslaved black served the Confederate army, the owner still maintained title over the black worker. Therefore, if anything happened to the slave the owner received financial compensation.¹²⁵ However, the temporary use of enslaved blacks provided little to be gained by the military. Enslaved military labor did perform menial tasks for the armies but slaves were isolated to nearby camps. Because Davis wanted a larger and more permanent force of enslaved labor in the military, conflict arose between the planters and Richmond. Planters wanted slaves for agricultural projects, and the government needed slaves to work in the camps and on fortifications. Davis therefore proposed to purchase 40,000 slaves. If the policy was accepted, Davis and the Confederate government owned the slaves and could use them as the government

¹²³ As quoted in Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, 37; Patrick Cleburne also expresses the idea in January 1864, in a Statement by Patrick Cleburne, January 2, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 587-88.

¹²⁴ Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, 135; William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century South* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 340-41, 356.

¹²⁵ A state specific example of an extension of the impressment law, “Act of the Legislature of Mississippi”, January 3, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 4, Vol. II: 296-97

required. Davis reasoned that slaves could be utilized for menial military tasks, which freed white soldiers for the front lines. With slaves in the military the Confederate ranks grew. This action, just as conscription and the Conscription Bureau, became temporary fixes to the numerical problem that plagued the army.¹²⁶

Slavery and governmental policies caused class tension and class division to grow and expand during the Civil War. Through conscription and impressment, poor southerners saw an unequal treatment in military policies that protected the slaveholder, and more specifically the wealthy planter class, from the experience faced by the yeomanry and small slaveowners. This not only escalated into a growth of military awareness where poor southern citizens questioned their roles in society but created uncertainty and a loss of trust by the lower class and Richmond's goals for the war. As the war progressed, and the tensions continued to heighten, more citizens, in and out of the army, started to discuss the possibility of slaves as soldiers. The numbers game could no longer be hidden behind the veil of nationalism and patriotism; the Confederacy needed more able-bodied men to fight for southern independence. In December 1863 and January 1864, Cleburne proposed to grow Confederate armies by filling the armies with enslaved blacks.

By the end of 1863, a substantial difference in military manpower, compared to the Union, created a dire situation in the Confederacy. In both the East and the West, the Union armies stymied Confederate invasions. Defeats at Gettysburg, Chattanooga, and Knoxville caused the Confederacy to lose more southern territory. Cleburne saw 1864 as an opportunity to reclaim Confederate glory lost in 1863, but the Army of Tennessee and the Army of Northern Virginia needed more men. The needed manpower had to come from the institution slaveholders

¹²⁶ Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, 33.

relied on for economic dominance. This idea not publicized for southern citizens, created tension and conflict among Cleburne and Confederate government officials. Cleburne noted how the Union armies had trained an army of black soldiers, and thus far, have been used effectively in the war. Why then, could enslaved blacks not be used with the same success? If the South did not use enslaved blacks as a source of manpower, the North would take advantage of such southern inaction and welcome runaways into Union lines.¹²⁷

Believing the use of slaves provided an opportunity to save the country, Cleburne called for Richmond to enact a law to allow slaves the ability to fight in Confederate regiments. Knowing that slaves needed compensation for their services, Cleburne proposed to free slaves who fought for southern independence. “As between the loss of independence and the loss of slavery, we assume that every patriot will freely give up the latter—give up the negro slave rather than be a slave himself.”¹²⁸ For this to happen, the Confederacy needed to adhere to the wants and desires of enslaved blacks, the desire for freedom. Freedom, thus, became the only way that slaves would become a viable force for the Confederacy.¹²⁹ Cleburne’s proposal to emancipate slaves who fought for the Confederacy was met with great disdain. General Joseph Johnston did not even forward the message to Richmond, in fact, the members of the meeting were ordered to not speak of this particular meeting outside the room. The proposal did reach the president.¹³⁰ President Davis refused the proposal immediately. Calling the idea “injurious to the public service,” the discussion should be muted. But if slaves were allowed, the Confederate armies would have a larger force to take into battle for the next campaign season, and not only an army large enough to meet the enemy on the defensive, but an army large

¹²⁷ Statement by Patrick Cleburne, January 2, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 587-88, 590-91.

¹²⁸ Statement by Patrick Cleburne, January 2, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 588-89.

¹²⁹ Statement by Patrick Cleburne, January 2, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 590-91.

¹³⁰ Craig L. Symonds, *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War*, 189.

enough to pursue multiple offensive campaigns against the Union to reclaim lost territory and supplies.¹³¹

Based on slaveholders' reluctance to offer their slaves for Confederate military tasks, the majority of slaveholders refused even to consider arming slaves. Further, antebellum ideology clearly defined an unequal nature between white and black. Therefore, blacks would make poor soldiers because they were an inferior race. Also, slaveholders considered the military a dangerous place for enslaved blacks but not for their personal safety. Slaveholders feared enslaved blacks, with their newly given status as soldiers, would rebel and revolt against the Confederacy. Some soldiers, like Sergeant Edward Brown from Alabama, said of the proposition to arm slaves for the cause of southern independence would "ruin us." Further, because of the proposal, "moral of the army is anything but good now." Other soldiers carried different opinions and wanted slaves armed for the survival of the Confederacy. Sergeant Marion Hill Fitzpatrick said that blacks should be used to fight, in fact, "make them fight," for the continuation of the Confederacy.¹³² The discussion ended in January 1864 and would not be readdressed until March 1865, when the Confederate government enacted a law that employed black soldiers. By then Confederate independence seemed a farfetched outcome. The Confederacy was on its last leg.

"Every reverse and disappointment the Confederacy has ever sustained, has been occasioned by immense superiority of numbers on the part of the enemy," claimed the *Richmond Enquirer*. Generals Johnston, Bragg, and Lee all suffered from a lack of men. Larger armies gave the Union an advantage from the start of the war up to the Confederacy's final defeats at

¹³¹ Jefferson Davos to General W. H. T. Walker January 13, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 596.

¹³² Both soldiers' voices are quoted in Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 57, 133.

Appomattox and Bentonville.¹³³ From 1862 forward, the Confederacy attempted to solve the problem of manpower through conscription and impressment. While sanctioning such policies, the Confederacy hampered Confederate success through worsening class tension and class division. As the war progressed, more suggestions proposed to solve the number problem of Confederate armies. Poor southerners called for wealthy planters to “bear the burden of war waged for their own aggrandizement.” While poor farmers left their homes to fight for the continuation of a slave aristocracy, planters and wealthy slaveowners avoided service by government favoritism.¹³⁴ Towards the end of 1863, General Cleburne proposed the enlistment of slaves for use in the Confederate army. Calling on the patriotism of slaveholders, Cleburne spelled out doomsday if the South lost the Civil War. Defeat, “it means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy,” thus, a society forgotten and subjugated by northern despots.¹³⁵ Even with such arguments, slaveowners refused military policies that affected their personal wealth. Because of such a closed perspective on war, class division among the rich and poor, created fissures within a society predicated on race and the enslavement of four million blacks that helped undo the Confederacy from within.¹³⁶

¹³³ *Richmond Enquirer*, July 11, 1863, accessed April 19, 2016, [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC](#); *Richmond Enquirer*, August 12, 1863, accessed April 18, 2016, [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC](#).

¹³⁴ *Nashville Daily Union*, October 3, 1863, accessed May 24, 2016, [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC](#).

¹³⁵ Statement by Patrick Cleburne, January 2, 1864. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 586-87.

¹³⁶ Joseph Glatthaar published in article in 2008 countering the perception of a “rich man’s war, but a poor man’s fight.” Looking at the Army of Northern Virginia, Glatthaar produced a statistical study, which emphasized the proportion of rich men who served in Lee’s army. Glatthaar concluded that wealthy southerners served at a higher rate than poor men. “Rich people, were, in fact, greatly overrepresented in Lee’s army,” yet the statistical analysis seems misleading. Glatthaar stated, “nearly four of every five soldiers were in the poorer groups. Barely in in nine was in the middle wealth, and one in ten was rich.” Because a lower proportion of southern whites could be labeled “wealthy” the proportion of such men would inherently be higher than the poor class. However, Glatthaar set out to debunk the myth behind a “rich man’s war, but a poor man’s fight,” in the *Eastern Theater*. Joseph T. Glatthaar, “Everyman’s War: A Rich and Poor Man’s Fight in Lee’s Army,” *Civil War History* 54, no. 3 (September 229-246): 229-246, accessed April 27, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/240473>.

Chapter Three

It became clear, rather quickly, that a defensive strategy would not win the Civil War. Numerically deficient Confederate armies could not defend, entirely, the vast southern territory. Therefore, southern armies needed to change their defensive philosophy and apply a more aggressive strategy to secure a quick independence. These offensive strategies came, in part, as a result of maintaining racial ideologies necessary to maintaining the southern social structure, and out of necessity due to the growth in social divisions on the home front as a consequence of conscription and impressment. This chapter will continue to look at military awareness but through a new lens. Instead of looking at military consciousness through a continued racial subjugation, or growing social divisions, this chapter will look at military favoritism. Eastern biases contributed to the lack of Confederate success in the Western Theater.

Military favoritism, expressed by President Jefferson Davis in the form of political and strategical support, played a major role in the relationship between the president and Confederate generals. While some generals showed a knack for military success, others faded under numerous military debacles. Therefore, favoritism towards the successful Robert E. Lee affected military strategy under the unsuccessful generalships of Braxton Bragg and Joseph E. Johnston in Tennessee and Mississippi. Where Lee received assistance to wage aggressive military campaigns against Union armies in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, Bragg and Johnston received little to no support for passive campaigns in Tennessee and Mississippi. The views of southern citizens and southern political figures also affected military favoritism within the Confederacy. This included hopes expressed by southern citizens on Confederate success under Lee's leadership, compared to Bragg and Johnston, as well as political friendships that advanced general officers' agendas. The next three chapters will examine military favoritism through

these multiple views. Chapter three will consider military favoritism through the lens of military success and military strategy, while chapters four and five will view the political friendships and personal agendas of general officers.

Since Thomas Connelly in the 1970s, and Steven Woodworth in the 1990s, historians have focused more on the Western Theater. Connelly explored the campaigns of the Army of Tennessee, placing the army in a contextual relationship with the Army of Northern Virginia. Through this methodology, Connelly showed the importance of Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia to the outcome of the Civil War. Woodworth, on the other hand, examined the western armies in a more politicized lens. Woodworth studied the relationship among Confederate generals and the president to find answers to the dreadful record of generals Bragg and Johnston compared to the nearly spotless record of Robert E. Lee. Changing focus from the East to the West has encouraged a new generation of scholars to expand Civil War interest and scholarship outside the Eastern Theater to the Army of Tennessee.

Jefferson Davis *did* participate in western military strategy but showed a military favoritism to Virginia. In fact, after the death of Albert Sidney Johnston at the battle of Shiloh in April 1862, Davis seemed to disengage himself from the military affairs in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi. Davis may have never completely neglected the Western states—he could not with the constant squabbling between generals—but Davis did give more attention to the war in the state of Virginia than any other locality during the Civil War. As a result, Davis designated most of the resources at the Confederacy's disposal to the Eastern Theater. Woodworth argued

that Davis's proximity to the Virginia front caused him to lose his perspective on the war as a whole; however, Davis's relationship with Lee also contributed to eastern favoritism.¹³⁷

Many historians agree that the military campaigns along the Mississippi and in the state of Tennessee decided the outcome of the Civil War instead of the campaigns in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, but Davis remained focused on the latter because of the proximity to the capital. Specifically Virginia remained in the limelight because of the importance placed on Washington, D. C., by the Confederacy. If the Confederacy could capture Washington, which could potentially cause a fall in the northern political system, then, in theory, the Confederacy had a better opportunity for European recognition. The Confederate idea that European nations wanted to support the Confederacy through the capture of Washington, neglected the importance of slavery. By the beginning of the Civil War both France and England had enacted emancipatory laws, which helped create free colonies in the Western hemisphere. As the war progressed, European nations became less likely to recognize a country predicated on slavery, but the importance of foreign recognition never diminished. E. S. Dargan, a Confederate congressional member, wrote to John B. Jones, a Confederate war clerk, in July 1863, "the destruction [of the Confederacy] must be complete unless France and England can be induced to interfere in our behalf."¹³⁸ Another aspect to consider why foreign recognition depended on success in Virginia was the proximity of Washington and Richmond to foreign capitals.¹³⁹

Historian Earl J. Hess developed a theory that European powers looked for successes and failures on the East Coast to determine whether to recognize the southern states. The Eastern

¹³⁷ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 54.

¹³⁸ John B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 250.

¹³⁹ Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 307.

seaboard, therefore, can be seen as a location for significant news to foreign countries. News collected on the coast spread to foreign countries at a quicker rate than news from Tennessee and Mississippi. The coast also became the focal point of the war from a European perspective because of the location of both capitals, the size and importance placed on Union and Confederate armies by their respective governments, and the site of European commerce. While the Davis administration maintained hope that foreign recognition promised to come with Confederate victory in the East, Davis placed a greater importance on Lee and the Eastern Theater.¹⁴⁰ The power and influence Lee held in Richmond created blinders for military decisions during 1862 and 1863.¹⁴¹

Lee's leadership, tenacity, and aggression forced Davis and Confederate officials to focus on the area around Richmond instead of the Western Theater. Thomas Connelly noted two firm beliefs held by Davis in regards to Union military strategy. First, the Union intended to capture Richmond. Second, the Union wanted to take control of the Mississippi River. Both assessments failed to see the importance of Tennessee, and the West in general, outside the Mississippi River. Instead, Davis took for granted the importance of the heartland especially in terms of agricultural production. He also maintained faith that the departmental command system provided the best opportunity for military success in the West. Connelly also mentioned that Davis thought the Union military would not engage in a multi-front campaign. In other words, Davis believed Lincoln and Union generals would not attack two points in the Confederacy at once. In theory, the Confederacy had ample time to move men from one theater

¹⁴⁰ The Confederacy actively looked for foreign recognition for the same reason the American army during the American Revolution looked for foreign recognition. Help from France or Britain offered an opportunity for the Confederacy to widen the war through a military alliance—support in both the army and navy—, continuation of economic commerce based on the cotton trade, and help to fund the war.

¹⁴¹ Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 18.

to another—the advantage of interior lines. Where the Confederacy faced a more severe threat, armies would work together to send divisions to the general under extreme Union threat. However, because of the leadership of General Lee, Davis generally did not shift men between departments. Instead he relied on the Western Theater to turn back the Union armies with the men at their disposal. At the same time Davis provided Lee with reinforcements from other departments, harming Confederate strategy in the West.¹⁴²

The allocation of resources also reflected Davis's primary focus on Virginia. This involved men, foodstuffs, and other army supplies. Most of the resources going to Virginia and Lee's army came from Tennessee. This decision proved disastrous for the Army of Tennessee. While the Army of Northern Virginia covered a smaller area, the Army of Tennessee protected a much larger area, with fewer soldiers. As a result, Lee's army relied on other departments for food stores. This created a competition between Lee's army and Bragg's army for resources from Tennessee.¹⁴³ The larger area that Bragg's army defended provided supplies to Lee's army. As one commissary agent wrote, "I understand my mission to be to collect supplies for the Armies of the C[onfederate] S[tates] & not for Genl Braggs Army."¹⁴⁴ Bragg's army, Thomas Connelly concluded, "lived a hand-to-mouth existence." Richmond did little to aid the Army of Tennessee.¹⁴⁵

From a manpower perspective, the Army of Northern Virginia acquired more men than the Army of Tennessee. In October 1862, Confederate officer John Liddell wrote, "the West had been overlooked. No adequate resources of men...had been sent to Bragg's support. Everything

¹⁴² Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 38-39.

¹⁴³ Richard M. McMurry, *Two Great Rebel Armies: An Essay in Confederate Military History* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 29.

¹⁴⁴ Judith Lee Hallock, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat. Vol. II* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), 160.

¹⁴⁵ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 114.

was called for and given to Virginia, overlooking altogether the back door to the capital of the South.”¹⁴⁶ Richard McMurry, a historian who compared the Confederacy’s largest armies, discovered that in mid-1862 that 18.5% of the units in Army of Northern Virginia came from the West. At the same time only 1.2% of the units in the Army of Tennessee came from the East.¹⁴⁷ The allocation of resources, specifically men, played a major role in western military campaigns. The generalship of Robert E. Lee, and the perceived importance of Virginia, provided one answer to the transportation of supplies from the Western Theater to Virginia.

When Lee replaced Joseph Johnston as commander of the Army of Virginia during the summer of 1862, Lee disregard campaigns in Tennessee and Mississippi. As a result, Lee placed a greater importance on the protection of Virginia. Lee’s strategy for the Confederate armies contained a simplistic, aggressive, one-way policy, that focused on defeating the Union army in his front, which provided little to no attention in the West. Lee continuously fought offensive battles, abandoning the defensive mentality, to defeat Union armies quickly and win Confederate independence. For example, in September 1862 when Bragg confronted Buell, Lee suggested an offensive into Maryland. While the Army of Northern Virginia pushed north, Lee intended Bragg to protect Virginia. In a letter to Bragg, Davis supported Lee’s invasion. If Halleck intended to embark on a campaign in Virginia, Davis reasoned, “we will endeavor to give them a full employment in this quarter, so as to prevent any return to the West.”¹⁴⁸ Instead of investing

¹⁴⁶ St. John Richardson Liddell, *Liddell’s Record*, ed. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 99.

¹⁴⁷ Hallock, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat. Vol. II*, 160. Another way to consider the disparity in numbers between the Army of Tennessee and the Army of Northern Virginia is the approximate number of soldiers in each army during the major battles. Army of Tennessee—Shiloh (45,000—known as the Army of Mississippi), Perryville (16,000—known as the Army of Mississippi during this battle); Stones River (35,000); Chickamauga (65,000—Longstreet and the First Corps in the Army of Tennessee during this battle); & Chattanooga (44,000). Army of Northern Virginia—Seven Days’ Battles (90,000); Antietam (45,000); Fredericksburg (72,000); Chancellorsville (57,000—Longstreet conducting a separate campaign in Suffolk during this battle); & Gettysburg (72,000).

¹⁴⁸ Davis to Bragg, August 5, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 334-36.

the resources necessary to accomplish the “Kentucky Dream”—a desire by the Confederacy to obtain Kentucky in the fight against the Union—reports of Halleck closing in around Richmond forced Davis to place a greater importance on Virginia, in the hope that a Union defeat near Richmond provided a change for military success in the West. In reality, Davis’s choice to focus on Virginia and Washington translated into Lee invading Maryland with political and military support.¹⁴⁹ Even though Union General George B. McClellan forced Lee to retreat into Virginia after the Battle of Antietam, Davis did not lose faith in the Virginian. As Union General Ambrose Burnside pressed for another campaign before 1862 expired, Davis once more allocated military resources to Lee’s army below the Rappahannock at the expense of western armies. However, in this instance, Davis chose to focus on Lee, not because of the threat posed by Burnside alone, but because of the successes and failures of Bragg compared to Lee.

In December 1862, Mississippi residents wrote Davis that demoralization ran high in the Army of Tennessee due to poor leadership and military defeats. Lee did not face the same sort of demoralization in the Eastern Theater. Therefore, Davis believed an investment in Lee, over Bragg, provided more of a military return.¹⁵⁰ However, it seemed that Davis existed only as a pawn in Lee’s desire to protect only Virginia. In 1863, Lee fought a dispersal of his troops to help Pemberton protect Vicksburg. Lee presumed the defense of Virginia was vastly important to the protection of Mississippi. Davis agreed with Lee and accepted Lee’s second invasion of the North, this time into Pennsylvania. This decision showed Lee misunderstood the situations

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 73.

¹⁵⁰ James Phelan to Davis, December 9, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 788-92.

and crisis in the West.¹⁵¹ The decision by Lee to not support the Confederate movements to relieve Vicksburg from the pressure of Grant, proved dire from April to May.

Historian George Rable said, “The Mississippi and Virginia Theaters were inextricably linked in a grand strategic tug-of-war. Not only would army and theater commanders have their say, but so would their political allies in Congress and the State capitals.”¹⁵² Rable, however, did not account for the importance of Lee in the discussion on who developed military strategy. The Western and Eastern Theaters did participate in a tug-of-war, but Bragg and Johnston did not have a complete say when it came to military strategy because of the status of Lee.¹⁵³ Archer Jones had it more correct when he described the two theaters as a competition, but not across geographical lines. Instead the competition existed between Lee and the generals in the West. Western generals wanted a nationwide concentration of forces before attacking the enemy while Lee strongly contested for individual command and offenses based on that individualized approach.¹⁵⁴ Lee’s proximity to Davis and his aggressive mentality proved to be the deciding factor for Davis when the President agreed on a military strategy. In the decision to move the capital from Montgomery to Richmond and the generalship of Robert E. Lee, Davis focused most of his attention on the Eastern Theater. As a result, over the next four years western

¹⁵¹ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 104-05.

¹⁵² George C. Rable. *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 196.

¹⁵³ Lee, the son of Revolutionary war hero, “Light Horse Harry Lee,” married Mary Ann Randolph Custis, a descendant of Martha Washington, and transformed into the new symbol for freedom and independence. His father called Washington “first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.” When the Virginia convention approved secession and later approved Lee’s appointment as Major General, the convention members believed Lee “first in war.” To finalize the connection, the convention believed Lee would become “first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” During the war Lee grew as more than a revolutionary hero, Lee turned into the hope for Confederate independence. This discussion is noted in Ernest B. Furgurson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., 1996), 41-42.

¹⁵⁴ Archer Jones, *Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), 22.

generals waged war with an inferior number of men, food, and other military supplies. The focus on Virginia and Lee hampered military campaigns in the West under Bragg and Johnston.

While Lee turned Confederate attention to the East, Confederate generals in the West attempted to gain political support by switching military tactics. Instead of choosing to fight a purely defensive war, the Confederacy began to fight an offensive war; the losses at Forts Henry and Donelson proved the ineffectiveness of a defensive strategy. Bragg, in February of 1862, proposed to abandon the government's policy in exchange for a united offensive. The vast southern territory, reasoned Bragg, held too many vital points to designate numerous armies to protect important resources. Instead, Bragg proposed to concentrate military forces to hold strategically important points in the Confederacy. "All means not necessary to secure these [strategically valuable points] should be concentrated for a heavy blow upon the enemy where we can best assail him, Kentucky is now that point."¹⁵⁵ Other generals also saw the importance of concentration. During the Shiloh Campaign, Albert Sidney Johnston believed all available units should be combined to defeat the Union forces at Pittsburg Landing. Joseph E. Johnston, in 1863, believed concentration allowed the Confederate armies the best possible opportunity to defeat the Union armies and regain Tennessee. Even senators saw the importance of concentration. As John B. Jones recorded, Texas Senator Louis Wigfall recommended that all armies in the West be concentrated to defeat the enemy in the Mississippi Valley.¹⁵⁶

As long as Bragg, and later Johnston, commanded in the West, the two generals and supporting political friends, advocated for concentration, but Davis did not approve of concentration as a means to win southern independence. Many factors contributed to Davis's strategic mentality. In part, Lee's successes in the East allowed Davis to judge that each

¹⁵⁵ Bragg to Judah Benjamin, February 2, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. VI: 826-27.

¹⁵⁶ Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers, 131.

individual army could defeat a larger, more numerically superior, Union army. Another factor contributing to Davis's blinders was his relationship with Lee compared to his relationships with Bragg and Johnston. Because Lee's military strategy showed success and promised a continuation of success, compared to military defeats in the West, under Bragg and Johnston, Davis placed a greater importance on the strategy of Lee than on the strategies of western generals. Another factor to consider is Davis's strategic mentality.

During the Peninsular Campaign, General George McClellan's first attempt to take Richmond during the summer of 1862, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston continually retreated from his position near Yorktown to the outskirts of Richmond. Author Winston Groom noted that history has not been kind to Johnston because of his actions during the war. Beginning at Yorktown in 1862, Johnston continually showed timidity while he waited for Union attacks. Constantly maneuvering, delaying, testing, or feinting, Groom concluded that Johnston waited "for the golden opportunity to deliver a crushing blow that would not risk his army in the process."¹⁵⁷ Johnston's retrograde movements, during the Peninsular Campaign, went against the desires of Davis and Lee who wanted Johnston to hold Yorktown as long as possible. Lee had told the general that the Confederacy could not lose Norfolk, the position of the Confederate Navy. General Johnston reluctantly held his position near Yorktown, but as soon as the Union army started to outnumber the Confederate defenders, Johnston abandoned the Virginia Coast. Johnston's actions during the Peninsular Campaign would foreshadow his actions later in the war. Because Johnston proved a passive commander Davis tended to side with Lee, the more aggressive commander. It was not just the general Davis agreed with, the president liked

¹⁵⁷ Winston Groom, *Vicksburg, 1863* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 191.

aggressive tactics. Which is why, in the summer and fall of 1862, Davis accepted an invasion of Maryland and Kentucky.¹⁵⁸

The campaign into Kentucky marked the climax of the war in the West. The Confederate armies decided to engage in an offensive war instead of sitting back on their heels to await more Union attacks. In Virginia after the Seven Days' Battles, Robert E. Lee embarked on an offensive campaign into Maryland. The Maryland campaign took Virginia's army to Bull Run, where Lee won another victory against Union forces led by General John Pope. The success at Bull Run gave Lee and his army an expanded confidence to take the war into the North. Goals of a Maryland invasion consisted of foreign intervention, access to more supplies, manpower, and the addition of another state to the Confederacy. In September, one of the most well-known battles took place outside Sharpsburg, Maryland. Written in history as the bloodiest day during the Civil War, Union General George B. McClellan stymied Lee's advance and forced the Army of Northern Virginia to retreat. In relatively the same time frame another offensive campaign started in the West. Even though Antietam receives more attention in history, Kentucky proved just as vital to Confederate hopes for success.¹⁵⁹

The success in the West depended primarily on the acquisition of lost territory in Tennessee and Northern Mississippi and Alabama, the addition and protection of a new state for the Confederacy, agricultural supplies for western armies, and more manpower for the Confederacy. From the outbreak of hostilities it became a government policy to "free" Kentucky

¹⁵⁸ For an in-depth study of the Peninsular Campaign, as well as a brief description of leadership characteristics between Lee and Johnston during the campaign, see Stephen W. Sears, *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1992).

¹⁵⁹ For an in-depth study of Antietam, consider Stephen W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1983). Sears put Lee's March north into context of foreign intervention and examined the generalship of both Robert E. Lee and George B. McClellan during the campaign. Also noteworthy is Sears' political analysis. Sears discussed the success and failures of Antietam to both Union and Confederate political workings. For examinations into the experiences of the soldiers, consider John Michael Priest, *Antietam: The Soldiers' Battle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

from the tyranny of Lincoln’s administration. This became known as the “Kentucky Dream.” The dream consisted of pushing the southern boundary north to the Ohio River and bringing Kentucky into the Confederacy.¹⁶⁰ Historian James McDonough asserted—for the Union—that the loss of the Ohio River would have expanded the war. With the Confederacy in control of Kentucky, and subsequently in control of the Ohio River, Tennessee and Cumberland River, as well as access to the upper Mississippi River restored, the Confederacy could have brought war to the Northern states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. These rivers—Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and the Mississippi—became the key points of invasion for Union generals deep into Confederate territory.¹⁶¹ Even Lincoln noted the importance of Kentucky saying “to lose Kentucky is nearly to lose the whole game.” Lincoln believed that if Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri all fell to Confederate armies the Davis administration would win the war.¹⁶² Historian James McPherson placed an added importance on offensive campaigns during the fall of 1862. “The three states [Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri] would have added 45 percent to the white population and military manpower of the Confederacy, 80 percent to its manufacturing capacity, and nearly 40 percent to its supply of horses and mules,” if the states’ white population supported the war.¹⁶³

Upon arrival in Kentucky, Bragg noted that the early observation by cavalry commander John Morgan, proved false, Kentuckians did not have an intense desire to join the Confederate army.¹⁶⁴ Bragg, therefore, issued his proclamation to the people of Kentucky in an attempt to gain recruits through Confederate patriotism within the state and criticisms of Lincoln. “We

¹⁶⁰ Connelly, *The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy*, 73.

¹⁶¹ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 6.

¹⁶² The interpretation of McDonough and Abraham Lincoln’s quote are taken from Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 6.

¹⁶³ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 284.

¹⁶⁴ Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 41.

come not as conquerors” Bragg maintained, but an army “to restore to you the liberties of which you have been deprived of” by the “tyranny of a despotic ruler.” The purposes for Bragg’s invasion of Kentucky, much like Lee in Maryland, depended on “liberating” the people of the Border States and persuade them to join the Confederate cause. To further emphasize his point Bragg told the Kentucky civilians that the army would leave if the civilians frowned upon their presence. However, if Kentuckians welcomed Bragg’s army with warm smiles and “willing hands” Kentucky’s liberty would be secured. This call did little to awaken the patriotism in the civilian majority. Bragg and Kirby Smith had to fight for Kentucky on their own.¹⁶⁵

Perryville became the battle to “conquer” Kentucky. Bragg’s invading force was split into two sections, one under himself and the other under Kirby Smith near Lexington, Kentucky. Just as during the beginning of the campaign, Kirby Smith acted independently to maintain his role as a commander of a separate army. Kirby Smith did not want a secondary role behind Bragg. As a battle seemed imminent, Bragg called for Kirby Smith to join forces outside of Perryville. Kirby Smith, disregarded Bragg’s calls to join the army, and did not partake in the fight near Perryville. Kirby Smith’s actions forced Bragg’s army of approximately 16,000 men—directed by General Leonidas Polk because Bragg was near Lexington—to face off against the majority of Buell’s army. After the battle, Bragg suffered a 20% casualty rate compared to Buell’s 7% casualty rate. Outnumbered, Bragg retreated from Kentucky, not able to gain the highly prized state for the Confederate war effort.¹⁶⁶

Davis insisted that “reinforcements for a Kentucky campaign would not come from the East,” in a letter to Bragg. Union General Henry Halleck had been reported in the East for the

¹⁶⁵ *The Courier*, “Gen. Bragg’s Address to the Kentuckians,” October 17, 1862, accessed November 11, 2015, NewsVault.

¹⁶⁶ For an in-depth study on the battle of Perryville, consider Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

purpose of taking Richmond, which forced Davis to focus on Lee's movements in Maryland.¹⁶⁷

As a result of eastern favoritism, Bragg fought an offensive campaign into Kentucky based on the premise supplied by Morgan that a vast majority of Kentuckians wanted to join the Confederate cause. This did not come to fruition. Without the support of Kentucky soldiers Bragg retreated back into Tennessee, much like Lee's army retreating into Virginia after the failure at Antietam.

Through the eyes of those soldiers who marched into Kentucky only to be turned around, the invasion proved a failure. Liddell voiced his displeasure at Bragg's retreat from Kentucky, stating, "This was the last, aye, the very last chance to accomplish anything by strategy...All chances were destined to be recklessly thrown away."¹⁶⁸ Davis, along with the other government officials, and southern society as a whole, agreed. The Confederates suffered a defeat at Perryville, a long and humiliating retreat back into Kentucky, and a severe drop in morale. More recently, however, some historians have argued that the Kentucky invasion brought some tangible gains. Bragg's army temporarily recovered territory in Middle Tennessee, secured Confederate area as far north as Nashville, and proved that the war would last. An offensive campaign into Kentucky during the fall 1862 proved that a defensive war was ineffective. Bragg's army failed in Kentucky but the winter of 1862 proved one more opportunity to turn the tide of war, even without the help of the eastern army and Richmond.¹⁶⁹

Through October and November Bragg held his army around Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Here, Bragg took command of the Army of Mississippi and the Eastern Tennessee Army under Kirby Smith, creating the Army of Tennessee. The failure in Kentucky proved costly for the

¹⁶⁷ Davis, in a letter to Bragg dated August 5, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 334-36.

¹⁶⁸ Liddell, *Liddell's Record*, ed. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr., 98

¹⁶⁹ Andrew Haughton, *Training, Tactics and Leadership in the Confederate Army of Tennessee: Seeds of Failure* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 102.

Confederate cause, but the Confederacy still controlled its own destiny. Without help from Richmond, Bragg faced off against the numerically superior army of General William Rosecrans—he replaced Buell after Perryville—and General Pemberton confronted General Grant in his first attempt to take Vicksburg. Noticing the problems between generals in the West, Davis appointed General Joseph E. Johnston to oversee all western armies. Davis hoped this move would create more unison between generals in Tennessee, Mississippi, and the Trans-Mississippi Theaters.

Even though Davis assigned Johnston to command in the West, the president did not have a very good relationship with the general. Dating back from their days at West Point, Davis and Johnston disliked one another. This dislike grew at the start of the Civil War when Davis ranked Johnston fourth in the military hierarchy. Johnston believed he should be first.¹⁷⁰ Retreat during the Peninsular Campaign gave Davis even more reason to despise Johnston as a commander, but no other officer outranked Johnston in the Confederacy, who did not already have an assigned command. The situation forced Davis to place Johnston in command of all western armies. The last point of tension, perhaps the most fitting for discussing the Western Theater, relied on the different strategies of Lee and Johnston. From the start of Johnston's time in the West he advocated for a combination of military forces to defeat Grant in Mississippi. "The defeat of Major-General Grant," asserted Johnston, "would enable us to hold the Mississippi and permit Lieutenant-General Holmes to move into Missouri."¹⁷¹ After the defeat of Grant the Confederate armies could then turn their attention on Tennessee and General Rosecrans. Davis opposed this strategy, in order to maintain the departmental command system.

¹⁷⁰ At the beginning of the Civil War, Johnston was the highest ranked officer in the army that joined the Confederacy. Frank E. Vandiver, *Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1956), page 28-29.

¹⁷¹ Joseph Johnston to Samuel Cooper, November 24, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 758.

Davis's reluctance reduced Johnston to nothing more than a figurehead. This decision proved disastrous for the Confederate forces at Murfreesboro in December 1862-January 1863 and the Confederate forces at Vicksburg in March-July 1863.¹⁷²

In December 1862, President Jefferson Davis traveled to the Western Department. After meeting with Generals Johnston and Bragg, Davis forced Bragg to send 9,000 troops to assist Pemberton's force in the defense of Vicksburg from Grant. Davis believed the most vital point of interest for the Confederacy lay with the Mississippi River. Johnston contended otherwise. Johnston insisted that Tennessee was the most vital portion of the Western Theater because of the supplies Tennessee offered the Confederate armies. Rail lines also added an importance to Tennessee. Major rail lines connected Tennessee south to Georgia and Mississippi, as well as east to Virginia. Johnston tried to persuade Davis to take reinforcements from the Trans-Mississippi department to send to Pemberton, "No more troops can be taken from General Bragg," contested Johnston, "without the danger of enabling Rosecrans to move into Virginia or to re-enforce Grant;" but Davis did not budge.¹⁷³ Johnston tried to employ the assistance of Adjutant General Samuel Cooper to assist in the persuasion of Davis to respect Johnston's strategy in the West. Writing December 6, Johnston insisted that a strong force taken from Bragg "would be to give up Tennessee," but to no avail.¹⁷⁴ Davis maintained his demeanor through his visit to Bragg's army in December, and the division he forced Bragg to send to Pemberton had dire consequences at the Battle of Murfreesboro at the end of the month.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 38.

¹⁷³ Johnston to Davis, December 22, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 800-01.

¹⁷⁴ Johnston to Cooper, December 6, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 2: 441.

¹⁷⁵ Jones, *Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg*, 117; William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschell, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 48-50.

Union General Grant's first attempt to take Vicksburg ended quickly because of Confederate General Earl Van Dorn's raid that cut Grant's supply lines, which forced Grant to retreat. The division sent from Bragg's army did not arrive in enough time to take part in the battle. Back at Stones River, Bragg decided to attack Rosecrans's larger force even though Davis had forced the general to send 9,000 soldiers to Mississippi. For the attack at Murfreesboro, Bragg decided to attack the right wing of the Union army using General Leonidas Polk's division to slam into Union General John Crittenden. Bragg's report of the battle of December 31 later read, "We assailed the enemy...and after ten hours' hard fighting have driven him from every position except the extreme left." Even though the Confederate army achieved a victory on day one, the battle at Murfreesboro continued into the new year. On January 2, 1863, the Union army counterattacked, and Bragg retreated.

Campaigns during 1862 proved erratic. Confederate armies countered defeats at Forts Henry and Donelson, and Shiloh with an offensive thrust into Kentucky. Kentucky ended in failure when the Union army forced Bragg and Kirby Smith to retreat from the Bluegrass States. Even though 1862 ended in failure, historians have noted the importance of 1862 to Confederate hope in success. James McPherson asserted, "this assured a prolongation and intensification of the conflict" which created an opportunity for Confederate triumph. However, just as quickly as Kentucky promised success, disappointment and failure ended Confederate achievements in 1862. The defeats at Perryville and Stones River gave rise to further dislike of Bragg within the army, as well as a loss of hope in Confederate independence. With 1862 ending in such gloom, Bragg and Johnston looked for a string of victories that might allow them another opportunity of success. In February 1863, Bragg attempted to get his division returned to him. Writing to Davis, Bragg believed that the return of his division from Mississippi would allow the

Confederacy an opportunity to reacquire Middle Tennessee.¹⁷⁶ Davis, once more, refused Bragg's request, showing little confidence in the general. With the failure to deliver victories, western generals lost support in Richmond and Davis continued to pursue victory in the Eastern Theater with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.¹⁷⁷

In the Eastern Theater, the Army of Northern Virginia lacked necessary supplies in their winter quarters above Marye's Heights outside Fredericksburg. The men in the ranks, frozen, hungry, lacking proper clothing, still held high spirits after their recent success over the Union army at Fredericksburg. The same could not be said for the Western Theater. To turn the soldiers' morale around Bragg, Pemberton, and Johnston needed to provide a succession of victories and provide a sense of hope for the Confederacy. The next best opportunity for Confederates to gain those victories occurred when Union General Grant attempted to take Vicksburg.

After crossing the Mississippi River in April, Grant marched his army to Jackson, Mississippi, then turned east towards Vicksburg. Just as in the previous campaigns, western generals fought this battle on their own with little support from Richmond, no matter how much they begged and pleaded for troops.¹⁷⁸ As the war progressed, Davis lay in the middle of competing strategies, Lee versus Johnston, Virginia versus Tennessee. The summer of 1863 showed the government's continued focus on the East at the expense of the Western Theater. The Confederate government, however, is not solely to blame for the focus on the Eastern Theater.

¹⁷⁶ Bragg to Davis, February 23, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. LII, Pt. 2: 426

¹⁷⁷ Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 218; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 858.

¹⁷⁸ Grant's army numbered 60,000 men while the forces under Johnston barely reached 23,000. More about the disparity in numbers and the Vicksburg campaign will be discussed in the following chapter.

Davis managed the war as a puppet of Lee's strategy and placed Virginia and Lee in the epicenter of Confederate military strategy. Lee, the Washington-like figure of the Confederacy, saw Virginia as the war's only battlefield.¹⁷⁹ In March, before the campaign season of 1863, Lee refused to send reinforcements to the West because of the lack of winter preparations taken by the Army of the Potomac. Further, Johnston received excuses to why reinforcements could not be sent to him during Grant's Vicksburg campaign. Davis insisted that the enemy "would not attack our positions in Southwestern Virginia, East Tennessee, and Mobile simultaneously."¹⁸⁰ Therefore, Johnston should have enough men in his department to transfer back and forth between armies if need be. However, after July, Davis momentarily shifted focus from Lee to Bragg, giving Bragg an opportunity to turn the tide of war in the Western Theater.¹⁸¹

May 1863. The Confederate army in Virginia won one of the most remarkable victories of the entire war. Outnumbered almost two to one, Robert E. Lee beat Union General Joseph Hooker at the Battle of Chancellorsville with one of the most discussed maneuvers in Civil War history, the infamous flank march to Hooker's right. The important takeaway from this battle is not the victory but the fact that Lee secured such an extraordinary victory without General James Longstreet and Longstreet's corps. Before May Lee sent Longstreet to the Suffolk area to acquire much needed supplies for the Army of Northern Virginia. Before Longstreet could return to take part in the battle of Chancellorsville Lee had already won a victory. At approximately the same time, General Grant began his campaign to take Vicksburg. The next two campaigns, Vicksburg in the West and Gettysburg in the East, demonstrated Richmond's

¹⁷⁹ Furgurson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War*, 41, 42.

¹⁸⁰ Jefferson Davis to Joseph E. Johnston, March 20, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 712; Joseph E. Johnston to P. G. T. Beauregard, June 21, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 837-38.

¹⁸¹ Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), page 119.

continued priority of the East. While Lee pushed north into Pennsylvania, General Joseph E. Johnston received little to no help from Davis and Richmond.¹⁸²

Beauregard, though he commanded an army in South Carolina during this stage of the war, continued to view the Western Theater as the most vital area in the Confederacy. From South Carolina, Beauregard attempted to use political friends, as well as his military experience, to persuade the Confederate government to see the West in the same light as he, Generals Longstreet, Johnston, Bragg, Kirby Smith, Secretaries of War Judah Benjamin and James Seddon, and Senator Louis T. Wigfall did. Beauregard believed that Rosecrans could be turned back if a vast Confederate army concentrated under Bragg. According to this plan, Lee would maintain a defensive position in Virginia while Longstreet and 20,000 men would travel to the Volunteer State and attack in Middle Tennessee. Confederate strategy planned to drive Rosecrans back into Kentucky and threaten Grant's communications into Mississippi. Longstreet supported this plan and proposed to take his entire corps to the Western Theater to reinforce Bragg, and make an offensive movement against Rosecrans to relieve the pressure on Vicksburg. Wigfall, in January and February also advocated for this strategy. In May, Lee rejected the plan due to the threat of the Union forces currently in Virginia, and Lee's desire to take the offensive again.¹⁸³

As May came to an end, western generals still struggled to add manpower to the army, while Lee secured the victory at Chancellorsville. Johnston knew that the Western Department did not have the military numbers necessary to defeat Union armies in Mississippi and

¹⁸² For more information on the battle of Chancellorsville consider, Ernest B. Furgurson, *Chancellorsville, 1863: The Souls of the Brave* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); and Stephen W. Sears, *Chancellorsville* (Boston, MA: Houghton Miffling Company, 1996).

¹⁸³ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 100-01; Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 211-13.

Tennessee. He thus told Major General Dabney H. Maury “perhaps the victory General Lee has just won on the Rappahannock may enable the Government to detach from his army.”¹⁸⁴ Staying true to Johnston’s strategy of military concentration, Johnston made another attempt to obtain men for the protection of the West. Lee declined to weaken his own army to support inferior commands in other areas of the Confederacy, which left Johnston and Bragg to fend for themselves. Believing that sending General George Pickett’s division to assist in the campaign against Grant in Mississippi would fail, Lee asked Davis to “decide whether the line of Virginia is more in danger than the line of Mississippi.” Lee’s argument against sending troops to the West centered around news reports from the North that suggested another thrust by Hooker’s Army of the Potomac. “It would seem therefore,” concluded Lee, “that Virginia is to be the theater of action...I think you will agree with me that every effort should be made to reinforce this army in order to oppose the large force which the enemy seems to be concentrating against it.”¹⁸⁵ With Lee's emphatic focus on Virginia, western generals received little assistance from the Virginian during the crucial Vicksburg campaign. Lee persuaded the Davis administration to allow him to invade Pennsylvania that left Vicksburg vulnerable to Grant.

Johnston arrived at Jackson, Mississippi, with orders to rescue Pemberton from Grant in front of Vicksburg. Historian William Shea called Johnston’s time in Mississippi during the Vicksburg campaign a show of defeatism. In other words, Johnston believed the cause lost and refused to sacrifice more men for an inevitable defeat. Johnston’s lack of inaction also showed his defensive and cautious military philosophy. The Vicksburg campaign, from the perspective of Johnston, is very reminiscent of the Peninsular campaign except for one difference. Johnston

¹⁸⁴ Johnston to Major General Dabney H. Maury, May 8, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 823-24

¹⁸⁵ Robert E. Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee*, ed. Clifford Dowdey (New York: Virginia Civil War Commission Bramhall House, 1961), 482, 483-84.

maintained the defensive in Virginia and refused to offer battle. In Mississippi, Johnston had an opportunity to attack Grant and save Pemberton at Vicksburg. Johnston's actions in front of Richmond in the summer of 1862 foreshadowed his role in Mississippi through the summer of 1863. Robert Kean, head of the Confederate Bureau of War, wrote that he had little confidence in Johnston to rescue Pemberton and Vicksburg. Believing Johnston needed to make an aggressive attack against Grant for any kind of success, Kean simply stated, "Such venture is inconsistent with Johnston's character as I understand it, and I greatly fear he will not make it."¹⁸⁶

That July, Vicksburg fell. To double the insult, the Confederacy also marched back a defeated mob after the failure at Gettysburg. However, the Confederacy maintained faith in Lee's military prowess compared to any other general—which perhaps solidifies the reason Richmond and Confederate officials focused on Lee and Virginia at the expense of the Western Theater. After Vicksburg fell, Belle Edmondson felt "uneasy" about the capture of Vicksburg, but believed Lee "has whipped him [General Meade at Gettysburg] & may get Baltimore & threaten Washington."¹⁸⁷ Flavel Barber, in the Western Theater, consistently looked for a battle from Lee's glorious army in August 1863 to reverse the ill tides of July. "If Meade is badly whipped," Barber wrote, "the courage and war spirit of the Confederacy will be up as high as it ever was."¹⁸⁸ Even John B. Jones, a Confederate official, voiced his faith in Lee. Calling the fall of Vicksburg not sufficient enough to call "this the darkest day of the war," Jones asserted that if

¹⁸⁶ Shea et. all, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River*, 124; Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger. Baton Rouge (LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 62, 69.

¹⁸⁷ Belle Edmondson, *A Lost Heroine of the Confederacy: The Diaries and Letters of Belle Edmondson*, ed. Loretta and William Galbraith (Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1990), 52-53.

¹⁸⁸ Flavel C. Barber, *Holding the Line: The Third Tennessee Infantry, 1861-1864*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Kent, OH: The Kent University Press, 1994), 144.

Lee fell back, “it will be the darkest day for the Confederacy we have yet seen.”¹⁸⁹ To further emphasize the importance of Lee compared to that of Bragg and Johnston, “If I could take one wing and Lee the other,” Davis mused in the late stages of the war, “I think we could between us wrest a victory from those people [Union armies].”¹⁹⁰ After the loss of Vicksburg and the defeat at Gettysburg, Davis finally allowed the Western Theater to attempt to turn the tide of war. The decision would not come easily. Standing in the way of such a plan to retake Middle and Eastern Tennessee stood Robert E. Lee.

Lee, a prideful man, remained focused on the state of Virginia after the defeat at Gettysburg. However, with Longstreet’s growth of dissent towards Lee, as well as Longstreet’s and Confederate officials’ desire to assist the western armies, Lee had to consent to a defensive measure. While Lee took a defensive stance, Longstreet and the First Corps acquired permission to assist the Army of Tennessee in Northern Georgia. Thus, the campaign to snatch victory from the Union enemy rested on Bragg during the fall of 1863.

In Longstreet’s route to Bragg’s army, Lee once more took center stage. Rumors spread that Lee himself would move to Tennessee to take over for Bragg. In the eyes of southerners, Lee’s generalship generated the best possibility for Confederate victory. Despite the fact that Lee allowed his most trusted general to take his entire corps to the West, the people wanted Lee. Agreeing to send Longstreet west, Lee permitted Virginia to take a backseat, for a short time, in Confederate war goals, but Lee repeatedly wrote to Jefferson Davis to ask for the return of the First Corps. If Bragg did not obtain victory against Rosecrans with Longstreet, Lee wanted Davis to return Longstreet for the start of another offensive movement against Union General

¹⁸⁹ Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers, 238-39.

¹⁹⁰ Davis’s quote is taken from Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 89.

George Meade in Northern Virginia. Even though Lee gave a portion of his army for a campaign into Tennessee, he still maintained a seat in Davis's inner circle to advise the president on military affairs. Because Lee focused on the Virginia front his constant pressure on Richmond about the return of Longstreet's troops forced the government to push Bragg to act quickly and decisively. Bragg did not have a military record of quick and decisive military actions. Instead, Bragg liked to focus on battles in which he had an advantage, whether numerically or topographically. Even though Richmond sent troops to the aid of Bragg, the focus on the defenses of Richmond still infringed on Bragg's military leadership.¹⁹¹

As a result of Longstreet's movement to Georgia, Bragg's army won the Confederacy's only victory in the Western Theater. At Chickamauga Longstreet took advantage of a gap in Union General Rosecrans's line, which forced the Federal army to retreat. As both armies and governments saw the victory, the Confederates would have been more victorious if not for the actions of Union General George Thomas, "the Rock of Chickamauga." Thomas held off the Confederate advance, giving the majority of Rosecrans's army time to retreat into Chattanooga. The lack of a decisive pursuit of the enemy by Bragg, led to the debacle at Chattanooga in November 1863. The sole Confederate victory in the West brought no tangible gains.¹⁹² After the Confederate defeat at Chattanooga Davis finally removed Bragg from the Army of Tennessee in December of 1863. Flavel Barber, an infantryman in the Third Tennessee, summed up 1863

¹⁹¹ Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers, 269; Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee*, ed. Clifford Dowdey, 600-01; Samuel J. Martin, *General Braxton Bragg, C.S.A.* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland 7 Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011), 178. After the battle of Chickamauga, Lee sent a letter to Seddon imploring the Secretary to send Longstreet's troops back to Virginia. Victory had been achieved and now Lee feared retribution from Meade's army. Lee desired Longstreet's return in order to bolster military forces in Virginia, Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee*, ed. Clifford Dowdey, 602-03.

¹⁹² For further information on the battle of Chickamauga, consider Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992). For a focus on Longstreet and the First corps in the West, consider Alexander Mendoza, *Confederate Struggle for Command: General James Longstreet and the First Corps in the West* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

as a year of gloom that “opened so brightly.” “Virginia,” Barber continued, “is the only place where [we] have held our own...they have overrun Tennessee...driven us from the Mississippi River.”¹⁹³

When the invasion into Kentucky failed, Davis refused to send any help to prevent the federal armies from capturing Tennessee. Instead, Davis intervened in the worst ways. Forcing Bragg to keep insubordinate officers and personally moving men from one part of the Western Theater to the other, Davis hampered Confederate success and even aided Union triumphs. The disconnect Davis had from the Western Theater, and the focus Davis placed on the Eastern Theater, forced Bragg and Johnston to wage individual campaigns with little assistance from the Army of Northern Virginia. This changed in 1863, momentarily, when Longstreet traveled to Georgia to secure Confederate victory. Joining with Bragg, the Army of Tennessee secured a stunning victory at Chickamauga, but the Union army held a firm grasp on its previous success and prevented the Confederates from regaining any territory. After Chattanooga, the primary focus on military excursions returned to the Eastern Theater, especially when Ulysses S. Grant took command of all Union armies and decided to make his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. The competition that existed between the Eastern and Western Theaters developed as one cause that changed military strategy from a defensive stance to an offensive war. However, another factor played into the changing Confederate military strategy. Military and political tension, created by multiple military leaders in the West, yielded insubordination, petty arguments, and competition for promotion.

¹⁹³ Barber, *Holding the Line: The Third Tennessee Infantry, 1861-1864*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell, 151.

Chapter Four

While Davis focused on the Eastern Theater the president harbored the contagious tensions that spread throughout western armies. Military commanders condemned one another for the mismanagement of campaigns, which escalated into personal attacks. From the death of Albert Sidney Johnston in April 1862, to the removal of Braxton Bragg from command in December 1863, western generals battled one another more frequently than the enemy. Each condemnation led to extremely critical reviews, which generated deeper disrespect for military commanders, which disrupted both military strategy and military success. The purpose of the following chapters is to show how insubordinate actions, military arguments, political friendships, and officers' desire to pursue personal agendas influenced military actions and impaired military capacity in the Western Theater.

In the West, Confederate generals caused countless headaches for the Davis administration. Braxton Bragg, Joseph E. Johnston, Edmund Kirby Smith, Leonidas Polk, Patrick Cleburne, John Hardee, James Longstreet, and countless others created a hostile environment that hampered southern success. As a result, Davis became a sounding board for western generals to air their grievances with one another. Generals constantly demanded and hoped for Davis to intervene on their behalf, as a means to progress their individual military agendas. On multiple occasions Davis traveled to the Western Theater in the attempt to diffuse military havoc. When western generals visited Richmond they attempted to undermine one another, which created harmful political relationships among Confederate generals and

Richmond political figures. Political relationships created isolation among some generals and Davis that harbored a dysfunctional theater.¹⁹⁴

This analysis is not to show that political relationships did not exist in the East. In fact, arguably the most successful political relationship existed between Davis and Lee, which is part of the reason why military focus remained on Virginia after July 1862. This examination will highlight the political relationships between western generals and Richmond officials, to show the effect on the Western Theater. By looking at the campaigns that occurred in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi, I will show that political relationships created an arena of open competition between western generals. As a result, the Western Theater suffered multiple military defeats due to the loss of military unity.

Davis's plan for the Western Theater began as a defensive war to protect the vital waterways critical to Confederate transportation and military maneuverability. Jefferson Davis appointed Albert Sidney Johnston, a friend from West Point and the Mexican American War, to command Confederate forces in the West, tasked with the protection of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. In the early parts of 1862, Johnston ordered the construction of Forts Henry and Donelson to defend the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers from Union advances. However, the lack of men and the lack of combat experience allowed Union General Ulysses S. Grant to capture both forts. Johnston lost control of the rivers, approximately 16,000 men, and retreated into southern Tennessee. The loss of two major waterways forced Davis to refocus his attention,

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 173; George C. Rable. *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 172.

momentarily, on the Western Theater. Davis helped amass a large force in northern Mississippi for an attack on southern Tennessee.¹⁹⁵

The Mississippi River remained one of Davis's primary focuses throughout the Civil War. August 12, 1861, General Leonidas Polk wrote that, "if this war should unfortunately be prolonged, the valley of the Mississippi must ultimately become the great theater, for the enemy now working to subjugate the South knows the value of our great artery of commerce and of the prominent cities upon it too well for us to doubt that he will bend all his energies to control them." In an attempt to counter the inevitable Union pressure down the river, the Confederates constructed numerous fortifications along Tennessee and Mississippi—Island No. 10, Fort Pillow, Port Gibson, and Vicksburg—commanded by General Polk. On multiple instances Davis regarded the Vicksburg, and the Mississippi River, as *the* vital point within the Confederacy. Harming military strategy by personally sending troops to the defense of the river on various occasions throughout the war, the president weakened Confederate forces in the Western Theater, which led to missed opportunities for military success. To command the forces along the Mississippi River Davis placed Leonidas Polk, Davis's friends and an inexperienced military man.

While in command of the river defense network, Polk made a mistake that further complicated the relationship among western generals. Polk ordered a movement into Kentucky but by crossing the neutrality line of Kentucky, Union troops were able to enter the state from the north and set out to protect the state from Confederate invasion. Historian Michael Ballard asserted that Polk's move angered Davis and other Richmond officials. Not only did Polk violate Kentucky's neutrality but also Polk created a sense of Unionism in the state. Kentucky's

¹⁹⁵ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 396-97, 401.

Unionist sentiment created difficulties for Braxton Bragg's and Edmund Kirby Smith's planned invasion in 1862. Historian Michael Ballard stated that, "Polk...possessed much initiative and very little common sense," which elicits more confusion in Davis's desire to keep Polk. The attack on Kentucky turned into a political disaster, one that the Confederacy tried to reverse late in 1862.¹⁹⁶

Sending Braxton Bragg's force from Pensacola to Albert Sidney Johnston's army gathered at Corinth, Mississippi, Davis showed the benefits of having a political friendship in the Civil War. The friendship between Davis and Johnston provided an opportunity for the West to receive reinforcements for the attack in Tennessee. Davis seemed to help out the western army more in this instance than during any other battle, possibly as a result of his close relationship with Johnston. Davis did not seem to express the same amount of faith in other generals he appointed to the Western Theater after Johnston's death in April 1862.¹⁹⁷ "Davis had almost unlimited faith in Johnston," historian Steven Woodworth wrote, "the president and his chief western general had made an excellent team. This teamwork could probably never be equaled by Davis in combination with any other general, except perhaps Lee."¹⁹⁸

The Confederate defeat at Shiloh capped off a string of unfortunate events for the Confederacy. In the first four months of 1862, the Confederacy lost control of Middle Tennessee and retreated into northern Mississippi. After the death of Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, and during Union General George McClellan's Peninsular Campaign, Davis turned his attention to Virginia and the military campaigns directly to his front. As a result of Davis's hands off

¹⁹⁶ Michael B. Ballard *Vicksburg: The Campaign that Opened the Mississippi* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 17-18, 194.

¹⁹⁷ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 53, 90.

¹⁹⁸ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 107-08

approach in the West, Bragg and Joseph E. Johnston commanded in a department filled with military strife.

At the end of April, Bragg needed to rebuild the army and the trust of the western part of the Confederacy. The summer of 1862, therefore, provided Bragg an opportunity to train his army. Historian Kenneth Noe asserted that before the lull in 1862, the Army of Mississippi had no extensive training.¹⁹⁹ Instead, from February to April the army only knew basic maneuvers. After Bragg took over for Beauregard at Tupelo, he completely changed the training and discipline of the army. Bragg expected the Army of Mississippi to train five to six days a week for four to five hours daily and face more stringent military rules. One of Bragg's staff officers, Samuel H. Lockett said there would be "no more playing soldier in Genl Bragg's army."²⁰⁰ Bragg had his men shot or whipped for breaking military rules. Therefore, Bragg's soldiers gave him the reputation of a harsh man who cared little for life. However Louisiana E. John Ellis remembered that Bragg saved the army through strict discipline. Evolving with the image of Bragg as a harsh commander, multiple detractors emerged in the officer corps to undermine Bragg and his role as military commander.²⁰¹

As Bragg readied the army for the campaign season, he and General Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederate forces in East Tennessee, planned an invasion of Kentucky. Both men decided on a dual pronged invasion where Kirby Smith agreed to become a subordinate to Bragg for the duration of the campaign. The movement called for Kirby Smith to take his army into the Cumberland Gap, reclaim lost territory, and then join Bragg's army near Chattanooga for

¹⁹⁹ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 23.

²⁰⁰ As quoted in Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 19.

²⁰¹ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 23.

an assault into Middle Tennessee. After both armies united, Bragg would take command and move against Union General Don Carlos Buell in order to sever all communication and supply lines. Bragg and Kirby Smith concluded that Buell would abandon Middle Tennessee and fall back towards the Kentucky border. Both commanders thought a campaign into Kentucky allowed the Confederate army a chance to recapture Tennessee. After securing Tennessee, Bragg's and Kirby Smith's attention turned towards Kentucky. Davis, however, wanted Bragg to defeat Buell before Bragg recaptured Middle Tennessee in order to secure the state permanently for the Confederacy. In this move, Davis maintained his desire to keep commands separate. Davis contended that a victory over Buell offered an occasion for Bragg to secure Tennessee, therefore, providing an open opportunity to invade the Bluegrass state, and liberate both Tennessee and Kentucky in a single campaign. The president set aside his desire to keep commands independent and approved Bragg's and Kirby Smith's original plan, but almost immediately the Kentucky invasion hit a snag.²⁰²

Kirby Smith disregarded the original invasion and decided to enter Kentucky on his own. He did not desire a subordinate role and wanted to maintain his independent command after the campaign. Historian Jeffery S. Prushankin stated that Kirby Smith had an enlarged ego. In fact, in one letter he sent to his wife, the general compared himself to the "Spanish conquistador Cortes and to the Carthaginian general Hannibal."²⁰³ A subordinate role thus jeopardized his desire to maintain an independent command, and possibly replace Bragg. To further illustrate Kirby Smith's desire, when Davis reassigned the general to the Trans-Mississippi Department, Kirby Smith likened the assignment to career ending. "You might as well bury me," proclaimed

²⁰² Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 22, 23; Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 32.

²⁰³ As quoted in, Jeffery S. Prushankin, *A Crisis in Confederate Command: Edmund Kirby Smith, Richard Taylor, and the Army of the Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2005) 13.

Kirby Smith. He wanted to remain close to Virginia and Kentucky, places where generals could find promotion. The Trans-Mississippi Department was viewed as a subpar theater, a place far away from the influence and sight of Richmond.²⁰⁴ To justify his individual move into Kentucky, Kirby Smith wrote to Davis to promote himself as a competent commander while he cast a negative view on Bragg's leadership. Calling Bragg's delays around Chattanooga disappointing, Kirby Smith expressed that "my advance is made in the hope of permanently occupying Kentucky. It is a bold move, offering brilliant results, but will be accomplished only with hard fighting."²⁰⁵ As a result of Smith's personal aspirations, he entered Kentucky in August 1862, and obstructed Confederate success.

Entering Kentucky, Kirby Smith further separated himself from Bragg. Writing to Bragg on the current state of affairs in his army, Kirby Smith proposed two options that faced the army in East Tennessee. A lack of supplies pressured the army to consider a retreat into Tennessee or continue the move into Kentucky. Kirby Smith reasoned, "the former course will be too disastrous to our cause in Kentucky," therefore, he "decided to advance as soon as possible upon Lexington."²⁰⁶ Sending a similar message to Davis, Kirby Smith told the president "our presence will give the true men of Kentucky the opportunity for rallying to our standard."²⁰⁷ While Kirby Smith moved into Kentucky, presumably seeking all the glory for himself, Bragg maintained his position near Chattanooga to await the arrival of troops from Tupelo. Once the Army of Mississippi assembled in Chattanooga, Bragg began his march towards the Kentucky border. Invoking the success of the Lee's army, Bragg urged his men to "emulate the soldiers of the Confederacy of the East." News from the East, recalled Flavel C. Barber, an infantryman in the

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 15.

²⁰⁵ Kirby Smith to Jefferson Davis, August 11, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 752-53.

²⁰⁶ Kirby Smith to Braxton Bragg, August 20, 1862, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 766-77.

²⁰⁷ Kirby Smith to Jefferson Davis, August 21, 1862, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2: 768-69.

Third Tennessee Infantry, gave revival to Confederate independence. Avoiding Union General Buell, Bragg steadily made his way towards Kentucky.²⁰⁸

The early success of Kirby Smith's invasion—a victory near Richmond, Kentucky—led to an exaggeration of Confederate success. An article in the *Wilmington Journal* stated the victory in Kentucky by Kirby Smith “is hardly less glorious and important than the transaction in northern Virginia.”²⁰⁹ Other editors recorded that “Cincinnati is now doubtless ours,”²¹⁰ or that thousands of Kentucky civilians “are rising en masse...pouring in all day in the midst of the wildest demonstration of delight,” to join the Confederate cause in Kentucky.²¹¹ Egregious rumors created certainty in Confederate success. Kirby Smith's perceived military success created a buffer zone for any social or military ramifications if the invasion failed. In other words, because Kirby Smith entered the state aggressively, editors wrote positive accomplishments about his role in Kentucky. As a result of glowing editorials, southerners would look to place blame elsewhere in case the invasion failed. Therefore, when Bragg entered Kentucky he not only faced multiple military problems but issues of civilian perception. Also, Kentuckians did not flock to either Confederate army, both wings remained separated, and success proved far from imminent.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Andrew Haughton, *Training, Tactics and Leadership in the Confederate Army of Tennessee: Seeds of Failure* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 92; Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 29; Braxton Bragg to the Army of Mississippi, June 27, 1862. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2: 626; Flavel C. Barber, *Holding the Line: The Third Tennessee Infantry, 1861-1864*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Kent, OH: The Kent University Press, 1994), 54.

²⁰⁹ *Wilmington Journal*, September 11, 1862, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²¹⁰ *The Lancaster Ledger*, September 17, 1862, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²¹¹ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 16, 1862, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²¹² Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 53

Colonel John Forsyth, of General Bragg's staff, discussed the role of Kentucky citizens on the outcome of the Kentucky invasion. Forsyth stated that the "people were not yet ready to take up arms...they feared we would not be able to remain there and protect them."²¹³ The fear of Union reprisals—confiscation of property, desolation of estate, dishonor to families, and possibly imprisonment—prevented Kentucky citizens from rising up and joining the Confederate army. In December, the *Wilmington Journal* ran an article describing the Confederate failures in Kentucky. Not harping on generalship, the editor centered on the inaction of Kentucky citizens. "The plan...was based on the most positive and...reliable promise of a general insurrection," the editor described. Both Kirby Smith and Bragg based their success on this information. However, when both armies entered Kentucky "no delegations from towns...hail[ed] his arrival; there were no crowds of Kentucky's stalwart youth flocking to a standard that promised them liberty." Instead the armies found areas fueled by "friends who dared not express their joy above a whisper."²¹⁴ As James McPherson wrote, Kentuckians wanted to join a "winner," and Bragg did not convey himself as such. Also, as a result of Polk's failure in Kentucky the previous year, Unionism embedded itself in the majority of the state. Therefore, Kentucky civilians refused to join Bragg's army under a belief that Confederate occupation would be short-lived.²¹⁵

Under the circumstances, Bragg fought two battles for control of Kentucky without any reinforcements. The first battle took place at Munfordville. This short battle lasted from September 14-17. Bragg's army captured 4,000 Union troops but still retreated because of the close proximity of Buell's army. This led to the creation of the Munfordville myth; the idea that

²¹³ *The Athens Post*, November 7, 1862, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²¹⁴ *Wilmington Journal*, December 4, 1862, accessed May 24, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

²¹⁵ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 517.

Bragg could have defeated Buell at Munfordville, which would have resulted in the capture of Kentucky. The creation of the myth occurred after the war but showed the precarious situation Bragg found himself in during the waning months of 1862. Bragg's reputation became the target for southern anger because of his failure in Kentucky. Where Kirby Smith succeeded, Bragg failed. Therefore, military leaders, citizens, and Richmond officials blamed Bragg for the failure in Kentucky. Recently historians have started to debunk the myth. Kirby Smith refused to go to Bragg's aid, which helped Buell maintain a numerical advantage over Bragg, and during 1862 a drought hurt agricultural production in the area of Munfordville. Even if the Confederates retained their position, historians argued that the Confederate army needed to move positions because Bragg's army only had two days of rations remaining. Forced to retreat, the Army of Mississippi marched towards the town of Perryville, pursued by Buell.²¹⁶

As both Confederate and Union forces jockeyed for position in Kentucky, Bragg repeatedly ordered Kirby Smith to join the Army of Mississippi for an upcoming battle. Kirby Smith rejected the orders. Kirby Smith held firm to his belief that his location to the northeast of Perryville offered a better position to defeat the Union army. Kirby Smith's rejection caused Bragg to continuously doubt his own military tactics while he confronted Buell. Kenneth Noe asserted Kirby Smith's actions showed his desire "to maintain independent command and hang on to the scene of his great triumph."²¹⁷ Earl J. Hess said of Kirby Smith, "that general, whose ambition for an independent command bordered on mutiny, continued to maintain his forces in the Lexington area, separate from Bragg's concentration at Bardstown," during a critical point in the battle for Kentucky.²¹⁸ Bragg, reduced to submit to Kirby Smith's insubordination, planned

²¹⁶ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 73-74.

²¹⁷ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 130.

²¹⁸ Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 81.

to gather the Confederate forces at Lexington and repel the Union attackers. On October 7 and 8, before Bragg could unite both armies, Buell's army, numbering approximately 60,000 men, attacked Polk's 16,000 men near Perryville. On the 8th, Buell lost the initiative, which allowed Bragg an opportunity to attack the Union army. Believing the majority of Buell's force maintained a position at Frankfort, Bragg ordered Polk to attack. The next day Bragg discovered he faced Buell's entire army and not just a fragment. As a result, Bragg retreated from Kentucky.²¹⁹

Bragg's retreat created a loss in morale that led to the start of the anti-Bragg bloc. John Euclid Magee wrote in October 1862, that, "great dissatisfaction exists in regard to Genl Bragg's course for the last 2 months." E. B. Goelet expressed, "Bragg's campaign in Kentucky has completely failed and he proved his incompetency." George Knox Miller, a Confederate cavalry Captain, stated, "the Kentucky campaign has greatly demoralised our army...about half of it being stragglers."²²⁰ Sam R. Watkins wrote, "none of General Bragg's soldiers ever loved him. They had no faith in his ability as a general."²²¹ Officers believed that their men suffered costly casualties and had little to show for it. As a result of the failures in Kentucky, Kirby Smith and Leonidas Polk led the anti-Bragg bloc that divided the army among Bragg supporters and Bragg detractors. In November 1862, Polk, the general involved at the Battle of Perryville, traveled to Richmond.²²²

Polk used his time in Richmond to advocate for the replacement of Bragg. According to Joseph Parks, a biographer of Polk, Polk did not desire an independent command or control of

²¹⁹ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 519-520.

²²⁰ Quoted in Andrew Haughton, *Training, Tactics and Leadership in the Confederate Army of Tennessee: Seeds of Failure*, 100.

²²¹ Sam R. Watkins, "*Co. Aytch: Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*," (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1990), 71.

²²² Keneth Noe, *Perryville: The Grand Havoc of Battle*, 339.

the Army of Mississippi. Instead, Polk wanted Bragg replaced because of the Bishop's belief that Bragg was not an efficient commander.²²³ Due to Bragg's failures in Kentucky, Polk argued the army no longer held any faith in the commander. Kirby Smith raised the same concerns as Polk but Davis refused to replace Bragg. Davis's friendships with Bragg and Polk²²⁴ created one possible explanation to why the president did not make changes in the western army during this period. In the Confederate military hierarchy, Bragg ranked fourth behind Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and P. G. T. Beauregard, but Davis refused to replace Bragg with any of them. Lee already held full command in Virginia and refused to serve anywhere but Virginia. Davis's dislike for Johnston went back to their West Point days. The division between Johnston and Davis expanded during the Peninsula Campaign because of Johnston's continued retrograde movements. Davis did not like Beauregard because of the general's extended sick leave before Bragg replaced the general after Shiloh. However, with such contempt directed towards Bragg, Davis summoned the general to Richmond for his explanation of the Kentucky campaign.²²⁵

After discussing the campaign with his general, Davis concluded that Kentucky could only be acquired with the support of the Kentuckians, "we could not long occupy the state," and "have no sufficient motive for doing so," without the support of Kentucky citizens. For the remainder of the year Bragg proposed to hold Middle Tennessee, which Davis approved. The decision to retain Bragg began what Hess called the long "frustrating drama that severely

²²³ Joseph H. Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A: The Fighting Bishop* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 196-97, 208-09. Parks highlights two instances when Polk offered his resignation to Davis in order to serve God. Polk retracted his resignation after being persuaded by other Bishop's that Polk's role in the military was necessary and just.

²²⁴ Polk was promoted to Lieutenant General after the failure in Kentucky and Polk hoped that his friendship with Davis would allow the general to offer the president advice, much like the relationship between Davis and Lee. Polk's thought proved flawed for Davis listened to Polk as much as he listened to Bragg and Albert Johnston. Joseph H. Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A: The Fighting Bishop*, 218.

²²⁵ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 34.

hindered the Confederate war effort in the West.”²²⁶ One positive that came from the meetings in Richmond, Davis placed Kirby Smith under Bragg’s command near Murfreesboro. When Davis refused to replace Bragg or replace other insubordinate generals the Western Theater became an environment where conflict thrived and damaged Confederate military success.

Even though Bragg grew steadily disliked by the end of 1862, many people still supported him in and out of the army. One newspaper, the *Memphis Daily Appeal*, ran an article defending General Bragg. Acknowledging that “General Bragg failed to accomplish all he designed to do in marching his army into Kentucky,” the editor did express accomplishments, even though Bragg’s accomplishments may have been exaggerated, within the campaign. “He liberated Tennessee, thus adding thousands of soldiers to our ranks, and furnishing our army with vast quantities of provisions that can now be had...He has enabled the government and country to see what the true status of Kentucky is; that she is utterly subjugated...and also, that the idea of invasion is absurd.”²²⁷ Although the Confederates may have gained few successes in Kentucky, the defeat at Perryville, and the subsequent retreat into Tennessee forced Davis to make a change in the western command structure. Deciding to keep Bragg as head of the newly formed Army of Tennessee, Davis placed General Joseph E. Johnston as head of the entire Western Department. Making this decision, Davis hoped Johnston could create unity between western generals amongst a sense of insubordination and individualism. As a result of the Department Command System, each general controlled a specific region. Johnston’s role

²²⁶ Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 114, 115; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 23, 33.

²²⁷ “General Braxton Bragg,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, November 12, 1862, accessed January 1, 2016, Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers, LOC.

emphasized the creation of unity among the separated generals. This played into Johnston's concentration strategy for offensive movements.²²⁸

From November 1862, until Johnston's surrender to William T. Sherman in April 1865, Johnston and Davis frequently argued about the direction of the western armies in Tennessee and Mississippi. The first point of difference emphasized military strategy. General Johnston advocated for a concentrated attack. Concentration may allow for the "destruction of the federal army," Johnston mused. Joining western armies together created more advantageous opportunities for success in the West, which shrunk the numbers gap between Union and Confederate armies. Braxton Bragg agreed with Johnston on the importance of concentration to ensure Confederate success in the West. Davis challenged Johnston's strategy, and asserted that independent western armies could and should defend their own respective regions.²²⁹ Geography consisted of another point Johnston and Davis differed over. Johnston wanted to devote most of his attention to protect the state of Tennessee for the valuable resources it offered Confederate armies. Davis, on the other hand, desired the protection of the Mississippi River, the lifeline of the Confederacy. Lose the Mississippi River, reasoned Davis, and lose the Trans-Mississippi Department. Johnston did not completely ignore the importance of the Mississippi, but found the state of Tennessee more valuable. The new commander wished to defeat smaller Union armies before the attack against Grant's superior army. Johnston also reasoned that the loss of Tennessee would lead to demoralization in the Army of Tennessee, more desertions, and allow Union General Rosecrans a chance to establish a base in southern Tennessee.²³⁰

²²⁸ Andrew Haughton, *Training, Tactics and Leadership in the Confederate Army of Tennessee: Seeds of Failure*, 102; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 36.

²²⁹ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 148

²³⁰ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 38-39.

Not persuaded, Davis forced Bragg to send 10,000—a full division under Major General Carter L. Stevenson—to aid Pemberton during General Grant’s first campaign to take Vicksburg. The division did not reach Vicksburg in time to participate in the campaign and its detachment from the Army of Tennessee weakened the Confederate position outside Murfreesboro. Because Davis’s intervention with military decisions harmed the war effort in the West, Johnston asked to be reassigned in December 1862. Johnston argued that the objectives of Bragg and Pemberton opposed one another and left Johnston to conclude that no single general could command both armies. Davis declined. Davis wanted one general officer to oversee the operations of the West, due to the distance from Richmond.²³¹ Davis appointed Johnston to supervise the Western Department but undermined the general, which produced division within the army. Focused intently on the state of Mississippi, the Mississippi River, and a strong dislike for Johnston, Davis nurtured the perfect setting for Confederate defeat and opportunities for Union success.²³²

The preparations for the battle outside Murfreesboro further proved to Confederate generals that Bragg should not command the Army of Tennessee. Bragg, not knowing the terrain of the land, created gaps in his defensive position. Across the Confederate position, the poor placement of troops—contending with Stones River and large areas of vegetation—created gaps that separated some units by approximately 200 yards. When Bragg issued orders for a defensive line on December 27 generals criticized the placement of troops. General John Hardee accused Bragg of selecting a position more advantageous to the enemy than the Confederate line.

²³¹ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 154-55.

²³² Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 185, 186; William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschell, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 48-50; Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stones River* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 38-39.

Hardee also mentioned that Stones River did not offer a formidable defense line, the river remained low, and an easy obstacle for the Union army to cross.²³³

The Battle of Stones River showed how costly political relationships were to Confederate success in the West. Fought December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863, Stones River was an up and down affair for the Confederates. On December 31 Bragg, “assailed the enemy...and after ten hours’ hard fighting have driven him from every position except the extreme left,” Bragg perceived the first day as a complete victory.²³⁴ Bragg noted in his dispatch that the enemy fell back from Murfreesboro, but in reality the Union army decided to remain in place. The first of January became a day of maneuver, and in the early hours of January 2 Bragg ordered General John Breckinridge to clear a Union division from a hill on the Confederate right. Breckinridge protested but Bragg forced Breckinridge to attack. Acting slowly, Breckinridge’s men were easily repulsed within the hour. Realizing that Rosecrans’s army had not retreated, Bragg pulled his men out of their position and moved south behind the Duck River.²³⁵ The Confederate failure in the West “doomed the entire Confederacy.” Earl J. Hess summed up the western affairs during 1862, “their failure may have been the decisive turning point of the western campaigns.”²³⁶ Bragg’s army suffered approximately a 30% casualty rate, which led to further dissension within the army. The Battle of Stones River added to the Anti-Bragg bloc.²³⁷

²³³ *Ibid*, 60-61; map, 74-75.

²³⁴ Bragg’ message to Richmond after the first day of fighting as quoted in Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 218.

²³⁵ Cozzens highlights the discussion between Bragg and St. John Liddell as a dividing point between officers in the army. Bragg’s failure at Stones River demoralized him to the point of accepting retreat as the only option for the survival of the Army of Tennessee. When Liddell told Bragg that he wanted to fight, Bragg simply stated, “General, I know that you will fight it out, but others will not.” Liddell returned to his division enraged by the fact that the army retreated. Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stones River*, 200-01.

²³⁶ Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 234.

²³⁷ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 582; Earl J. Hess, *Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River*, 197.

Upon retreating further south, a soldier in the 4th Louisiana, Patrick Robert, asserted that Bragg “is running like the devil.”²³⁸ Later in January, Robert wrote that “Bragg is not fit for a general and I have always contended that, and the most he is fit for is the command of a brigade and he would make a damned poor brigadier.”²³⁹ An article in the *Chattanooga Rebel* claimed Bragg “had lost the confidence of the Army—that a change was necessary and that the retrograde movement from Murfreesboro was against the advice of his general officers.”²⁴⁰ Bragg did have his supporters, though. Congressman Francis S. Lyon wrote to Bragg and indicated confidence in the general. “In my humble judgment, you have won a title to the respect and gratitude of the entire people of the Confederate States.” “Only leading men,” Lyon continued, “encounter occasionally abuse and misrepresentation—but these things are only temporary...truth and justice will prevail in the end.”²⁴¹ However, with every admiration for General Bragg more ridicule followed. “Bragg is said to have lost the confidence of his command completely,” summed up Robert Garlick Hill Kean from Richmond.²⁴² The negative views of Bragg prompted the general to ask his subordinate generals to answer questions about the Stones River campaign and protect his image. The plan backfired.

“Finding myself assailed in private and public by the press,” Bragg wrote to his subordinates “it becomes necessary for me to save my fair name.” Bragg required his generals to answer honestly about the retrograde moment from Stones River and acknowledge the council of

²³⁸ Robert Patrick, *Reluctant Rebel: The Secret Diary of Robert Patrick, 1861-1865*, ed. F. Jay Taylor, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 76.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁴⁰ Grady McWhiney, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, Volume 1 Field Command* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 375-76.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 382.

²⁴² Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger. Baton Rouge (LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 37.

war that agreed to retreat.²⁴³ Each general agreed that the council of war decided to retreat, however, the generals showed great disdain for Bragg. Breckinridge wrote to Bragg that brigade commanders have the highest respect for Bragg's patriotism, but "you do not possess the confidence of the army to an extent which will enable you to be useful as its commander."²⁴⁴ John Hardee told Bragg that the sentiment of the general officers is "unanimous in the opinion that a change in the command of this army is necessary."²⁴⁵ Patrick Cleburne rounded out the attitudes of the officer corps telling Bragg that the men appreciate his capacity for organization, "but at the same time they see...that you do not possess the confidence of the army in other respects in that degree necessary to success."²⁴⁶ Leonidas Polk held more critical views of Bragg.

In early February, Polk, still in belief that Bragg was not a proficient enough commander, wrote to Davis in response to Bragg's circular to the generals. Where Breckinridge, Hardee, and Cleburne held their tongues, Polk lashed out at the capacity of Bragg. Calling into question Bragg's military leadership, Polk campaigned for Johnston to take over Bragg's role. Johnston "will cure all discontent and inspire the army with new life and confidence," wrote Polk. "If General Lee can command the principal army in his department there is no reason why General Johnston should not." The current state of the army demanded a change in the West.²⁴⁷ Along with his note to Davis, Polk enclosed the circular—footnote number 36—to further diminish Bragg's image in Richmond. Polk argued that Braxton Bragg did not effectively command the Army of Tennessee. Not only did he lose the faith and support of his army but also Bragg

²⁴³ Bragg to subordinate generals, January 11, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 1: 698-99.

²⁴⁴ John Breckinridge to Braxton Bragg, January 12, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 1: 682.

²⁴⁵ John Hardee to Braxton Bragg, January 12, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 1: 683.

²⁴⁶ Patrick Cleburne to Braxton Bragg, January 13, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 1: 684.

²⁴⁷ Leonidas Polk to Jefferson Davis, February 4, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XX, Pt. 1: 698-99.

needed to write to his subordinates and implore them to help clear his name of any wrongdoing. Accompanying the growing sense of demoralization and the division within the Army of Tennessee's hierarchy, Davis sent Johnston to Tennessee on a fact-finding mission. Davis wanted to know if the accusations were fact or exaggerated.

Under Davis's directive, Johnston headed towards Bragg's headquarters to determine "the best interests" of the Army of Tennessee moving forward. Recent reports described the enemy in preparation for an advance and the success of the Western Theater depended on support among the general officers. After spending some time with Bragg and mulling around the army, Johnston found the support of the army primarily behind Bragg. Bragg's army is "encouraging, and gives positive evidence of General Bragg's capacity to command," which contradicted the statements of Breckinridge, Hardee, Cleburne, and Polk.²⁴⁸ Johnston acknowledged such discontent within the army but continued to regard the infantry in high spirits even when the general officers threatened to resign if Bragg remained in command. Johnston concluded his report by backing Bragg, "the interests of the service require that General Bragg should not be removed."²⁴⁹ All indications pointed towards Davis wanting to replace Bragg with Johnston but Johnston backed away from such an appointment.

Johnston's prior service as commander of the army in Virginia offered one possible answer to why Johnston did not want to replace Bragg as head of the army of Tennessee. In 1862 Johnston commanded the "Confederacy's most prestigious army," but after his injury at Seven Pines he had been hospitalized and replaced by Lee. Steven Woodworth wrote that Johnston "desired the glory of an army commander rather than the responsibility of theater

²⁴⁸ Jefferson Davis to Joseph Johnston, January 22, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 613-14; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 79.

²⁴⁹ Joseph Johnston to Jefferson Davis, February 12, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 632-33.

command,” however; Johnston did not want command of a western army. Instead Johnston desired a return to Virginia. Any service in the West, due to constant failures and defeats, would hamper Johnston’s possible return to Virginia. Another item to consider in understanding why Johnston did not want to replace Bragg was the theater itself.

From the appearance of Johnston in the Western Department, the general noted the difficulties in a theater so large. Davis intended for Johnston to look over the theater, and who has the “authority to transfer troops from one army to the other in an emergency.” Johnston, however, thought such shifts were impracticable due to the distance between Bragg and Pemberton.²⁵⁰ The distance also played into the number of men Johnston would have available to attack the Union army. In most cases, the Union army had a numerically superior army, which caused tentativeness in Johnston when he planned military strategy. Even with his shortcomings and pessimism, Johnston had political friends in Richmond. Texas Senator Louis T. Wigfall and Secretary of State James Seddon advocated for Johnston to replace Bragg. Senator William Lowndes Yancey attempted to sell the general’s ability and claimed Johnston as the only man who had the military prowess to save the nation. Polk added that General Johnston was the best man for the command. “The army and the West believe so, and both would be satisfied with the appointment,” wrote Polk. Johnston did not want Bragg’s position, which Polk attributed to Johnston’s desire to not be “the cause of his [Bragg’s] removal,” as well as wanting a field command and not “the duties of administering a department.”²⁵¹ Disregarding all calls of support, Davis kept Johnston as departmental commander in the West; however, Davis did send

²⁵⁰ Joseph E. Johnston. *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 155.

²⁵¹ Leonidas Polk to Jefferson Davis, March 30, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 729-30.

a message to Johnston and told the general to take over Bragg's army while Bragg headed to Richmond for a meeting with the president.²⁵²

Johnston did not replace the general because of the health concerns of Bragg's wife. Therefore, Johnston did not command, for any stretch of time, the Army of Tennessee. When Bragg's wife did recover, Johnston himself became ill, which forced Davis to keep Bragg in command of the Army of Tennessee. With Bragg in command, the general set out to dispel all subordinates who opposed him or involved themselves with the anti-Bragg bloc. Bragg attacked Cheatham and his lack of attention at Stones River because of his alcoholism. Cheatham responded telling Tennessee Governor Isham Harris that he, Cheatham, no longer wished to serve under Bragg. When John McCown criticized Bragg openly in public, Bragg had McCown court-martialed. Breckinridge and Hardee, two leaders of the anti-Bragg bloc, were both relegated to Mississippi in May and July of 1863, momentarily silencing the anti-Bragg bloc in the Army of Tennessee. The last months of 1862 and the first two months of 1863 foreshadowed a dreadful year to come. The lack of respect general officers showed one another, in part, prevented success in the western armies from Shiloh to January 1863. Due to military infighting and political relationships military campaigns fell flat. In May, the next threat appeared around the last Confederate port on the Mississippi. As General Grant made his way down the river to take Vicksburg, Confederate generals proceeded to squabble, which further impeded Confederate success.²⁵³

²⁵² Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 197; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865*, 78-79; Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis Vol. 9*, 19; Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger. Baton Rouge, 43-44.

²⁵³ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 198; Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stones River*, 212-16.

Throughout May, Confederate generals in the West continued to implore Richmond for concentration as a reaction to Union movements. Grant moved to take Vicksburg, Rosecrans continued to maintain a strong position in southern Tennessee, and a new report revealed a movement by Union General Ambrose Burnside into East Tennessee. Johnston knew the individual commands in the West could not independently defeat the Union armies without more men. He thus voiced a possible solution, “perhaps the victory General Lee has just won on the Rappahannock may enable the Government to detach [men] from his army.”²⁵⁴ Beauregard backed Johnston’s proposal and sent appeals for support to Texas Senator Louis T. Wigfall.²⁵⁵ Writing to Wigfall, Beauregard declared that the concentration of armies on one specific Union army offered an opportunity to get “us back Tennessee, Kentucky, and Louisiana, relieve the States of Mississippi and Arkansas of the presence of every Yankee in them, and probably give us Missouri also.” For this strategy to provide victories, the Army of Northern Virginia needed to take a defensive position for the near future. Beauregard argued for Lee’s cooperation. If the Army of Northern Virginia began another campaign, Beauregard stated the military operation would cross an “exhausted country,” and the “danger to Washington would arouse again the whole Yankee nation to renewed efforts for the protection of their capital.”²⁵⁶ With the focus on Washington and Richmond, Beauregard implied that offensive movements in Virginia would come at a costly rate because of the number of men required to defeat well-fortified strongholds around Washington. Therefore, a defensive position by the Army of Northern Virginia offered an opportunity for success in the West by a concentrated military movement. Beauregard

²⁵⁴ Joseph Johnston to Major General Dabney H. Maury, May 8, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 823-24.

²⁵⁵ P. G. T. Beauregard to Joseph Johnston, May 15, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 823-24. In a postscript to the dated June 21, 1863, Beauregard added “It may be that Lee could not have spared 30,000 men from Virginia, for the purpose of re-enforcing Bragg; he certainly could have sent him Longstreet’s 20,000 men from North Carolina and elsewhere, who took no part in the battle of Chancellorsville.” *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 837-38.

²⁵⁶ P. G. T. Beauregard to Texas Senator Louis T. Wigfall, May 15, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2: 839.

argued, the armies of John Pemberton, Braxton Bragg, and divisions from Virginia, led by Johnston, could accomplish important victories. While concentration fell on deaf ears Richmond sent Johnston to Mississippi in order to protect Vicksburg and save Pemberton.

Johnston's arrival in Mississippi did nothing to save Pemberton. Provided with a small army, Johnston continuously got into arguments with subordinate generals and Richmond officials, which caused the general to move at a very slow and cautious rate. May 1863, Johnston arrived at Jackson, Mississippi, with orders to rescue Pemberton by defeating Grant in Johnston's front.²⁵⁷ Johnston, however, acted slowly which caused Richmond officials to view the general in a negative light. Robert Kean noted that the disgruntled general treated the Western Department as an enemy, doing little to improve the conditions of the armies. Kean suspected Johnston's feelings permeated from a "morbid jealousy of Lee and of all his superiors in position, rank, or glory." As a result of such animosity, government officials predicted disasters in Mississippi and Tennessee.²⁵⁸ Johnston himself wrote to Pemberton that if Vicksburg could not be held, then the general should forgo protection of Vicksburg. In a case of army versus city, Johnston felt the army held more value to the ultimate success of the Confederacy. Pemberton countered Johnston's orders and stated that Vicksburg is "the most important point in the Confederacy." Pemberton stayed in his position, protected Vicksburg, and continued to hope for Johnston's rescue; a rescue that never came. Opposing military objectives led to a division between Johnston and Pemberton.²⁵⁹ Defeatism reinforced Johnston's opinion that no obtainable victory presented itself around Vicksburg. Therefore, Johnston did not pursue

²⁵⁷ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 172.

²⁵⁸ Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger. Baton Rouge, 50.

²⁵⁹ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 187, 188.

battle in fear of uselessly sacrificing men for an inevitable defeat, which created a conflict between the general and Seddon.²⁶⁰

Writing in June, Johnston declared he held no power in his current position as department commander. Instead, Johnston compared his role to purely a figurehead. “I cannot...judge which it is best to hold—Mississippi or Tennessee; that is for the Government to determine,” wrote the displeased general. Therefore, “I consider saving Vicksburg hopeless.”²⁶¹ Time and time again the western generals’ strategy for concentration had been denied in favor of individual campaigns against superior Union armies. Johnston saw the advantages in such campaigns but Richmond, blinded by the successes of Lee in Virginia, failed to recognize such promise. “Vicksburg must not be lost without a desperate struggle,” urged Seddon, “the interest and honor of the Confederacy forbid it.” As the Western Theater slowly succumbed to the Union’s noose, Vicksburg became the vital point of defense in the West. With all eyes on Johnston’s army, and the constant urging of Seddon, Davis, and other Richmond officials Johnston reluctantly embarked on a campaign to save Vicksburg. But the effort proved pointless. Defeatism ran rampant in the general’s mind.²⁶²

Complaining constantly to Seddon and Davis throughout June, Johnston continually told Richmond about the dire conditions he found himself in, “I am too late.”²⁶³ Grant’s army numbered 60,000 men while the forces under Johnston barely reached 23,000. Having less than half the total strength of General Grant, Johnston balked at any aggressive movement towards

²⁶⁰ William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschell, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River*, 124.

²⁶¹ Joseph Johnston to James Seddon, June 15, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 227

²⁶² James Seddon to Joseph Johnston, June 16, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 227; James Seddon to Joseph Johnston, June 21, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 228

²⁶³ Joseph E. Johnston to James Seddon, May 13, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 215.

Vicksburg to save Pemberton's army. Throughout May and June, Johnston avoided a campaign against Grant due to the numerical disadvantage he found himself.²⁶⁴

When President Davis and Secretary of War Seddon asked Johnston to attack Grant near Vicksburg, Johnston refused, which caused Confederate officials to lose faith in Johnston just as they had for Bragg. "I have little confidence in the General who came near losing Richmond and who thinks so much of himself," wrote Kean.²⁶⁵ On June 19, Johnston wrote Seddon that the Confederate government did "not appreciate the difficulties in the course you direct, nor the probabilities in consequence of failure."²⁶⁶ From Richmond's perspective, the loss of Vicksburg and Pemberton's army resulted from Johnston's lack of aggression. On July 4, 1863, Pemberton surrendered his garrison and the Mississippi city to Union General Grant. Historian Steven Woodworth calls Vicksburg the "single [most] decisive battle" of the Civil War. With the loss of Vicksburg, the Confederacy lost control of the Mississippi River, which severed Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas from the rest of the country. Vicksburg symbolized Johnston's failure as a commander. As a cautious leader, Johnston did not provide the aggressive spark those in Richmond wanted and expected from the general. Instead, Johnston's squabbling with Secretary of War James Seddon and the president further divided the general and Davis. Johnston's firm belief in not sacrificing soldiers for no tangible gains, his military philosophy of cautious

²⁶⁴ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 196-204. Multiple telegrams between Johnston, Seddon, and Pemberton discuss the problem with manpower in regards to saving Vicksburg and attacking Grant from in May and June 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 215-29.

²⁶⁵ Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger, 71-73. Kean's opinion of Johnston's generalship is further noted in an entry dated June 14, 1863. Speaking of the opinion that Johnston did not move because of his characteristics, Kean asserted that Johnston's delaying movements and arguments with Richmond were centered on personal honor and petty arguments against Confederate President Davis.

²⁶⁶ Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War Between the States*, 513; Joseph E. Johnston to James A. Seddon, June 19 [18], 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIV, Pt. 1: 227

movements, and not attacking superior forces, became a pattern that repeated itself in 1864 and 1865.²⁶⁷

As the summer of 1863 dragged on the Confederacy faced defeats in both the Eastern and Western Theaters. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania failed and with it all hopes of foreign intervention were lost. In Mississippi, the actions of Johnston proved costly as the fortress around Vicksburg fell to a determined general in Ulysses S. Grant. Due to the insubordinate actions of general officers in the western army, the territory under Confederate control severely declined. Richmond's unwillingness to provide adequate attention and resources to the Western Theater diminished success in the West from 1862 and 1863. Within the military, the lack of coordination and harmony created conflict between western generals. As long as Bragg remained in charge of the Army of Tennessee general officers refused to get along with the disliked man. In Mississippi, Johnston still held the support of the troops. General John Gordon said Johnston's troops bore the confidence to "assume the offensive" at the request of Johnston. Johnston's troops remained loyal to him because he did not waste the lives of his soldiers and he chose favorable ground to confront the enemy.²⁶⁸ In Richmond Johnston had little support. Up to July 1863, Confederate defeat seemed imminent.

As fall of 1863 began, the western armies looked desperately for a victory to reignite the support for Confederate independence. In the East, the Davis administration started to discuss, and seriously consider, a change to military strategy for the remainder of the year. With optimism, the Eastern Theater finally received orders to act purely on the defensive while the Army of Tennessee launched an offensive campaign to reclaim Tennessee and push the Union

²⁶⁷ Steven Woodworth, *Decision in the Heartland: The Civil War in the West*, 65, 66.

²⁶⁸ John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 131.

army back into Kentucky. This single stroke, in theory, would provoke a resurgence of the Confederate fighting spirit, and claim both victory and separation from the Union.

Chapter Five

Gettysburg had ended in failure. After three days of heavy fighting the Army of Northern Virginia recrossed the Potomac River back into Southern territory. Never again did Robert E. Lee's army march onto northern soil. To compound the problem further the Confederacy suffered a disastrous defeat in Mississippi. Due to a lack of coordination, an inept general, military squabbling, and a multitude of other factors, Vicksburg fell to the Union. July 1863, arguably became the most ruinous month of the entire war for the Confederacy. In a mere four days, Union General George Meade turned back the Confederacy's most prestigious army with a defining win, and Union General Ulysses Grant captured one of the last remaining Confederate ports on the Mississippi. With Confederate hopes dwindling, General James Longstreet and the First Corps traveled west to resurrect Confederate fortunes. However, Longstreet's presence did little more than deteriorate military relationships. This rift, just as the military squabbling among the armies under the control of Joseph Johnston and Braxton Bragg had, affected the military strategy at Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Knoxville.

To fully understand Longstreet's role in the Western Theater, the discussion will begin with the general's service in Virginia. This chapter will focus on 1863 to show Longstreet's growth as a Confederate general and will culminate with his desire to command a western army. Longstreet's persistent desires to concentrate Confederate forces for military campaigns in 1863 show a shift in Confederate military strategy and the growing importance of the Western Theater to Confederate success. While the Confederate political leadership remained fixated with the Eastern Theater, Longstreet started to see an opportunity for success in the West, but only if Richmond allowed him to transfer departments. Longstreet's actions from February to September 1863, will prove that Confederate generals started to look beyond the Eastern Theater

for military success. Thus, Longstreet actions show a change in Confederate military strategy for military success.

After the Battle of Fredericksburg both the Union and Confederate armies watched one another from across the Rappahannock River. The dominant victory Lee had gained on the hills beyond the city gave the Army of Northern Virginia a reinforced feeling of confidence. Confidence soared further after Lee and his army watched Union General Ambrose Burnside get stuck in the mud while trying to cross the Rappahannock upstream. Even though the Confederate soldiers atop Marye's Heights regained a fighting spirit after the defeat at Antietam, the winter intensified the need for food, coats, shoes, and other military necessities.²⁶⁹

With the army in desperate need of supplies, Lee sent General James Longstreet south of Richmond—Suffolk—to gather supplies for the army. The landscape in Northern Virginia had little to no agricultural sustenance, as a result of constant military campaigns over the same area the past two years. The Suffolk area, barely touched by war, had plenty of supplies that offered enough food for the army during the winter and the upcoming campaign season. Apart from gaining much needed supplies, Lee also had a secondary motive for sending Longstreet below Richmond. Recent reports and recent enemy movements placed a Union corps in the vicinity of Suffolk. Therefore, Lee sent Longstreet south of Richmond with approximately 40,000 soldiers to protect against any enemy advance towards the Confederate capital.²⁷⁰

In Southeastern Virginia, Longstreet operated with numerous personalities that interfered with his own actions. Having no “real” command of the department, Longstreet needed to act

²⁶⁹ Stephen Sears, *Chancellorsville* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 19-22; For an in-depth discussion of the battle of Fredericksburg see Francis Augustin O' Reilly, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter on the Rappahannock* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006) and George C. Rable, *Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

²⁷⁰ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America* (New York: De Capo Press, 1992), 324; Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier—A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 228-229.

within the combined military orders from Lee, Jefferson Davis, and James Seddon. Longstreet needed to maintain a close connection with the Army of Northern Virginia in case the newly appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac, Joseph Hooker, decided to advance upon Lee's position.²⁷¹ Meanwhile, Davis wanted Longstreet to protect the capital and set up defensive positions around the outlying areas. Seddon, on the other hand, desired for Longstreet to attack the Union forces in the Suffolk area to gather more supplies for Lee's army in winter quarters.²⁷² As a result, Longstreet attempted to appease all three men but decided to focus more on gathering supplies than pursuing an active campaign against the Union forces.²⁷³ This episode in Longstreet's career began a split between Lee and his "Old Warhorse."

In the Suffolk area Longstreet repeatedly wrote to Lee advocating for concentration, in which Longstreet might lead a united effort to defeat the Union army below Richmond. Writing on March 18, Longstreet promoted a strategy to concentrate military forces in Southeastern Virginia instead of the area around Fredericksburg. Suffolk, Longstreet argued, had been little touched by war and offered the best source of supplies for the military. "If it is necessary to give ground anywhere," stated Longstreet, "it seems to me that it would have been better to retire your forces across the Anna [River], and to keep possession of all that part of North Carolina where we may be able to get supplies."²⁷⁴ The next day Longstreet reiterated his point. Longstreet argued that the army's focus should be on the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. Once Longstreet defeated the smaller Union army below Richmond, Lee could refocus attention on Hooker and Hooker's "grand army." Concentration forced the Confederacy to

²⁷¹ Robert E. Lee to James Longstreet, March 16, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 921-22.

²⁷² Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier—A Biography*, 231.

²⁷³ Longstreet did engage in battle with the Union presence in southeastern Virginia—a siege did take place around Suffolk—but for the most part Longstreet maintained a defensive position for the purpose of gathering supplies for the Army of Northern Virginia.

²⁷⁴ James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, March 18, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 924-25.

abandon an area of Virginia, momentarily, but Longstreet accepted the consequences in favor of long-term success.²⁷⁵

Lee, however, did not budge in Longstreet's plan to fight in Southern Virginia. Lee feared leaving Northern Virginia exposed to the Army of the Potomac. With Hooker showing no intentions of campaigning or retreating towards Washington, Lee could not risk the defense of Richmond for Longstreet's campaign. Further, Lee seemed to have little regard for the importance of Southern Virginia outside the acquisition of supplies. "But except to draw provisions from North Carolina...I do not see that you can accomplish much," Lee wrote to Longstreet.²⁷⁶ Once Lee had rejected Longstreet's plan to fight the enemy in Southern Virginia, Longstreet recommended a campaign to concentrate military forces in the Western Theater. Longstreet wanted the Army of Northern Virginia to take a defensive stance while multiple units gathered under the command of Johnston and Bragg.²⁷⁷ Before this plan received any attention or gained any momentum, Hooker began a movement to attack Lee. The last days of April consisted of Lee bombarding Longstreet with requests to hurry back to the army. Longstreet did not rejoin Lee immediately because sustenance operations remained ongoing, Longstreet needed time to gather the wagons and men before he rejoined Lee.²⁷⁸

The Battle of Chancellorsville thus occurred, without two divisions from the First Corps and Longstreet himself. Outnumbered approximately two to one, Robert E. Lee defeated the numerically superior enemy over the course of three days. This is an important point to emphasize because of what happened next in Virginia. On his way back from Southern Virginia,

²⁷⁵ James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, March 19, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 926-27; James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, March 30, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 50.

²⁷⁶ Robert E. Lee to James Longstreet, March 30, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 906.

²⁷⁷ James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, April 4, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XVIII: 959-60.

²⁷⁸ Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier—A Biography*, 238, 240.

Longstreet stopped at Richmond to gain information about the Western Theater. Longstreet, in his memoirs, remembered advocating for General Joseph Johnston and the force currently under his command to reinforce General Braxton Bragg's army in Tennessee as a means to defeat Union General William Rosecrans. With overwhelming numbers, the enlarged western army could defeat Rosecrans, march towards Cincinnati and the Ohio River, and force Grant to break his campaign against Vicksburg. Justifying his reasons for his suggestion, Longstreet stated, "it was manifest before the war was accepted that the only way to equalize the contest was by skillful use of our interior lines, and this was so impressed by two years' experience that it seemed time to force it upon the Richmond authorities."²⁷⁹ Longstreet believed that the use of interior lines afforded the military an opportunity to move military forces back and forth. In doing so, armies could combine forces at the weakest point along the line, maintain territory, and defeat any Union attack. Upon returning to Lee's army Longstreet made the same suggestion to his commander as he did in Richmond. Seddon also sent a telegram to Lee with the intent to send one division west, but Lee refused. Claiming that nothing could be accomplished by sending a division from his army to the West, Lee traveled to Richmond with a new proposal in mind.²⁸⁰

Accompanying Lee to Richmond, Longstreet once more promoted the idea of concentration in the West to defeat Grant and reverse Confederate misfortune in Tennessee and Mississippi. Instead of one division, Longstreet proposed to take his entire corps to relieve the

²⁷⁹ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 327.

²⁸⁰ The theory behind Seddon's proposal rested on the accomplishment of Lee with half the fighting force of the enemy. If Lee could defeat Hooker without Longstreet and only 60,000 men compared to Hooker's 120,000 men, then it followed that Lee could defend Virginia without George Pickett's division. Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 211; James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 331; Robert E. Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee*, ed. Clifford Dowdey (New York: Virginia Civil War Commission Bramhall House, 1961), 482.

pressure in Tennessee. Davis countered the general's campaign and argued that Grant intended to take Vicksburg and no Confederate reinforcements in Tennessee could assure a change in Grant's objective. Longstreet claimed that Grant would "obey the calls of his government." If Lincoln needed Grant to fall back towards Tennessee and protect the Kentucky border, Longstreet asserted that Grant would follow orders.²⁸¹ To solve the deadlock between Longstreet and Davis, Lee proposed to attack the Union army on northern soil.

Hoping that an attack in the East would prevent Grant from capturing Vicksburg, Lee suggested an invasion of the Northern states. A northern invasion not only offered a possible retrograde movement by Grant in Mississippi, but an opportunity to save Virginia from the destruction of war, as well as an opportunity for the army to gather agricultural sustenance. Remember, Lee once stated, "save in the defence of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword." Lee's statement placed the importance of Virginia above all else.²⁸² Further, Lee acquired Union papers that announced Washington's plan to reinforce Hooker's army for more military operations into Virginia.²⁸³ Using the papers as evidence of the danger Union armies posed to Richmond, Lee persuaded the administration to pursue a northern invasion. Longstreet disagreed with the decision and blamed Davis's reliance on foreign intervention. "Foreign intervention," wrote Longstreet, "was the ruling idea with the President, and he preferred that as the easiest solution of all problems."²⁸⁴ Without an alternative, Longstreet reluctantly accepted the proposed northern campaign. The northern invasion of 1863 is known for the Battle of Gettysburg. Widely regarded as the "high water mark" of the Confederacy, many scholars have analyzed the three-day battle that occurred in July 1863. The Battle of Gettysburg, and the

²⁸¹ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 328.

²⁸² Robert E. Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee*, ed. Clifford Dowdey, 9.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 483-84.

²⁸⁴ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 327.

subsequent retreat back into Virginia, further divided the military relationship between Lee and Longstreet.²⁸⁵

After July 1, Longstreet thought the Confederacy held a weaker defensive stance than the enemy on Cemetery Hill. Longstreet proposed to move the army to a more favorable spot. Longstreet believed a Confederate movement would force Union General George Meade to attack the Army of Northern Virginia instead of Lee's army attacking Meade's defensive position. Lee declined, and stated that the battle will be fought in its current location. The following morning, July 2, Lee proposed to attack the Union army on both flanks. Longstreet protested again, and made another argument for the army to move between Meade and Washington and force Meade into an attack. Lee declined, and gently forced Longstreet to fight the Union left. Longstreet became irate with Lee and wrote in his memoirs that the general "did not even give me a guide to lead the way to the field from which his battle was to be opened. He certainly failed to go and look at it, and assist in selecting the ground and preparing for action."²⁸⁶ The battle over Devil's Den, the Peach Orchard, and Little Round Top ended with the Union maintaining its defensive position on Cemetery Hill. The Confederate army remained on Seminary Ridge. The next day, July 3, divided the two generals even more over the infamous Pickett's Charge.²⁸⁷

During July 3, Longstreet continuously argued with Lee about the frontal attack on the federal position at Cemetery Hill. The open ground allowed Longstreet's attack no cover. Union artillery on Cemetery Hill held command of the field. Lee, however, maintained faith in

²⁸⁵ Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier—A Biography*, 247; Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 92-93; Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 211-13; James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 331.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 403.

²⁸⁷ Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg*, 234-40, 252-63; Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier—A Biography*, 247; 268.

his artillery. Staying firm to his belief, Lee ignored Longstreet's concerns and pressured Longstreet into the attack. On July 3, Longstreet showed a sense of defeatism in the planned attack. Longstreet refused to order any attack. Historian Stephen Sears argued that Longstreet, from the beginning of the day, did not want to make the attack upon Meade's position. In fact, Longstreet tried to get the artillery general, Porter Alexander, to begin the attack but Alexander refused to issue such a decision. Writing after the war, Longstreet asserted, "General Lee had considered and would listen to nothing else." Whether Longstreet liked it or not Lee intended to attack across that open field on July 3.²⁸⁸ Finally, when General George Pickett pressured Longstreet for an attack, Longstreet simply nodded his head, which began the futile attack. Pickett's charge ended in failure and the Confederacy lost the Battle of Gettysburg. Despite Confederate mistakes, they almost broke the Union lines, but Longstreet only saw failure. Longstreet blamed Lee for some aspects of the battle—mentioned above—however; some generals believed the reason for defeat lay with the First Corps commander.²⁸⁹

General Lafayette McLaws wrote, "Genl. Longstreet is to blame for not reconnoitering the ground and for persisting in ordering the assault [on July 2 and July 3] when his errors were discovered." Walter Taylor, of Lee's staff, believed Longstreet did not fully invest his heart at Gettysburg. General Edward Alexander believed the attack on Meade's center conflicted with Longstreet's defensive military strategy.²⁹⁰ To regain his role and image within the Confederacy, Longstreet once more started to advocate for western concentration. With the fall

²⁸⁸ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 391.

²⁸⁹ For an in-depth study of the Battle of Gettysburg, see Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg*. Specific pages for the information regarding day three can be found in Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg*, 396-408, 443-454.

²⁹⁰ Lafayette McLaws, *A Soldier's General: The Civil War Letters of Major General Lafayette McLaws*, 197; Walter H. Taylor, *General Lee and His Campaigns in Virginia, 1861-1865* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 199; Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*, 237.

of Vicksburg and the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, the Davis administration turned its attention to the West in an attempt to reverse the direction of war.

Tennessee Senator G. A. Henry wrote Seddon, “I say to you we want some fighting generals in the Army of Tennessee...Can’t Longstreet be sent there?”²⁹¹ Union Generals Grant and Rosecrans threatened to end the war by defeating the armies of Johnston and Bragg. If Rosecran’s defeated Bragg in Northern Georgia, the Confederacy became further vulnerable to Union attacks. To add to the seriousness of the West, Longstreet also noted that the fall of Vicksburg allowed the Union to control the Mississippi River. Therefore, the Army of Northern Virginia should take a defensive position “and send detachments to reinforce the army in Tennessee; to call detachments of other commands to the same service, and strike a crushing blow against General Rosecrans before he could receive reinforcing help.”²⁹²

After Gettysburg, the Army of Northern Virginia maintained a defensive stance in Virginia. Not wanting to sit on the defensive for the rest of the year, Longstreet wrote to a political ally in Richmond, Texas Senator Louis T. Wigfall, and pressed for another attack on Union forces. Not needed critically in Virginia, the general expressed, “hope that I may get West in time to save what there is left of us. I have no personal motives in this,” however Longstreet did hint at taking command from either Bragg or Pemberton, “for with either Bragg or Pemberton’s army I should be second to Johnston and therefore in the same relative position I am at present.”²⁹³ Claiming a position as directly beneath Johnston, Longstreet insinuated that he would control either Bragg’s or Pemberton’s army. Summing up his thoughts to the senator, Longstreet concluded that his only desire is to “save the country.” Therefore, in September

²⁹¹ As quoted in Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 28.

²⁹² James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 433-44.

²⁹³ As quoted in Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga*, 28.

Longstreet and his political allies persuaded the Davis administration of the importance of a western victory.²⁹⁴

“I know but little of the condition of affairs in the West, but am inclined to the opinion that our best opportunity for great results is in Tennessee” Longstreet surmised.²⁹⁵ After two and a half years, the Army of Northern Virginia gained military victories but nothing more. Still stuck in Virginia Lee did no more but defeat inferior Union commanders. In addition, Longstreet asserted that “if we advance to meet the enemy on this side, he will, in all probability, go into one of his many fortified positions; those we cannot afford to attack... I think that we could accomplish more [in Tennessee] than by an advance from here.”²⁹⁶ Therefore, Longstreet contended, “I think that it is time that we had begun to do something in the west, and I fear if it is put off any longer we shall be too late.”²⁹⁷ If Lee did not want the First Corps to go, Longstreet offered to replace Bragg in the West as commander of the Army of Tennessee and Bragg would take over, momentarily, Longstreet’s command of the First Corps.²⁹⁸ Longstreet’s persistence paid off. Richmond finally consented to the First Corps’ movement west. Persuaded to take a lesser role for the remainder of the year, Lee told Longstreet that he “must beat those people out in the West.” In fact, Lee wanted the Union army driven into the Ohio River. Anything short equaled military failure.²⁹⁹

Departing in mid-September, Longstreet’s desired to command the Army of Tennessee. Thinking that Bragg had lost faith of his army, Longstreet wrote Wigfall, “I don’t think that I

²⁹⁴ Judith Lee Hallock, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat. Vol. II* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), 79.

²⁹⁵ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 435.

²⁹⁶ James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, September 2, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIX, Pt. 2: 693-94

²⁹⁷ James Longstreet to Robert E. Lee, September 5, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIX, Pt. 2: 699.

²⁹⁸ Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga*, 59.

²⁹⁹ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 436, 437; Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga*, 60.

should be under Bragg.” However, the general also admitted that he held little faith in any general in the West. “And I would fight against,” being a subordinate to Bragg, “if I had any hope of setting anyone in the responsible position except myself.”³⁰⁰ Traveling towards Georgia in September, Longstreet already presumed himself superior to the leadership of Bragg. Upon arrival, Longstreet stepped into a whirlwind of controversy. The moment allowed Longstreet a ripe opportunity to make changes in the command structure of the Army of Tennessee.

Before the majority of Longstreet’s troops arrived in the West, Union General Rosecrans engaged in battle near Chickamauga creek in Northern Georgia. Attempting to push the Army of Tennessee further into Georgia, Rosecrans opened the attack on September 19. Fighting on the 19th came to a standstill when Bragg’s subordinates failed to attack the Union left. That night Longstreet arrived at Bragg’s headquarters and was given command of the army’s left wing. Bragg planned an echelon attack for the following day with General Leonidas Polk beginning the battle at daybreak. However, because of mismanagement on Polk’s part, the attack did not get started until four hours later on the 20th. The lack of communication between Polk and his subordinates allowed the Union army time to construct a defensive position. The delay did not deter Longstreet’s troops from pushing back the Union troops on the Confederate left. Throughout the morning and early afternoon, the left wing steadily pushed the Union force back. At approximately 3 PM, Longstreet and Bragg held a mini conference about the progress of battle. Longstreet asserted success and recommended troops from the right wing to help force the federal army from the field. Bragg declined, and insisted that troops in Polk’s wing did not have any more fight in them. Historian Alexander Mendoza hinted at the tension between both generals in this moment. Determining that Bragg did not want to switch battle tactics half-way

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 60.

in the battle—Bragg’s original plan called for Polk’s right wing to smash against Longstreet’s left wing preventing Union retreat—Bragg decided that Longstreet’s minimal amount of time on the battlefield did not allow for the First Corps commander to issue such orders. After the meeting, Longstreet returned to the left wing, renewed his attack, and turned the Union army back towards Chattanooga.³⁰¹

Chickamauga ended a series of Confederate defeats in the West. The victory, however, cost the Army of Tennessee 18,000 men, which, in part, answers Bragg’s reluctance to chase Rosecrans back towards Chattanooga. After driving the enemy from the field Longstreet wanted to pursue enemy further into Middle Tennessee. Bragg refused the idea by citing the number of casualties the army had taken. As a result of Chickamauga and the success of Longstreet, the anti-Bragg bloc grew and the popularity of Longstreet skyrocketed. When news reached Virginia of the victory in Northern Georgia, Lee congratulated his eastern army on its success in the West.³⁰² Citizens acclaimed Longstreet for obtaining the only victory for any western army during the war. The success of Longstreet, mixed with the growing anti-Bragg bloc, created more tension in the Army of Tennessee, which caused the victorious army to not follow up battle successes at Chattanooga.³⁰³

As a result of the perception of Longstreet’s importance to the Confederate victory in the West, the call to replace Bragg once more started in earnest. This time neither Polk nor Smith led the animosity. Instead, the general officers looked for Longstreet to promote a change in military leadership. Longstreet seemed the logical pick because of his success as a general, his

³⁰¹ Alexander Mendoza, “Operation Westward Ho and the Chickamauga Campaign,” in *Confederate Struggle for Command: General James Longstreet and the First Corps in the West* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008) 47.

³⁰² Robert E. Lee to James Longstreet, September 25, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXIX, Pt. 2: 749.

³⁰³ Alexander Mendoza, *Confederate Struggle for Command: General James Longstreet and the First Corps in the West*, 36-52. For an in-depth study of the Battle of Chickamauga see Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga*.

distance from the Western Theater in the early stages of the war, and the confidence he exuded. Over the next couple of weeks the army in Tennessee failed to follow up the victory gained at Chickamauga because of infighting within the general officer corps and Longstreet's desire to become the army commander of the Army of Tennessee.

Knowing that Bragg did not intend to aggressively pursue the Rosecrans's army, Polk, Hill, and Longstreet held a meeting to present ideas on how to replace Bragg. Two decisions came from this assembly. First, Longstreet accepted the role of the de facto leader of the anti-Bragg bloc. In this role, Longstreet wrote to Seddon with hope to replace Bragg. On September 26, Longstreet asked for Richmond to send Lee to the West. At the current moment he argued, the Army of the Tennessee "has neither organization nor mobility...we have too much at stake in this to remain quiet under such distressing circumstances." Therefore, Longstreet recommended Lee to take over command of the army.³⁰⁴ Historian Steven Woodworth regarded this tactic by Longstreet as expressing a desire to control the army. Woodworth noted Longstreet knew that Lee already declined the role once, which left Longstreet to replace Bragg. In support of Longstreet's plan of getting Bragg replaced, General Leonidas Polk once again called for Bragg's replacement. Polk told Lee "we must have a change before any permanent success can be had in this region."³⁰⁵ Polk knew Lee's presence would inspire that permanent success desired in the West. Further, Polk wrote to Davis in October that General Bragg had "allowed the whole of the fruits of this great victory to pass from him by the most criminal negligence, or rather, incapacity."³⁰⁶ Bragg's subordinate general officers had enough of Bragg's incompetence

³⁰⁴ James Longstreet to James Seddon, September 26, 1863. *OR*, Series I, Vol. XXX, Pt. 4: 705-06; Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean*, ed. Edward Younger. Baton Rouge (LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 109.

³⁰⁵ Leonidas Polk to Robert E. Lee, September 27, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXX, Pt. 4: 708.

³⁰⁶ Leonidas Polk to Jefferson Davis, October 6, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXX, Pt. 2: 67-68.

as head of the Army of Tennessee. The meeting also saw the creation and distribution of a proclamation denouncing Bragg, signed by twelve corps, division, and brigade commanders.³⁰⁷

The purpose of the petition focused on the replacement of Bragg for a more competent leader. St. John Richardson Liddell, an officer within Bragg's army, regretted the actions of Longstreet, Hill, Cleburne and other subordinate officers. "At such a critical period...when every means was necessary to keep alive the animus of the Army and the unity and harmony of action," wrote Liddell, the army splintered more severely than ever before.³⁰⁸ The petition called attention to Bragg's health as a means to indict the commander with military incompetence and allow Longstreet to promote Johnston as head of the army. Upon receiving the petition, Davis decided to travel, once more, to the Western Theater to settle the displeasure in the army and protect his friend.

Davis traveled to the West to meet with Bragg and the dissenters in the army. Instead of meeting with commanders individually Davis met with them as a group. This meeting became an uncomfortable situation for all involved. General Bragg took a seat in the corner as Davis went around the room and asked the generals—Longstreet, Hill, Cleburne, Chetream, and Buckner—about their thoughts on Bragg. Davis turned to Longstreet first but Longstreet did not answer. Pressed, Longstreet concluded, "our commander [Bragg] could be of greater service elsewhere than at the head of the Army of Tennessee." The other generals followed Longstreet's example, and further threw Bragg under military scrutiny. Davis did not expect this kind of condemnation. After the meeting Davis retained Bragg as commander for numerous reasons. To

³⁰⁷ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 38-39; Alexander Mendoza, *Confederate Struggle for Command: General James Longstreet and the First Corps in the West*, 63-65.

³⁰⁸ St. John Richardson Liddell, *Liddell's Record*, ed. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 152.

reiterate his friendship with Bragg, Davis claimed Beauregard would cause future disasters, Virginia needed Lee, and Woodworth claimed Davis “was not yet desperate enough to try Joseph E. Johnston again.” The president's decision to keep Bragg foreshadowed the disaster at Chattanooga and the movement of Longstreet’s corps to Knoxville in an attempt to dislodge Burnside.³⁰⁹

In November, Longstreet started to formally break away from Bragg’s command. Setting a siege around the Tennessee city of Chattanooga, Bragg hoped to starve the Union army out of its position and either force the federal army to fight on Bragg’s field of battle or retreat deeper into Tennessee. This decision caused a lot of disgust within the Army of Tennessee. Wanting to pursue an aggressive campaign against the Federals in Chattanooga, Bragg forced the Confederate army to recover after Chickamauga. As a result, Confederate generals started to listen less to Bragg. The best example of such an act of insubordination, Longstreet allowed a Union division to beat his troops back, and open a larger supply line. “Shortly after this affair,” wrote Liddell, “Bragg ordered Longstreet with 12,000 men to Knoxville, as he said to me [Liddell], to get rid of him and see what he could do on his own resources.” Officers criticized Bragg’s decision. In the eyes of other Confederate generals, the movement of Longstreet north “left hardly 25,000 men at Mission Ridge” to meet the Union army amassing in the town below.³¹⁰ The Knoxville campaign offered Longstreet a last attempt to gain an independent command, which, in the general’s mind, indicated he would replace Bragg. The campaign did little more than to expose the weakness of the Army of Tennessee and the campaign strategy of Longstreet.

³⁰⁹ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*, 241-42; James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 465, 466; St. John Richardson Liddell, *Liddell’s Record*, ed. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr., 153-54.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

On November 4, Bragg finalized the plans for an attack on Knoxville. The plan consisted of a joint attack—Samuel Jones led one wing, Longstreet the other wing—intending to defeat Burnside at Knoxville, and force Grant to relieve pressure around Missionary Ridge. Because Grant posed a threat to Bragg at Chattanooga, Longstreet needed to maintain open communications with Bragg in case Grant attacked the Confederate position before Longstreet achieved success. Bragg also intended for the First Corps to live off the land due to the fact that the Army of Tennessee had few supplies near Chattanooga.³¹¹ Longstreet had his reservations about Bragg’s plan. Thinking that Bragg lowballed Burnside’s force at 15,000 men, Longstreet asked for more Confederate soldiers. Bragg refused. Longstreet also asked for Bragg to reconsider keeping an open line of communication between Chattanooga and the First Corps. Arguing that such a movement slowed his operation, Longstreet pressed for a quick and decisive attack. “If I can move rapidly and with force,” stated Longstreet, “I can make myself felt so decidedly and so suddenly that, instead of his striking here [Chattanooga], he will...be obliged to begin to look out for his rear, and this you will be enabled to move on his flank or re-enforce in East Tennessee.”³¹² Longstreet’s reservations eventually led him to replicate similar characteristics that hampered him at Gettysburg and Johnston's attempt to take Vicksburg. Longstreet suffered from defeatism caused by a lack of confidence, lack of necessary information and soldiers, and a habit to second-guess military movements.

Longstreet did not suffer a lack of confidence based on military action, but he did suffer from a lack of confidence on military campaigns that he commanded. During the months around Suffolk, Longstreet adhered to three other person’s desires; therefore, he still operated as a subordinate to Lee. In Tennessee Bragg gave Longstreet more control of the military operations

³¹¹ Braxton Bragg to James Longstreet, November 4, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3:634-35.

³¹² James Longstreet to Braxton Bragg, November 5, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3:636-37.

than Lee in Virginia. In fact, Bragg wanted to rid himself of the insubordinate general, which explains one reason why Bragg gave Longstreet more authority on this campaign than Longstreet received previously. More control led to a greater feeling of responsibility. If Longstreet failed, the blame fell on him alone. This in part answers why Longstreet exhibited the same sense of defeatism Johnston faced in Mississippi from May to July 1863. Probably knowing that his desire to lead the Army of Tennessee after 1863 remained connected to military success, Longstreet needed battlefield victories. Anything short of victory and Longstreet found himself back in Virginia under the command of Robert E. Lee. Moreover, from the beginning of the campaign, Longstreet found fault with the majority of the preparations, requirements, and eventual battle site, escalating Longstreet's sense of defeatism.

After rejecting Bragg's plan to maintain an open communications line, Longstreet began to plead for more men. Bragg's estimate placed Burnside's numbers at more than 15,000 men, which caused Longstreet to stress the importance of Stevenson's division to the success at Knoxville. "There are many reasons for anticipating great results from the expedition against Gen. Burnside's Army with a proper force," Longstreet wrote Bragg November 11. "But with the force that I now have I think that it would be unreasonable to expect much. In fact it will in all probability be another fine opportunity lost." Longstreet's complaint that victory cannot be achieved without sufficient manpower, allowed a campaign with much promise to be unsuccessful.³¹³ With no extra forces reaching Longstreet's army he settled for a siege of the federal position. In mentioning this to Bragg, Longstreet hoped to finally persuade Bragg to send more troops for the purpose of defeating Burnside and then return to Chattanooga and

³¹³ James Longstreet to Braxton Bragg, November 11, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3:680-81.

defeat Grant.³¹⁴ But before Bragg had an occasion to send more troops, reports came streaming in that the Confederate army had been defeated and Grant prepared to march on the First Corps.

Settling on a point to attack along the Federal line, Fort Sanders, General Lafayette McLaws reported Bragg's defeat at Chattanooga. However, the reports did not convey a complete narrative. No report offered a definite answer on the condition of the Army of Tennessee. This caused Longstreet to hesitate and ignore McLaws's suggestion to wait for further news. McLaws argued that if Grant and Burnside defeated Bragg and Longstreet, a return to Virginia might prove difficult. If Longstreet succeeded at Knoxville, but Grant defeated Bragg at Chattanooga, then the victory at Knoxville would prove meaningless. Grant, sooner or later, would catch Longstreet in between two armies. In reply to McLaws's letter, Longstreet did not believe a major engagement happened at Chattanooga, but the report that Bragg had retreated towards Tunnel Hill only made the attack on Knoxville more important. "It is a great mistake to suppose that there is any safety for us in going to Virginia if General Bragg has been defeated, for we leave him at the mercy of his visitors," concluded Longstreet. Therefore, Longstreet decided for an attack on Fort Sanders.³¹⁵

Fort Sanders ended in disaster. Longstreet, wary of making a frontal attack against Burnside, made a half-hearted effort, which led to Confederate defeat. Forced to march around Knoxville, the First Corps made the slow trip back to Virginia after spending the fall and winter in Tennessee. For the remainder of the war, the First Corps remained in Lee's army, and surrendered at Appomattox in April 1865. After the defeat at Chattanooga, Bragg's opponents reared their heads once more. Dissent in and out of the army finally forced Davis to replace Bragg as commander of the Army of Tennessee in December 1863, but Davis remained

³¹⁴ James Longstreet to Braxton Bragg, November 20, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3: 721.

³¹⁵ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs from the Civil War in America*, 504-05.

committed to the military expertise Bragg offered. In 1864, Bragg returned in Richmond as Davis's military advisor.³¹⁶ For the decision of keeping Bragg in command of the army, soldiers blasted Davis. Sam Watkins described the feeling of soldiers on retreat from Chattanooga. Insulting Davis for sending Longstreet to Knoxville in the face of Grant's military, Watkins attested that "the whole army knew that the enemy was concentrating at Chattanooga," how could Davis and the military generals not know?³¹⁷

Thomas Connelly noted that the Bragg and Longstreet quarrel prevented Bragg from giving military attention to his army, and instead focused on the attacks coming from the army and the general officers. Connelly also attributed the infighting to affecting the military strategy, which prevented military success in the West.³¹⁸ Adding to Connelly's conclusions, the appearance of Longstreet in the West showed the general's desire for an independent command, an opportunity to get out from beneath Lee's shadow and gain military glory for himself. Showing little regard with whose career he needed to end or how he got command of the Army of Tennessee, Longstreet jeopardized the success of the West by undermining Bragg and deepening the anti-Bragg feeling in the army and Richmond. When Longstreet received his opportunity to lead an independent campaign to defeat the federals at Knoxville, the same traits he displayed around Suffolk and at Gettysburg prevented him from making the most of his opportunity. Instead, he diminished his success by showing a sense of defeatism that had plagued the western army since the start of 1863. As a result, the Confederacy lost the West. And except

³¹⁶ James Longstreet to Braxton Bragg, December 6, 1863. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3: 719. This answers part of the question why Longstreet did not choose to rejoin Bragg after Knoxville.

³¹⁷ Sam R. Watkins, "*Co. Aytch: Maury Grays First Tennessee Regiment or A Side Show of the Big Show*," (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1990), 128.

³¹⁸ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 253-54.

for an ill-fated attack on Nashville in 1864, the Union confined the Confederacy to Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia for the remainder of the war.

Conclusion

The two disasters at Chattanooga and Knoxville at the end of 1863 proved the probability of Confederate defeat. Even though the Civil War raged on until the mid-way point of 1865, the Confederate armies were no longer a viable danger to Union success. Joseph Johnston was confined to retrograde movements in Georgia as Union General William T. Sherman marched to Atlanta and eventually Savannah by December 1864. The Army of Tennessee lost momentum as a result of Johnston's actions, but one more thrust into Tennessee sparked a small flame of hope for the Confederate army. After a terrible defeat at Franklin, the Army of Tennessee ceased to exist as the same fighting force that marched into battle in 1862 and 1863. After November, the Civil War was effectively reduced to the Virginia Theater under the leadership of Robert E. Lee. Popular history likes to remind the readers that the war ended with the surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox April 9, 1865. Scholars, however, have found out that the war had not yet ended. Violence and political atrocities continued into the Reconstruction Era, which brought mistrust and misguidance to both North and South.

This analysis touched on the social tensions caused by military policies. My research relied heavily on published written records, the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, and digitized newspapers available through the Library of Congress and other online databases. More voice lie in the stacks of archives covered with decades of dust. Also, my study has little to no black and female voices. Blacks and females experienced the Civil War Era differently than white males, just as poor southerners viewed the war differently than white slaveowners. Their relegation from this study was reluctant, but a result of the access to available resources. In the future, I intend to not only add to the research within these pages, but also add the views of

women and blacks. How did women view the racial enslavement? How did class conflict create a division between poor and elite women? How did free blacks in the South feel about the use of black soldiers in the North compared to laborers in the South? Last, Northern voices cannot be forgotten. This study focused on the southern sphere of influence, specifically a view from the top half of social hierarchy. The Civil War did not isolate itself to the experiences of the South, and in order to gain a better knowledge of the past, all stories must be told to better represent the past.

I argued that social changes affected military strategy, and as a result, military strategy affected the way citizens thought about the war. Further, military generals' relationships and aspirations hampered military success, which produced negative emotions within southern society. By emphasizing military awareness, class division, military favoritism, and the political friendships and personal aspirations of key Confederate generals; I wanted to convey Confederate military strategy and how changeable military campaigns became. Viewing campaigns through a non-military perspective but a social perspective, alerted the reader to the sensitivity of military policies. Political and military leaders, as well as newspaper correspondents, soldiers, and the home front all affected the Confederate military strategy and the ultimate outcome of the Civil War. Also, by viewing the causes and outcomes of military decisions through a social lens, readers will realize that the conflict affected more than just those who served in Confederate or Union armies. Military battles may be the most prominent visual reminder of the war but the Civil War altered the social landscape of American history. Non-military factors, therefore, are just as important, if not more so, in understanding Civil War campaigns and strategy.

In fact, by observing military awareness historians realize that war does not solve a country's inner conflicts. Today, Americans struggle with segregation under a new name. Since the 1990s, and more prominently, since 2001, Americans view Muslims with a sense of disdain and difference. As history has shown, social conflict will lead to military wars that do little to solve the *difference* between racial insecurities. This is why social and cultural histories are important areas of study for the modern historian. Military histories have a sense of romanticism and glory because the horror is covered with the emotions of honor and courage, but social and cultural histories force the readers to look deep within themselves and ask, "have we have really progressed as a civilization and a society?"

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