“NO SACRIFICE IS TOO GREAT, SAVE THAT OF HONOR”: HONOR, DEATH, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COMBAT TRAUMA IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

By

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B. S. Central Missouri State University, 1981
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Submitted to the Department of History and the Faculty
of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Committee Members: _____
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Abstract

Examination of honor culture and attitudes toward death and dying found in letters, diaries, and newspapers – from the colonial and revolutionary period through the Civil War era – strongly suggests that Civil War soldiers did not suffer from psychological combat trauma. Psychological combat trauma is as much a part of today's war as uniforms and ammunition, but this was not the reality for Civil War Americans. The truth is that all wars are terrible for those who fight them, and physical stresses of battle have been part of warfare in every age. Twentieth-century ideas of the psychological effects of war differ vastly from those of the nineteenth century. Civil War battle offered potential for psychiatric trauma. Civil War soldiers, however, lived in a time of different expectations and beliefs about honor and death and dying. Expectations for psychiatric trauma for these soldiers did not exist. This dissertation uses research in honor culture, masculinity studies, and attitudes toward death and dying to illustrate the idea that nineteenth-century cultural ideals of honor and death reduced or prevented psychological consequences of combat in Civil War soldiers.

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gave up time with me so I could study and travel for research. Most importantly, they believed I could do this. This project belongs to all of us. Thank you.

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Introduction:

A Tale of Two Cops

"The theme of honor is a giant in the mighty band of concepts commonly invoked to justify or control human behaviour. It is a giant that can smother us if we are not careful in our study of it. It has entered into most amazingly wide employment."[1]

Geoffrey Best

Three men were experiencing acute stress reaction. Two veteran police officers faced an armed criminal they had arrested numerous times before. On each occasion during the confrontation, the gunman pointed his weapon at Lenny H., and the officers had their weapons drawn. With this fourth threat, Lenny's partner, Gary T., pulled the trigger and killed the gunman. Though their department cleared the officers of any wrongdoing, legal battles with the dead man's family ensued for nearly two years. Lenny's partner committed suicide shortly after the incident. Once the legal battle ended, Lenny thought he could finally move on with his life and career. That was when the spiders appeared in his bed every night. He could not sleep. He did not believe his wife when she assured him the spiders did not exist. He underwent psychiatric therapy and counseling for over a year before he developed coping mechanisms to get him through his nightmares. Today, he seems fully recovered, but when he talks about the incident all those years ago, he always points

[1]Geoffrey Best. *Honour Among Men and Nations: Transformations of an Idea*. The 1981 Joanne Goodman Lectures. Toronto, Buffalo, London: The University of Toronto Press, 1982, 6-7.

over his left shoulder when he mentions Gary. That's where Gary was standing at the time of the shooting.

Another officer, Jeff C., a twelve-year homicide veteran, shot and killed a criminal in the line of duty. His reaction was much different from those of Lenny and Gary. He did not react. He proceeded with life and career as usual. Today, he shrugs his shoulders and says he has had no adverse after-affects from the incident – no big deal. Lenny and Jeff do not know one another. I shared each one's story with the other. Lenny thinks Jeff is doing a great job of putting up a brave front but thinks that Jeff is probably engaging in some compensatory behavior; if not, he will falter or even break some day. Jeff disagrees. He declares he is fine, and he has functioned normally in every way during the years since the incident.

Lenny and Jeff are both highly-trained, experienced, veteran police officers who have conducted themselves well under fire many times. Yet their reactions to these incidents are nearly opposite. One of the differences in their experiences is that Lenny lost a brother officer to suicide as a result of the incident; Jeff did not. They each reacted acceptably and appropriately after the incident. The point of the illustration for our purposes is the debate surrounding Jeff's behavior since the incident. Lenny is not the only one who expects Jeff to break or have negative psychological reactions to the experience. The possibility exists that Jeff will never experience negative psychological consequences as a result of the shooting incident. Those around him are reluctant to accept that possibility. Americans of the mid-

nineteenth-century and earlier would have expected Jeff to continue to function normally, as he has, with no ill effects from the experience. Most Americans in the twentieth or early twenty-first centuries find it difficult to imagine the possibility. This disparity between American attitudes then and now about psychological breakdown as a result of acute stress, manifested as the threat or reality of deadly force over the course of the two eras, represents the essence of the argument of this study.[2]

This work began with the goal of documenting psychological combat trauma in the American Civil War. Not long into the project, that goal changed. In fact, the new goal embodied a complete reversal of the original hypothesis. No longer was I attempting to describe and analyze the universality of psychological battle trauma in the Civil War soldiers; now I was trying to figure out why they did not seem to suffer from this presumably universal phenomenon. Evidence of psychological combat trauma in the Civil War is elusive at best. Eric Dean's *Shook Over Hell* argued for its existence and provided possible documentation, but his argument falls short, and the evidence is not compelling. Dean studied 291 Civil War veterans committed to the Indiana Hospital for the Insane, arguing that most of them suffered from "what today would be diagnosed as PTSD" as a result of combat. Dean's numbers are far too small, the case diagnosis descriptions are too vague, and no way exists to prove that those asylum inmates would not have ended up there even had they not endured Civil

[2] Personal interviews in possession of the writer.

War battle. John Talbott argued that, elusive as evidence is, psychological combat trauma certainly existed among Civil War soldiers, proof of which lies in the fact that soldiers deserted, though unfortunately, the deserters were executed instead of provided with psychiatric treatment. Civil War historians seem to accept the probability that the condition existed, but are they simply accepting its existence based on its presence in twentieth-century wars? Not one convincing argument with accompanying proof is available. As thoroughly as the Civil War has been scrutinized, this lack of proof suggests that perhaps an argument can be made that the condition did not, in fact, exist. The concept is a radical one for anyone living today to consider. Over the years, when I shared this hypothesis with others, they gave me that "good luck" look, the one that suggested I was pursuing a crazy idea. I forged ahead anyway. That the lack of evidence of psychoneurosis in the Civil War has generally been explained by presuming that the condition probably existed but no one had discovered a way to document it I found difficult to swallow. Medical personnel left no record of anything resembling the condition, though they did note evidence of what was then called irritable heart. Evidence supports my argument that irritable heart was not psychoneurosis. In addition, no one examined Civil War soldiers for preexisting psychological issues as soldiers are examined today or were examined before, during, and after, say, World War II.

That documentation of the condition for the Civil War did not exist could partly be explained away by the fact that psychiatry did not exist at the time of the Civil War.

Still, that explanation was unsatisfactory to me. People today, me included, expect adverse psychological reactions when soldiers experience battle. The possibility of soldiers enduring battle relatively unscathed psychologically is not within our realm of thinking. Even if official medical terms and diagnoses did not exist for Civil War soldiers, at the very least, doctors and nurses would mention odd behaviors or symptoms which could suggest psychoneurosis. Civil War medical personnel made no mention of any such behaviors or symptoms outside of irritable heart and nostalgia, which are clearly terms indicating physical symptoms in reference to irritable heart and homesickness in reference to nostalgia. I became more and more convinced that, for some reason or reasons, Civil War soldiers did not suffer from the malady. If that was, in fact, true, the question became: why soldiers of that era did not experience psychological combat trauma.[3]

At first, possible answers to that question seemed as elusive as evidence of the malady's existence. Perseverance was required. Numerous likely explanations emerged to the question. Although they seemed surprising at first, they soon became logical and obvious. The reason I was having difficulty in accepting what I found was my own attitudes toward the very issues at hand. I was a product of Vietnam-era thinking. So many Vietnam veterans came home with mental and emotional problems that, in 1980, what was once called the Vietnam Disease became officially documented and recognized in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic*

[3] Eric Dean, Jr. *Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War*. Harvard University Press, 1997. John Talbott. "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War." *History Today*. London. March 1996. Vol. 46, Iss. 3, pp. 41ff.

and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Though actual numbers as well as the magnitude of the phenomenon are highly disputed, of the fifteen percent of American soldiers in Vietnam who were combat soldiers, estimates of PTSD sufferers went as high as sixty percent. PTSD was a major problem for not only the veterans but for the entire country. PTSD has shaped our thinking about war and battle.

This trend of accepting and even expecting psychological trauma as a result of stress continued after its initial identification. Causes expanded to include much more than combat conditions. Victims expanded to include civilians who had experienced trauma as mild as hearing a disturbing news story or spilling hot coffee on themselves. PTSD exploded into American culture until there emerged, according to observers such as Ben Shephard, a "culture of traumatology." Many Americans, experts and polls affirm, are receiving regular psychotherapy, and many others believe they need it. Schools and juvenile courts require mandatory psychological screening and therapy for what used to be considered common childhood activities. Crisis counselors are on hand at the scenes of accidents and other calamities. We expect our soldiers to be afflicted with PTSD. In its most extreme version, this climate of traumatology suggests everyone is in need of therapy all the time.

This and other common contemporary attitudes hinder our understanding of the attitudes and values of nineteenth-century Americans. To pursue the chief hypothesis, I needed to gain insofar as possible a clear understanding of nineteenth-

century American attitudes by stepping outside twentieth-century perspective. The aim is to demonstrate that Civil War soldiers did not suffer from psychological combat trauma for many reasons. Four will be dealt with in this study. First, Americans until the era of World War I held different attitudes toward warfare than do most Americans today. Civil War Americans did not envision a world with no war, did not strive for world peace. Recently, while the world's eyes were on the 2008 Olympics, demonstrations for world peace were happening in China. At the same time, war erupted to the East between Russia and one of its former satellite states. Second, nineteenth-century Americans found it almost impossible to accept psychological breakdown; in fact, it was taboo, shunned, and nearly always hidden. Radically different, too, were their ideas concerning emotional or psychological breakdown or illness. Those members of a family or community who were deemed mentally or emotionally unstable were hidden away from public view. Men simply were not allowed to break down or be weak emotionally or psychologically. Women were treated differently. Common thought of the day saw women, due to their physical make-up, as emotional and hysterical and naturally prone to breakdown.

Third, nineteenth-century Americans held vastly different views toward death and dying than do modern Americans. Americans then did not fear death in the same ways and to the same extent as Americans now. To those who lived lives haunted by disease without antibiotics, other things were worse than death. The same does not appear to be true now. As life expectancy increased and quality of life improved in

the twentieth century, American attitudes toward death and dying underwent drastic changes.

Lastly, a compelling difference between Americans of today and those of earlier times is the role of honor. Honor was the most important reason Civil War soldiers did not suffer from psychological breakdown. Understanding nineteenth-century American attitudes in these four areas is critical for understanding their views toward life, death, war, and battle. Understanding these attitudes is also critical for accepting the idea that Civil War soldiers did not suffer long-term affects of psychological battle trauma, and, indeed, might not have experienced the condition at all.

Attitudes toward warfare have changed radically from the nineteenth century to the twentieth. Sir Michael Howard calls this metamorphosis *The Invention of Peace*. His point is that for most of the history of man, war has been a large part of life. Only with the enlightenment thinking of the French philosophes did the idea of peace as a normal human condition emerge. Many historians agree with Howard that war is the normal condition of man and that the idea of peace is a recent and possibly naïve construct. In 1968, American historians Will and Ariel Durant calculated that there had been only 268 years free of war in the previous 3,421. Civil War era Americans did not envision a world without war. Americans had spent twenty-six of the one hundred and twenty-three years between 1689 and 1812 at war; every generation had faced war or the threat of war. Younger men of the Civil War era had grown up at their fathers' and grandfathers' knees, listening to stories of the American Revolution

and other wars, and were eager to prove themselves in a war of their own. Their fathers and grandfathers were convinced that battle had been their defining moment, that men needed the test of battle, and that each generation needed war to mold them, refine them, into men who could lead communities and their country. Not only did young men in the antebellum era desire to prove their manhood, they felt the need for a war of their own, like their fathers and grandfathers.[4] Civil War Americans did not dread war in the same ways as later Americans. By the interwar years of the twentieth century, American dread of war was mounting. By Vietnam, that dread was full-blown in some circles.

Arguably, the last time that American men enthusiastically enlisted for war was just before the entry of the United States into World War I. During that conflict, however, a strange condition emerged. Combat soldiers became disoriented and unable to perform simple duties, but they had not suffered visible wounds. Medical personnel initially sought a physical explanation for the condition and called it shell shock, the result of invisible but very real injury from a nearby shell explosion. Large numbers of soldiers from all the belligerents experienced this condition. By the end of the war, some medical personnel had identified psychological factors as the underlying cause and proclaimed that soldiers were suffering from a psychoneurotic condition, the result of modern or prolonged combat and the new weapons soldiers faced on the modern battlefield. The identification of what was commonly termed

[4] Will and Ariel Durant. *The Lessons of History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968, 81.

shell shock in World War I prompted a psychiatric screening program for World War II inductees, to screen out those susceptible to psychiatric breakdown.

By the time war clouds were once again looming in the late 1930s, Britain still had large numbers of World War I soldiers under government care as victims of shell shock. Governments did not want to risk the loss in treasure and manpower that shell shock could possibly produce in another war. Thus, those being inducted for military service were psychologically screened to eliminate those prone to the condition. Screening did not go as planned and ultimately did not work well, but around a million American men were denied enlistment into World War II as a result of these evaluations. The goal of the program was to identify neurotic, psychotic, or homosexual inductees, with the idea that this would reduce or eliminate battlefield breakdown. The experts did not assert with any confidence that they could predict who would be prone to breakdown. The problem of psychological breakdown in battle, however, did not disappear. More than half a million American soldiers were evacuated from World War II battlefields with the diagnoses of psychoneurosis, battle fatigue, combat fatigue, or one of several other labels. Screening had failed. The failure of the program became evident when psychiatric breakdown became the primary reason for soldier evacuation from World War II battlefields.[5] The studies done late in World War II and after suggest that the critical factor was duration in combat and that anyone would suffer psychoneurotic problems if in combat

[5] Roger Spiller. "The Psychological Battlefield." Article in possession of this writer.

conditions for an extended period. Psychological breakdown as a result of battle became one of the military's – and the country's - biggest problems. This problem persisted through Korea, Vietnam, when it was officially recognized as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and through the present war in Iraq, where returning Americans cannot even call family members until they undergo three to five days of mandatory psychological evaluation to determine if they suffer from PTSD, or, more probably, from what level of PTSD they suffer. In 2003, the United States Department of the Army published *The U.S. Army Combat Stress Control Handbook*, in response to the widespread need to understand PTSD.[6]

Both civilian and military Civil War era Americans would have viewed these ideas about psychological breakdown as foreign and possibly absurd. Civil War doctors, nurses, commanders, families, and soldiers frowned upon the slightest hint of emotional weakness or psychological breakdown. Many medical accounts from the Civil War reflect vigilance in detecting any emotional or psychological weakness and continual effort to discourage and prevent such behaviors, even at the most trying of times. Military commanders practiced zero tolerance for psychological weakness of any kind, especially cowardice demonstrated through desertion. Execution for desertion was swift and public. Soldiers' families encouraged bravery and courage at all times, taking pride in those who performed properly and expressing shame and humiliation for those who did not. Perhaps the most adamant group expecting

[6] Casey Henry, American combat medic and Iraq War veteran, interview, 2006.

courage under fire was the soldiers themselves. Though worried about their performance in their first encounter with battle, they welcomed and longed for the chance to prove themselves. Many letters and diaries from the first days and months in camp describe the camp conditions, but they also express their eagerness for battle and the chance to prove themselves as worthy. After their first battle, their enthusiasm for battle might lessen, but they were still determined to conduct themselves properly in their next battles and to continue fighting until the enemy was defeated. Soldiers whose behavior did not meet the standards of the day experienced loss of respect, loss of reputation, loss of self-respect, and poor treatment from their fellow soldiers. Those who committed the ultimate inappropriate behavior through desertion were shunned, with fellow soldiers volunteering to serve in firing squads. All nineteenth-century Americans of the Civil War era made it clear that death was preferable to being thought of as a coward. Death was not the worst fate for these Americans.

Nineteenth-century American attitudes toward death and dying were vastly different from our attitudes toward death and dying today. In chapter four, I use Philippe Aries's conceptual model of dying and death to illustrate the differences. Aries's model holds two kinds of death: tame death and wild death. Until about the twentieth century, Americans practiced tame death. A tame death was a good death. Death was inevitable, expected, accepted, not to be feared, and even desirable. Death was a public ritual affair; dying alone was not acceptable. Death took place at home,

surrounded by family and friends – and sometimes strangers off the street who were happening by. The dying person was to be in control of the deathbed ritual and ceremony. The dying knew death was close; if not, people close by made sure the dying understood what was happening, understood that death was near. Stonewall Jackson was wounded away from home during the May 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville. His wife and daughter traveled to be at his bedside when he died. He was not aware that his death was near, so the doctor and his wife told him several times until they were sure he understood he was soon to die. When he understood, he followed the customs of his time concerning the deathbed ritual ceremony and his own expected behavior. The ceremony had a prescribed agenda. The dying needed to be in bed, or at least lying down face up, surrounded by as many loved ones, friends, and even strangers as possible. The dying addressed friends and loved-ones, distributed wealth and property, announced the nearness of death, and waited for death calmly and serenely. This last act of calmness and serenity was the most important, since by this time people believed that a good death was the single determinant of the soul's final destination. This last act was the critical and essential sign of a good death. A good death was more important than a good life. The most vile and evil could still assure their soul's entrance into heaven through a good death, since that moment determined the soul's destination. A perfect illustration of the importance of a good death to the soul's eternity is found in *Hamlet*. Hamlet knows that he must kill Claudius to avenge his father's murder. His hesitation throughout

the play comes not from his meekness or doubt in performing the necessary task. He waits for the perfect moment, the moment that will ensure Claudius's soul eternal damnation. If he allows Claudius a good death, his soul will go to heaven instead of hell, a condition unacceptable to Hamlet. Hamlet knows that the soul of a person as vile and evil as Claudius can go to heaven through a good death. Hamlet will not allow it. A good death was important to the dying, but a good death was also important to those surrounding the deathbed. Witnessing a good death was important to nineteenth-century Americans. They could be assured of the destination of their loved-one's soul. They could also be encouraged about death itself by witnessing serenity and calmness in its presence. On the Civil War battlefield, soldiers would surround a fellow dying soldier and witness the final moments of dying, hoping for a good death. These witnesses would report to the dead soldier's family – even if they did not know the soldier personally – that their loved one had died a good death.

This tame death is foreign to modern Americans, who view and practice wild death. Wild death is not welcome or good. Death is not acceptable and is certainly not desirable. Death is no longer public; death is private; people die alone and lonely. Death takes place in sterile hospitals, with doctors and nurses in attendance instead of family and friends. The dying person possibly does not realize he is dying. He was probably initially sent to hospital to recover from illness; instead, he will die. During his final days and moments, he is surrounded by medical personnel who are strangers to him. He drifts in and out of consciousness in a drug-induced stupor. If he does not

know he is dying, all the better for those around him. He will not be told. If he does know, he is to keep it a secret to avoid making those around him uncomfortable. He is expected to lie quietly and peacefully, rather in the same way as with tame death. The difference here is that he is part of a plot to deny the presence of death. Family is not present, since they are too busy to attend the deathbed. Family can even hire strangers to sit with their dying loved one in their stead. Even if the dying person knows he is dying or is aware enough to conduct the ritual deathbed ceremony, the ceremony is forbidden. In addition, the dying is usually so sedated near the time of death now that not only does he probably not know he is dying, but he could not conduct the ritual ceremony even were it not taboo. In this way, he simply expires. The body is moved to a holding area, the family is called, and the death professionals are notified of need of their services.

Corpse disposal practices differ from tame death to wild death. Tame death required that the family take care of the body – washing, dressing, transporting, and burying. Since death took place in the home, the family prepared the body for viewing and burial. Friends arrived at the home to view the body. Family and friends transported the body to the place of burial and buried the body. Because embalming was not yet a common practice, preparation and burial followed a timetable of three to four days following death. The family underwent a time of mourning during this time and for a prescribed time after. Beginning in the last decades of the nineteenth century, death professionals started taking care of every task for the family, relieving

them of nearly all responsibilities surrounding the death of a loved one. Some of these new death professionals – doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel - are first encountered in the hospital. The existence of hospitals has transformed the customs and rituals of dying. People go to hospitals to be treated for illness, where they receive medications and treatments, recover, and return home. Those who do not recover die there. Death now takes place at the hospital instead of at home. The doctors and nurses at the hospital replace the family in many of the customs and rituals of the dying process. Instead of the family caring for the dying in traditional ways, medical personnel manage the dying process in ways that make dying more comfortable for them and for the family, but in the process, traditional aspects of dying are denied. The dying person is excluded from the process. Modern Americans, including medical personnel, do not want to be in the presence of death, so death is not welcome or accepted as in earlier times. Since death takes place at the hospital, the body requires transport to a place of preparation for viewing and burial. The next phase of death professionals, the funeral director, retrieves the body and transports it directly to a funeral parlor. Taking it straight to the funeral parlor is simply more convenient than taking it to the deceased's family home, and it relieves the family of the tasks of bringing the body home and preparing it for viewing and burial. At the funeral parlor, the director embalms the body, an increasingly common practice in the early decades of the twentieth century, to appear pleasant and life-like. Family and friends arrive to view the deceased. The funeral director and his

assistants arrange transportation and burial and all things in between. The family only needs to choose the casket, show up at the viewing and burial ceremonies, and pay the bills. Moreover, the ceremonies are scheduled so that family and friends will not have to miss work to attend. The death professionals also make it possible for the family to shorten mourning time and get on with life. These practices that modern Americans take for granted would shock and dismay Americans of the mid-nineteenth-century and earlier.

Not only have modern Americans removed themselves from death and dying, they are trying to defy and avoid death, through procedures such as cryogenics. Truly, death to today's Americans is wild. These opposite attitudes toward death, dying, and corpse disposal bear greatly on attitudes toward war and battle. Avoidance of death was not the ultimate goal of Civil War Americans.

Attitudes toward warfare, psychological breakdown, and death and dying are all important contributors to this study. The single most important aspect of this study, however, is the difference in attitudes concerning honor. Women and men had radically different roles in this fourth and most influential reason that Civil War soldiers did not suffer from psychological breakdown as a result of battle. Belief in and adherence to the requirements of an honor code as an important part of the country's honor culture may also be the most difficult of the four reasons for modern Americans to understand. Unlike previous eras, honor might seem invisible or absent today. In fact, current American society contains anti-honor attitudes and practices.

The truth of the matter is that honor has traditionally been the centerpiece of American culture and only lost its significance beginning in the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth. James Bowman declares honor dead, the twentieth-century victim of psychotherapy, feminism, and modern warfare. Respected Southern historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown and historian Donald Kagan do not completely agree with Bowman's declaration, but they do see honor in sharp decline and holding a place of far less significance than in previous times. Bowman doubtfully but hopefully calls for a return to honor. Wyatt-Brown and Kagan see America's abandonment of honor as a serious threat to America's safety and standing in the global community.[7]

Americans of the mid-nineteenth century and earlier did not doubt the importance of honor in all aspects of life and for all members of society. Gordon S. Wood and Joanne B. Freeman both trace honor's importance from as early as colonial times. Freeman argues that "honor was a way of life" for Americans of the early Republic.[8] The roots of America's honor are ancient. Some of the oldest honor cultures were more tribally-oriented. Their honor codes were more primitive in nature. In these cultures, men possessed honor, not women. Honor, however, was not a permanent possession. Honor had to be reinforced and maintained. A man's and a family's

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[7] James Bowman. *Honor: A History*. New York: Encounter Books, 2006. Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Donald Kagan. *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*. New York: Anchor Books – A Division of Random House, 1996.

[8] Gordon S. Wood. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1991. Joanne B. Freeman. *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

honor were constantly at risk and at stake. If a man or a family lost honor, they essentially lost everything. The basic ingredients of these honor cultures required men to display courage and bravery at all times and to protect the women in their charge. The women had to remain chaste and were expected to fully support their men in the pursuit and maintenance of honor. A critical aspect of these honor cultures and honor codes was performance and victory in battle. These basic ingredients of honor codes and honor cultures did not change much over time. The honor group changed over time from tribal and family loyalties to loyalty to a lord or a king or a nation. Men remained the possessors of honor and needed to vigilantly earn and protect honor. Women were to be protected. Women's roles did not change over time. The role of women in honor cultures consistently remained in upholding chastity and providing moral support for the men.

American honor culture included these traditional characteristics. From the beginning, honor was a man's and a family's most important possession. Sectional differences between the North and the South in the antebellum years may suggest that honor codes exhibited dramatic differences as well. Northerners tended to express concern for manhood more often than Southerners in the decades before the Civil War, but both sections still adhered to the same honor culture in the years leading up to the Civil War, and masculinity is always one of the most important characteristics of all honor cultures. Northerners referred to manhood more often than Southerners, but both sides held masculinity as the centerpiece of their honor culture. The

particular threats to honor might have differed for each section, but the fact remains that all the threats were attacks on the manhood and honor for men of both sides.

The surest way to assert manhood and establish, gain, or maintain honor has always been through battle. Early and Medieval honor codes held that only victory in battle gained honor for a warrior. Spartan women told their men to come back with their shield or on it. Warriors who lost in battle and survived were shamed and humiliated. This changed at about the time of the Renaissance, when it became possible for warriors to lose a battle and retain their honor even if they survived in defeat, if they fought bravely and courageously. The enduring facet of these ideas remained that men could gain honor through a single behavior – battle. Americans of both North and South held to these views. If they could not find a battle, they could still defend their honor through violence, in the form of the duel or knife fighting, eye gouging, fist fighting. The Civil War, however, provided the perfect opportunity for men of both sides at a critical time when honor and manhood were under siege. Motives for going to war varied, but the bottom line and certainly a major motivator for most or all men was the chance to fight as men. According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "for many, the CW was reduced to a simple test of manhood."[9]

Men and women rejoiced at the beginning of the war. Enthusiasm ran high. People in both North and South danced in the streets, held parades, and celebrated the beginning of a war. Men enlisted in numbers higher than their governments called

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[9] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Honor and Violence in the Old South.* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 28.

for or could handle. Women busied themselves preparing supplies their men would need to take with them as they departed. Communities were proud of their men. The honor group quickly shunned and humiliated those men not planning to go or those hesitating, calling them women and giving them aprons. The honor group expected certain behaviors of their men. War required men to go to battle, not stay at home. Bravery, stoicism, and courage were the behaviors of the time. Psychological weakness or emotional complications were not allowed at any time, at the beginning of the war, during the war, or after.

These pages do not provide inarguable proof of the absence of psychological combat trauma in soldiers of the American Civil War. Neither do they attempt such. Rather, they offer an alternative to simple acceptance of the condition's existence. We cannot presume that the condition existed in the Civil War based simply on its existence in other wars. Evidence remains inconclusive and elusive. We cannot presume that the evidence exists and has just not been collected and argued. In light of the lack of compelling and convincing evidence, perhaps other ways of thinking about psychological combat trauma in the Civil War are in order. That is the goal of this work: to offer possibilities. The four possibilities in these pages explore the cultural thinking and traditions of the Civil War era. Individually, they offer insights into the minds of nineteenth-century Americans. Together, they form a compelling possibility that psychological combat trauma was not possible in the American Civil War. In addition, other possibilities exist that these pages will not address,

possibilities such as the Enlightenment, Romanticism, warrior codes, and chivalry. Those ideas must await future exploration but may only strengthen the argument that psychological combat trauma did not exist in the American Civil War.

Chapter 1:

War - The Father of All Things

"Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier."

Samuel Johnson[10]

The Spartan warriors at Thermopylae were members of an elite group. All Spartan men were expected to serve their community as warriors; all had undergone years of preparation for the honor of serving in combat. By enduring intense physical training and conditioning, they earned the privilege of a place in the phalanx on the day of battle. Only accidental death would prevent their participation in the supreme ritual for which they had directed every hour of their lives. Spartan women told their men to come home with their shield or on it. In other words: fight bravely or die trying. Spartan commanders and warriors did not enter war lightly; they did not undertake suicide missions. However, defeat and surrender were not options. Missing the battle was also not an option.

Two Spartans did indeed miss the fighting at Thermopylae. The lives of these two men were destroyed as a result of this unfortunate event in a soldier's life. According to the Greek chronicler, Herodotus, Pantite had been away in Thessaly on a

[10]James Boswell. *The Life Of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (Everyman's Library (Knopf), New York).

diplomatic mission at the time of the final encounter at Thermopylae. He later hanged himself because he was dishonored as a result of missing the battle; the reason for his failure to take part did not matter. Herodotus used the Greek imperfect tense, meaning that the dishonor Pantite suffered was a continuous state, which he simply could not continue to endure, until he ended his agony by another kind of suicide than that which he had originally been detailed by order of the state. Paul Cartledge has written: "Sparta was an extreme case of an 'honor and shame culture, so it was not only the public disgrace heaped upon him but the shame he felt inwardly that prompted him to take his own life."[11] Spartan culture placed the highest consideration upon service in battle. Though Pantite missed the battle as a result of orders, both he and members of his community saw disgrace and dishonor in his absence. Pantite's feeling of disgrace was more than he could endure, but in addition to the personal dishonor, his community shunned and ostracized him with oneidos – public disgrace. Aristodamus, the other Spartan warrior to miss that day's fighting, was blind at the time of the battle, having suffered an eye inflammation. A fellow Spartan warrior, Eurytus, was also temporarily blind at the time of the battle. Eurytus refused to accept missing the fight. He had his servant carry him to his place on the battlefield to be included in the battle. Eurytus went to battle blind – and died. Aristodamus chose to sit out the battle, using his blindness as a reason. This decision was one Aristodamus greatly regretted. Herodotus uses the word "atimie" to describe

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[11] Paul Cartledge. *Thermopylae: The Battle that Changed the World*. Woodstock and New York: The
Overlook Press, 2006, pp 156

the form of Aristodamus's dishonor. No Spartan would give him light to make a fire, without which, he was not allowed or able to make due sacrifice to the gods. His fellows 'sent him to Coventry' – deprived him of talk, ostracized him. He was also publicly labeled tresas (the Trembler) – adjudged officially to have acted the coward – for no excuse, even blindness, was accepted. Eurytus died as a result of his decision, but he had died in battle; he had died an honorable death. Aristodamus had chosen dishonorably that day. He attempted to redeem himself at Plataea in 479, but his actions continued to smack of dishonorable behavior. He was allowed "promachoi" - a front-line fighting position, though he was still ostracized. During the battle, Aristodamus disobediently broke ranks and committed the act he should have earlier chosen – dying in battle. While he fought bravely, his breaking of rank was dishonorable because his absence in the battle line put his fellow soldiers at grave physical risk. Cartledge noted:

> The Spartans conceded that Aristodamus had 'displayed great deeds' – that is, fought magnificently; presumably he had taken out several Persians before he himself succumbed. But he had done so for the wrong reason, with the wrong motivation, at the wrong time and in the wrong way. He had fought in this grandstanding manner solely to get himself killed in order to expiate his sorry state of disgrace. Instead of displaying resolute self-discipline, he had acted in a mindless frenzy of madness; and to cap it all, he had left his rank and broken martial discipline – his most heinous crime in Spartan eyes. Put differently, Aristodamus had performed the wrong sort of suicide.[12]

[12] Ibid., 159.

These stories offer glimpses of ideas about honor. These stories also show us attitudes toward warfare, the subject of chief focus in this chapter. By illustrating the persistent presence of war in the history of mankind and man's equally persistent embrace of armed conflict, we will see that Civil War Americans held attitudes toward warfare radically different from those Americans who took part in twentieth-century warfare. We will look at Greek and Roman attitudes toward warfare, at primitive man's attitudes toward warfare, at European attitudes toward warfare, at the attitudes of American colonists and Revolutionary Americans, and, finally, at the attitudes of Americans during the antebellum and Civil War years. We will take a brief glimpse at current American attitudes toward warfare. Careful attention to these historical vignettes suggests that modern viewpoints about war differ greatly from those of the past. Just where Americans during the era of the Civil War stood on this evolving stage is our principle concern.

Anthropologist Lawrence Keeley recounts:

> The earliest recorded histories are military histories. The earliest Egyptian hieroglyphs record the victories of Egypt's first pharaohs, the Scorpion King and Narmer. The first secular literature or history recorded in cuneiform recounts the Adventures of the Sumerian warrior-king Gilgamesh. The earliest written parts of the Books of Moses, the 'J-strand' (called so because in its passages the name given to God is Yahweh or, Jehovah), culminate in the brutal Hebrew conquest of Canaan. The earliest annals of the Chinese, Greeks, and Romans are concerned with wars and warrior kings. Most Mayan hieroglyphic texts are devoted to the genealogies, biographies, and military exploits of Mayan kings. The folklore and legends of preliterate cultures, the epic oral traditions that are the precursors to history, are equally bellicose. Indeed, until this century,

> historiography was dominated by accounts of wars and the political intrigues that led up to them.[13]

According to James M. Morris, "Warfare has always played a key role in history… Because some persons have always felt a compulsion to impose their will on others, the history of peoples and nations has been marked by war. War, as a consequence, has been a prime determinant of the fate of peoples and nations."[14] Fifth-century Greek historian Heraclitus wrote, "polemos pater panton": "war is the father of all things." Looking toward the modern age, Yale historian Donald Kagan observed: "Over the past two centuries the optimists and pessimists, each predicting the end of war for different reasons, have been proven wrong. Believing in and hoping for progress, they forgot that war has been a persistent part of human experience since before the birth of civilization." In 1968, American historians Will and Ariel Durant calculated that there had been only 268 years free of war in the previous 3,421. Historian Arther Ferrill noted that "organized warfare appeared at least by the end of the Paleolithic Age….From the Stone Age, at least as far back as ten thousand years ago, organized armies in formation fought one another and built fortifications to protect themselves and their people from attacks from other armies." Kagan continued:

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[13] Lawrence Keeley. *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p 3.
[14] James M. Morris. *America's Armed Forces, A History*. Second edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994,p. 1. Donald Kagan. *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*. New York: Anchor Books – A Division of Random House, 1996, p 5.

> The earliest civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia were from the first occupied with war, as were later Bronze and Iron Age cultures all over the world…The earliest civilizations of China were established by armies. Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle took an enduring human nature and the persistence of war for granted.[15]

The authors of *Men In Arms: A History of Warfare and its Interrelationships with Western Society* agreed with the idea of the intimate historical relationship between humankind and war: "The history of human society has been thoroughly permeated by war."[16] This persistent presence and importance of war to man is significant to our study of the American Civil War. Americans of the antebellum and Civil War era agreed that peace was desirable but not always feasible. They also believed that war could be necessary and inevitable, the only solution to conflicting viewpoints. When war was the only way to settle differences, they did not shrink from the thought. Indeed, they embraced the idea of war as part of life. They believed citizens in a democracy should serve their country in wartime and in peacetime. Greek civilization is the primary source of the Western military tradition. This chapter will show that Americans of the antebellum and Civil War years held views about war similar to the Greeks, views which contributed to their attitudes toward the Civil War, toward battle, and toward life and death, views radically different from Americans in the twenty-first century. Again, we turn to Kagan: "Modern states, most particularly the United States in the post-Cold War years, are quite different. The martial values

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[15] Kagan, pp 4-5. Arther Ferrill. *The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great*. Revised edition. Boulder CO: Westview Press, pp. 13, 18-31. Will and Ariel Durant. *The Lessons of History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968, p 81.

[16] Richard A. Preston, Alex Roland, and Sydney F. Wise. *Men in Arms: A History of Warfare and its Interrelationships with Western Society*. Fifth edition. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991, p. 1.

and the respect for power have not entirely disappeared, but they have been overlaid by other ideas and values, some of them unknown to the classical republics. Arguably, now, barriers of conscience over the use of violence arise in the practice of acquiring and maintaining power and using it to preserve the peace that would have been incomprehensible to the Greeks and Romans."[17]

The Spartans were a warrior society. Members of the other Greek city-states also looked to war as a necessary component of life, not to be shunned or evaded. The Greeks had great familiarity with war – from the wars with the Persians to wars with other Greeks. Peace was desirable but not always feasible. Moreover, Greek warfare followed an unwritten but clear warrior code.

The Greeks were not alone in their views of the presence and necessity of war. Kagan commented in *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*:

> The Greek states, the Athenian democracy no less than any other, were warrior communities that accepted without question the naturalness of war and the absolute obligation of each able-bodied man to do military service and risk his life for his community. He also regarded these actions as among the highest attributes of a man, proof of his freedom and dignity and a source of honor and glory, themselves the highest values for human beings. The Romans had even fewer hesitations about the desirability of power and the naturalness of war than the Greeks. Theirs was a culture that venerated the military virtues. It was a society that valued power, glory, and the responsibilities of leadership, even domination, without embarrassment. The effort needed to preserve these things could be taken for granted; it was in the nature of things and part of the human condition.[18]

[17] Kagan, 570.
[18] Ibid., 570.

Roman males owed the state sixteen years of military service between ages 17 and 46, though legislation could extend that period to twenty-nine, and no Roman could hold public office until he had completed ten years of that service. Also, Romans were nearly always at war. In the sixty years before the First Punic War in 264, only four or five years were free of war. A man's military success was the center of the Roman value system and the basis of the high reputation every Roman male sought. Public recognition of this reputation came in the form of ceremonies and rituals known as triumphs.

Unlike some societies, Romans honored those who had died in battle, if they had died bravely. Public speeches at the elaborate funerals of these men praised their deeds and encouraged that quality in others. The Greek historian, Polybius explained: "By this means, the glorious memory of brave men is continually renewed; the fame of those who have performed any noble deed is never allowed to die; and the renown of those who have done good service to their country becomes a matter of common knowledge to the multitude, and part of the heritage of posterity.[19]

A brief history of American wars will support this similar premise and show how nineteenth-century Americans came to believe as they did. Civil War era Americans did not envision a world without war. Americans had spent twenty-six of the one hundred and twenty-three years between 1689 and 1812 at war, excluding most wars with indigenous peoples; every generation had faced war or the threat of war.

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[19] Polybius. *Histories*. F. W. Walbank. University of California Press, 1990, 6.54.2.

Younger men of the Civil War era had grown up at their fathers' and grandfathers' knees, listening to stories of the American Revolution and other wars, and were eager to prove themselves in a war of their own. Their fathers and grandfathers were convinced that battle had been their defining moment, that men needed the test of battle, and that each generation needed war to mold them, refine them, into men who could lead their communities and their country. Not only did young men in the antebellum era desire to prove their manhood, they felt the need for a war of their own, like their fathers and grandfathers. They craved battle. Confederate soldier Edmund DeWitt Patterson expressed a sentiment frequently found in soldier documents, when, before Gettysburg, he recorded the following in his journal, "The time for action had come. The time to try our manhood, the long looked for hour…I prayed God in that hour to assist me to do my whole duty to my country."[20] With the first shot at Fort Sumter, men and women rejoiced in the streets. And so began the war and all it entailed: victory, emancipation, restoration of the Union, death, destruction, and memories. After secession and the surrender of Fort Sumter, according to the April 15, 1861 *New York Times*: "The bells [in Charleston] have been chiming all day, guns firing, ladies waving handkerchiefs, people cheering, and citizens making themselves generally demonstrative. It is regarded as the greatest day in the history of South Carolina."

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[20] Edmund DeWitt Patterson. *Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson*. John G. Barrett, editor. Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1966, 52.

Americans had indeed lived with war and the threat of war from the founding of the colonies. Europeans arriving in the New World had left a continent with a long history of warfare. Warfare was common in their lives. As Kagan observed: "England and France were national, economic, and religious rivals for the domination of Europe. The so-called Wars for Empire between England and France broke out in 1690 and continued on and off until 1763; colonists under both flags in the New World were more than ready to join in the fray on behalf of their mother countries and of their own provincial interests."[21] These wars, King William's War of 1689-1697, Queen Anne's War of 1702-1713, King George's War of 1744-1748, and The French and Indian War of 1754-1763, heavily involved the colonists and indigenous peoples on the side of the British against the French. All these wars were between the French and the British for reasons minimally related to the colonists, but the colonists volunteered each time to fight, though not always enthusiastically and with conditions attached.

King William's War was French King Louis XIV's attempt to expand his realm in Europe to gain more land and to regain the English throne for the exiled James II. The fighting between England and France spread to the colonies. Volunteer forces drawn from various colonies fought for eight years in this war. Queen Anne's War once again involved colonists in a war over European affairs, this time France's Louis XIV's endeavor to place his grandson on the Spanish throne. This decade of war

[21] Kagan., p 4.

involved the colonists against the French, the Spanish, and their Indian allies. Volunteers in South Carolina joined England in the fight against the French and Spanish. Decades of peace between England, France, and Spain followed Queen Anne's War, but neither England nor France had abandoned the idea of being the leader in world dominance. Both countries spent these years in colonial expansion in the New World. In 1739, a small conflict called The War of Jenkins' Ear broke out. This small conflict grew into King George's War, the War of the Austrian Succession, and involved the colonists in four more years of costly and bloody war between the European powers in their quest for world domination in what have come to be called the Wars for Empire. As if all this fighting were not enough, in between Queen Anne's War and King George's War, the colonists fought in the 1715 Yamasee War. The colonists' motives in these wars were not the continental goals. French and British colonists fought for domination of the New World only, in wars over land, wars over slaves, and wars over revenge.

The French and Indian War of 1754-1763, also called the Seven Years' War, would come closer to settling the issue of European and colonial dominance in North America, but at great cost for all. The British gained more control of the continent, though Spain still had interests and France later held a large part of the continent. The French and Indian War was different from the previous Wars for Empire. It became a total war for dominance over the continent of North America. As a result of this war, France was mostly pushed off the North American continent, losing all

her colonies to the British, except two small fishing islands and some sugar islands, and French lands west of the Mississippi that went to Spain. Britain essentially had gained control of the North American continent. American colonists had fought for years in this war and the wars leading up to this one.

John Whiteclay Chambers, II, illustrated how colonial militia units were raised for the French and Indian War, how large these forces were, and the motives of the men who enlisted. The Bay Colony mobilized nearly one-third of its young men in 1756 for six-month enlistment terms. "Eighty-eight percent enlisted voluntarily, inspired by economic, religious, and patriotic reasons, and sometimes by the sheer desire for adventure." Important for these men was the contractual nature of the enlistment. Like soldiers of the Civil War, these Massachusetts' citizen-soldiers followed their enlistment contracts to the letter and expected the government to do the same. Any government alteration of or failure to meet the strict terms of the contract made the contract null and void and freed the enlisted man to return home before the contract's expiration date. Virginia's approach to fielding militia units involved socially-selective conscription which targeted the "lesser sort, the common herd, the ignorant vulgar." Conscription failed. Men targeted for conscription fled to the mountains. Those middle class not targeted refused to support conscription of any whites. Virginia was unable to raise even a single regiment using conscription. Once conscription was abandoned and Britain agreed to pay volunteers, Virginia could boast two full regiments of volunteers within six months. Clearly, colonial

Americans were willing to become soldiers for Britain for a variety of reasons, but they were not to be coerced.[22] They did not avoid war, even wars with goals not directly affecting them, but they participated only on a volunteer basis with contractual guidelines.

A closer look at provincial motivation during the Seven Years' War is necessary for understanding attitudes toward warfare in America at this time. According to Fred Anderson, in his well-researched *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War*, "war, as much as peace, typified New England life in the eighteenth century." Ninety percent of Massachusetts' provincials were volunteers, and their diaries indicated that they volunteered for military service against the French for four reasons. Religion was a factor in their motivation in the form of Protestantism versus Popery. Financial gain was also a factor, in the forms of enlistment bounties and plunder. Kinship and personal relationships were also motivating factors in that men enlisted to serve under men they knew and respected, who had a reputation for bravery and leadership. A big factor took the form of character, reputation, and manhood. According to Anderson, "military service promised an accelerated entry into real manhood." Fear of cowardice played a part in the motivation concerning reputation. Provincial Rufus Putnam saw his first fighting at Ticonderoga, after which, he was "'so panic-struck that [he] was willing to remain with the boat guard'" rather than continue in battle with his regiment. Later, he felt

[22] Chambers, John Whiteclay, II. *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America*. New York and London: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1987, 15-18.

that his "'character might suffer for having willingly remained with the boat guard,'" so he volunteered for the hazardous duty of carrying ammunition to the front in the heat of the battle. In another example, Sergeant Robert Webster noted that "one of his men, 'Jonathan Corbin[,] confessed that he was afraid…Set his name down for a coward.'" When Corbin learned of his reputation as a coward, he was shamed into participation.[23] Manhood and cowardice motivated colonists to enlist for military service in wars that did not necessarily threaten hearth and home.

This voluntary enlistment rested heavily on contractual principles, as it did with Civil War soldiers. Anderson elaborated on the contractual basis of the provincials' service from the beginning of the war to its end. Provincials received a portion of an enlistment bounty when they first volunteered. Conditions provincials expected included provisions of food, clothing, rum, and bedding; payment at regular intervals; additional compensation for work not part of the original agreement; and prompt release at the end of the enlistment period. Any government infringement or failure to meet any part of this agreement released the provincial from the contract, meaning that mutiny and desertion were completely acceptable. Anderson discovered that nearly all cases of mutiny and desertion were a result of government failure to meet contract agreements.[24] Civil War soldiers also viewed their military service in contractual terms and saw no dishonor in desertion or mutiny as a result of governmental failure to meet those obligations.

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[23] Fred Anderson. *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War*. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1984, pp. vii, 39, 155-161.
[24] Ibid., 187-189.

The end of the Seven Years' War "decisively terminated the imperial presence of France in North America"[25] and left Britain with an empire twelve times the size of its home islands. As a result of the decades of war with France in the effort to gain that empire, Britain was deeply in dept, especially after the Seven Years' War. Not only was Britain unable to pay even the interest on that debt, she had no money with which to manage and develop her new empire, politically and economically. Politically, Britain needed to control the colonists in several key aspects. Colonists were pouring into lands that the British government had promised to Native American allies during the war in exchange for their help against the French. If these promises were broken, trouble with the Indians would be costly and needed to be avoided. Britain was in dire need of money – to pay debt and to protect and develop the new territories. The French remaining in North America and their Native American allies were still a military threat, so troops needed to be maintained and on hand in the event of trouble. In addition to these financial woes, Britain replaced France in relationship with indigenous peoples of North American, especially those who had aided them and fought with them in the war. Diplomatic custom with Native Americans dictated that the European power provide yearly gifts to the indigenous peoples. France had faithfully maintained this custom, though quite expensive. The French had more successfully exploited Native American alliances than had the British. The French had successfully used diplomacy, with gift-giving as an

[25] Ibid., 6.

important aspect, to convince Native Americans of their good intentions and of their willingness to fulfill the role of a "benevolent father." The French also understood that gift giving could ameliorate conflict and foster friendship. No British money existed for this or any of the other financial needs in North America. Even had the British possessed money for annual gifts to their Native American allies, they were not inclined to maintain that custom. The British withheld gifts and sent troops into Native American territories, clear indications to the Native Americans that the British were not the benevolent fathers the French had been. The Native Americans were therefore not happy with the British and were not adamantly opposed to the idea of French return. British citizens on the home island were already overtaxed and simply would not consent to pay more taxes. The solution was to tax the colonies. After all, the troops were to protect the colonists as well as British interests. It only made sense that financial support for those expenses come from the colonists.

Unhappy colonists, disgruntled Native Americans, and the sullen, defeated French presented real threats to British management and possession of the colonies. War was a constant possibility but one that Britain could ill afford. Moreover, warfare on the North American continent was not the same as that in Europe, and the British were not prepared for that either. Warfare in North America had taken on primitive characteristics. "In contrast to that waged in Europe in the same period, warfare in North America was punctuated by atrocities caused by deep antagonisms between the

two white groups."[26] Both the French and the English had borrowed barbaric practices from their native allies in the Wars for Empire, without a clear understanding of the ideology behind primitive warfare. This barbaric strain in warfare, present in American warfare almost from the beginning of European settlement, was to culminate in excesses which marked the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. Examples abound, from whites scalping Native Americans to the activities of the Paxton Boys. In Pennsylvania in 1763-1764, a group known as the Paxton Boys used Pontiac's Rebellion as reason to claim their government could not protect them from Native American attacks. A number of these backwoodsmen attacked peaceful Susquehannocks near Millersville in December of 1763, killing six. Later, they attacked and massacred the remaining Susquehannocks who had been placed under protection. Their methods clearly displayed the brutality of North American warfare. All the Native Americans had been mutilated. Incidents such as these which show the welcome use of barbaric practices provide evidence that men of the American Colonial and Revolutionary eras did not shun war; they sought it, and they adapted the more savage practices of the "primitives" of North America into their war chest. John Grenier wrote, "…war focused on noncombatant populations is itself a fundamental part of Americans' military past, indeed, is Americans' first way of war."[27]

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[26] Preston, 149.
[27] John Grenier. *The First War of War: American Warmaking on the Frontier, 1607-1814*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 2.

Two early theorists of the concept of primitive war, Quincy Wright (1890-1970) and Harry Turney-High (1899-1982), point out that motives for civilized, modern warfare are economic and political; primitives fought for different reasons – for personal, psychological and social reasons, such as pursuit of personal prestige and status, initiation to manhood, and revenge. Surrender was not an option in primitive warfare because wounded or captured adult male combatants were nearly always immediately killed as part of the primitive conduct of war. If not immediately killed upon capture, they might be saved for later ritual torture and sacrificial death, as with Iroquois and pre-Columbians. A few primitive peoples, such as Meru herdsmen of Kenya, would ransom captives for cattle, but killing prisoners, especially males, was the more common practice, with rituals of mutilation or cannibalism providing significant trophies symbolizing honor and humiliation.[28] Primitive peoples of today still practice ritual warfare and ritual ceremonies of initiation to manhood, revenge, prestige, status, and honor. In many cultures, men who fail as warriors are reviled as women. Indeed, an historical purpose of war was to make men from boys. According to the Congo Fang people, unarmed men are not considered men and are told to go and rear children. Upon successful ambush, Fang men come home shouting, "We are real men, we have shot a man, we are real men." Masai men cannot marry until they have blooded their spear. The Karamoho youth must distinguish himself in war before he may marry. Male members of Papuan Gulf

[28] Keeley, pp 9, 84-85, 101.

tribes must become warriors before they can marry. The Naga warrior must present a skull or scalp before he may marry. If a member of the North American Creek nation had not been on a war party, he bore no title and was considered a boy. According to Tacitus, "Many noble youths, if the land of their birth is stagnating in a protracted peace, deliberately seek out other tribes, where some war is afoot. The Germans have no taste for peace; renown is easier won among perils, and you cannot maintain a large body of companion except by violence and war."[29] Opportunities for war were welcomed and sought in these cultures. Warfare was not shunned or avoided except under extreme circumstances. Native Americans and later colonial Americans were no different in their acceptance of war.

Primitive warfare was also limited, not total. This important ideological aspect of warfare was a source of great misunderstanding between Native Americans and Europeans and colonists. The overall aim of western warfare has been the total defeat and destruction of the enemy – war without mercy became the standard military technique of Europeans abroad. Europeans and therefore colonists had a tradition of total warfare, the annihilation of the enemy with the goal of complete subjugation of the enemy or capture of enemy lands. Native American warfare had much more limited goals and much less loss of life. They did not seek enemy subjugation or

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[29] Harry Holbert Turney-High. *Primitive War: Its Practices and Concepts*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. 1949, p 145. Julie Wheelwright. *Amazons and Military Maids: Women Who Dressed as Men in Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness*. London: Pandora, 1989. Franco Fornari. *The Psychoanalysis of War*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975, p. 46. Maurice R. Davie. *The Evolution of War: A Study of Its Role in Early Societies*. Dover Publications, 2003. Tacitus…

perhaps control of enemy lands. Instances of these ideological differences in warfare are scattered throughout the Wars for Empire. These instances also illustrate that perhaps "primitive" is not an accurate description of warfare on the North American continent. Tom Holm offered a look at the use of the word primitive to describe Native American warfare. According to Holm, long-accepted ideas about Native American warfare need re-analysis. These ideas promote Native American warfare as "primitive," meaning that it was illogical, inconclusive, and chaotic, and that it had no formal rules of engagement or codes of conduct, making it uncivilized and savage. This ideological view further promoted European-style warfare and European conquest, then, as a civilizing process. Holm discussed the South Dakota Crow Creek Massacre of 1325 which involved the deaths of 486 people, including women and children, to suggest that Native Americans had at one time used total warfare, perhaps over food and land, but had apparently decided the cost in lives of total warfare was too high and rejected it in favor of more limited warfare. For the most part, Native Americans did not wage war to annihilate others or to colonize territories of the conquered (though the Pequots did subjugate nearby tribes to a certain extent for trade advantage). Many groups have examples of total war in their past and settled on "complicit partnership" warfare instead of total decisive and destructive warfare. The Crow Creek massacre is clearly an example of state, not primitive, warfare. In other words, rather than practicing what some military historians call primitive warfare, these groups had experienced and rejected total warfare as a means to a political end.

Native American groups who joined the Puritans against the Pequots in 1637 were shocked at the level of death and protested to their Puritan partners. Under Mason, the Puritans were intent on complete annihilation of the Pequots, including women and children, and killed all who surrendered. This approach to warfare went against the ideology of their Mohegan allies, who abandoned the battle in light of what they considered unnecessary atrocity and destruction of human life on the part of their Puritan partners. This clearly illustrated the different ideology concerning warfare that existed between the Native Americans and the Europeans. Europeans reintroduced total warfare onto indigenous peoples of North America during the sixteenth century. In the four hundred years that followed, indigenous peoples had no alternative but total decisive warfare.[30] In the process, Europeans adapted some of the brutality of the warfare of the primitive peoples they encountered on the American continents. These ideological differences in views about warfare between Europeans, colonists, and North American Natives, in part or in sum, do not detract from the fact that these cultures and peoples all saw warfare as a large and necessary part of life. Warfare was a common occurrence and was often sought for various reasons. The Europeans and colonists sought invasion and conquest with objectives of annihilation or subjugation of peoples and control of land and other resources. Native Americans sought what other tribal peoples had long sought – captives, prestige, honor, recognition of manhood.

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[30] Tom Holm. "American Indian Warfare: The Cycles of Conflict and the Militarization of Native North America," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, eds. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 2004.

Though the objective of achieving recognition of manhood seems to be a more common reason for seeking war and battle for primitive or tribal peoples than for modern participants, that goal is not limited to those groups. Participants in modern warfare express similar views about war. Napoleon's 100th Maxim advises: "To avoid peril oneself…is an act of cowardice." German poet Theorod Korner at the time of the Napoleonic Wars wrote, "Happiness lies only in sacrificial death."[31] To prove manhood through victory and survive was the ideal for many groups, and death was preferable to defeat. To some, death and sacrifice were both important parts of the honor code. Typically, Native Americans preferred to avoid death and constructed ways to demonstrate manhood in battle without the costly sacrifice of its limited number of male combatants. For other societies, death in battle enhanced one's victory, honor, and manhood in the form of reputation, both individual and family. Dying in battle has historically been considered a worthy endeavor. The Romans celebrated it, as have other peoples. Post-World War I Americans do not share this view, though earlier Americans did, partly because many earlier Americans shared the view that war and service to one's country in war were more important than avoiding war to preserve one's life. We will have a more thorough discussion of the issues of reputation through battle in the chapter on honor.

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[31] Napoleon's Maxims were first published in Paris in 1827 and immediately translated into German, English, Spanish, and Italian. According to Thomas Jackson's biographer, Colonel G. F. Henderson, Stonewall carried the maxims in his haversack. Maxims quoted in this paper are from Brigadier General T. R. Phillips, ed. *Roots of Strategy: The 5 Greatest Military Classics of All Time Complete in One Volume: Sun Tzu, Vegetius, De Saxe, Napoleon.* Stackpole Books, 1985. George Mosse. *Confronting History: A Memoir*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2000, p. 70.

American attitudes toward warfare have not remained consistent through time. Philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes argued that man's nature is essentially unchanging and timeless, but people are also products of their environment and upbringing. American warfare has been a large part of that environment. James Morris summed it up well:

> Born in the crucible of conflict in the late eighteenth century, tested in its early years by Old War enemies, faced with conflict with the Indian nations time and again as it expanded westward into their territories, torn by the fratricidal Civil War that decided whether it would be one nation or two, called to play a major role in the defense of its values in two great world conflicts in the twentieth century, and propelled into military and political leadership in the defense of Western ideals since World War II, the United States for two centuries has relied on its military forces to defend its values and freedoms and to extend them to others.[32]

According to conservatively-minded historians, recent attitudes toward warfare are indeed different from those of the mid-nineteenth-century and earlier. Victor Davis Hanson wrote:

> The pacifism of the post-Vietnam generation shamed Americans into thinking that all conflicts were bad. Conflict resolution advised that there was rarely such a thing as a moral armed struggle of good against evil – to be scoffed as 'Manichaean' – and that strife is a result of misunderstanding and so can be resolved through give-and-take and rational discourse…In 1986, a panel of the UN declared that war was an aberration and not in any way natural or innate to humans.[33]

Sir Michael Howard traced this rejection of conflict as normal and natural to the last two hundred years. According to Howard, Enlightenment thinkers of the

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[32] Morris, p. 2.
[33] Victor Davis Hanson. *Ripples of Battle: How Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live, and How We Think.* New York, London: Doubleday, 2003, p. 254, 255.

eighteenth century invented the idea of peace. They saw war as a waste and something which could be eliminated through the application of reason. Upon removal of traditional and artificial barriers – monarch, aristocracy, and the established church – to individual freedom, man had a natural capacity for peaceful self-government and perfectibility. Two ancient and enduring myths help to explain Enlightenment thinking: man's original state was happy and peaceful; man's original state was violent, ignorant, and brutal. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes turned these myths into enduring philosophical attitudes which supported the idea that war is unnecessary and can be eliminated.

The point for us is that application of Enlightenment thinking has greatly affected attitudes toward warfare, but that metamorphosis had not occurred or had not had widespread influence by the time of the Civil War. Evidence of that assertion comes from comparing attitudes toward warfare from different places and times. Many examples from the writings and recollections of Americans during the Civil War make clear that they did not use Enlightenment thinking about war and peace in their ruminations about war and peace. The attitudes of Americans about warfare through and beyond the Civil War, in fact, closely matched the thinking of ancient, medieval, and early modern Western peoples.

Many years ago, Douglas Southall Freeman commented that, "Confederate soldiers and nurses and citizens of beleaguered towns had one inspiration that twentieth-century America has not credited to them – the vigorous Revolutionary

tradition….Many men in the ranks, North and South, had seen old soldiers of the Continental Army; thousands had heard stories of the sacrifices of 1777 and of the hunger and nakedness at Valley Forge. From its very nature, freedom was born in travail."[34] The Revolutionary spirit is often mentioned in Civil War correspondence. One example is John Tyler's letter to Mrs. Tyler in Richmond, dated April 17, 1861: "The numbers opposed to us are immense; but twelve thousand Grecians conquered the whole power of Xerxes at Marathon, and our fathers, a mere handful, overcame the enormous powers of Great Britain."[35]

Belief about duty and universal military service for all citizens was widespread in the antebellum years. Philip Sidney was a young boy from Virginia who was killed in battle on the Potomac. His family and friends were, of course, devastated by the loss. Mourning did not encompass the totality of their reaction, however. Pride played a role as well. In a letter from John Lothrop Motley to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes in Virginia, dated November 14, 1861, he shared his mourning and his pride concerning the loss of Philip: "Well, it is a beautiful death – the most beautiful that man can die...It is a noble and healthy symptom that brilliant, intellectual, poetical spirits like his spring to arms when a noble cause like ours inspires them."[36] The April 18, 1861, journal entry of Henry William Ravenal reinforced this position:

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[34] *The Civil War Archive: The History of the Civil War in Documents*. Forward. Edited by Henry Steele Commager. Revised and Expanded by Erik Bruun. NY: Tess Press, an imprint of Black Dog and Levanthal Publishers, 2000, p. 27.
[35] "The Spirit of Virginia Cannot Be Crushed." Lyon G. Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers*. Richmond, 1884. II, pp. 641-642.
[36] "The Race of Philip Sidneys Is Not Extinct." George William Curtis, ed., *The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1889, II, pp. 40-43.

"One of the remarkable features of the time is that men of all classes and conditions, of all occupations & professions are of one mind. We have students of Divinity & ministers of the Gospel in the ranks with musket on their shoulders doing battle for their country."[37] In the days leading up to First Bull Run, the Confederate government had authorized additional enlistment numbers of 400,000 volunteers. Such high numbers of volunteers came forward that 200,000 had to be turned away.[38]

Men and boys hurried to enlist before they missed out on the experience of war. Their motivations included a sense of duty and service, as well as the chance war provided to enter the realm of manhood. Boys as young as eleven signed up to serve in battle. A widespread story of the Civil War era is that young men scrawled the number eighteen on paper and placed the paper in their shoes so that they could honestly tell the enlistment officer they were over eighteen. If young men were slow to volunteer, they risked being the recipient of aprons or white feathers from women in the community – symbols of cowardice. Women urged their men to join the military and go fight. According to Southerner Mary A. Ward, "The women of the South generally were altogether in favor of secession and of the war, if there had to

[37] "Our People Are All United." Armey Robinson Childs, ed., *The Private Journal of Henry William Ravenal*, 1859-1887. Columbia, SC.: University of South Carolina Press, 1947, pp. 65-57.
[38] James M. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 321.

be a war, and if the Southern men had not been willing to go I reckon they would have been made to go by the women."[39]

In his fascinating work, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, E. Anthony Rotundo traced the human invention called manhood and how this American cultural construct had developed and changed since colonial times. Rotundo argued that "men born from the 1840s to the 1860s became preoccupied with the contrast between the strong, assertive man and the gentle contemplative one."[40] Vigor and assertiveness separated true men from the rest. The best way to prove manliness was through warfare and soldiering. Mark Gerzon observed that, "to be a warrior means to be a man, with the test of battle as the ultimate experience, the final arbiter…The history of masculinity is the history of war." The characteristics of the soldier were deeply embedded into the American psyche long before the Revolution. The soldier was the bravest of men, willing to sacrifice himself for the cause, willing to serve as the protector. Without him, survival was slim. He welcomed hardship and suffering, because, "in exchange for his services, his culture conferred upon him a priceless gift. It considered him a man."[41] Those not considered men were considered cowards. We will see in later

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[39] Testimony of Mrs. Mary A. Ward, *Report of the Committee of the Senate upon the Relations between Labor and Capital, and Testimony Taken by the Committee*. Washington, DC.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1885. IV, pp. 331-332.
[40] E. Anthony Rotundo. *American Manhood: Transformation in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era.* New York: Basic Books, A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1999, 267.
[41] Mark Gerzon. *A Choice of Heroes: The Changing Faces of American Manhood*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982, 12, 31.

chapters that for the great majority of Civil War soldiers death in battle was preferable to being called or even considered a coward.

A few decades after the Civil War, people were no longer recoiling from the horrors of war but were extolling the wondrous benefits for the country and for the men who fought the battles. The men who fought the battles welcomed these attitudes. By 1895, Theodore Roosevelt was calling for another war for the good of the country and for the good of the American boys who had not seen battle.

Oliver Wendell Holmes's words at a Memorial Day commemoration in 1884 speak evocatively about nineteenth-century attitudes concerning duty and war:

> When it was felt so deeply as it was on both sides that a man ought to take part in the war unless some conscientious scruple or strong practical reason made it impossible, was that feeling simply the requirement of a local majority that their neighbors should agree with them? I think not: I think the feeling was right-in the South as in the North. I think that, as life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time at peril of being judged not to have lived….Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire.[42]

Holmes' stance was typical of his time and generation. According to Gerald Linderman, "Postwar rituals…had by 1890 transformed the conviction of many Union veterans that war was hell. Holmes himself began to wear a military mustache

[42] Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. "In Our Youth Our Hearts Were Touched With Fire." An address delivered for Memorial Day, May 30, 1884, at Keene, NH, before John Sedgwick Post No. 4, Grand Army of the Republic. http://www.paulmartinart.com/BondOfBrothers.html Retrieved April 15, 2008.

and to observe battle anniversaries."[43] Holmes told the Harvard graduates of 1895, "War, when you are at it, is horrible and dull. It is only when time has passed that you see that its message was divine…We need it everywhere and at all times…Out of heroism grows faith in the worth of heroism."[44] Americans were loudly calling for war against Spain in Cuba in 1898. President McKinley tried to "ignore the public demand for war, but crowds hissed his name in the music halls and burned his effigy."[45] According to Kristin Hoganson, Americans were once again calling for war as a means to prove American manhood and uphold American honor. Just a few short decades after the worst war in America's history, Americans were once again not only anxious for war but were demanding one.[46]

Civil War America's ideas about warfare differed drastically from ours today. Legacies from Greek and Roman warfare, from European warfare, from colonial warfare, and from the American Revolution generation shaped their thinking in unique ways. In the following chapters, we will look at other aspects that contributed to this perspective, themes such as honor, manhood, and attitudes about death and dying. Unless we understand the foundations of their beliefs about individual and

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[43] Gerald F. Linderman. *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974, 29.
[44] Quoted in Linderman, *The Mirror of War*, 29, from Mark DeWolfe Howe, comp., *The Occasional Speeches of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962, 80.
[45] Ibid., 28.
[46] Hoganson, Kristin L. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998.

group obligation, we cannot understand the views of Americans during the Civil War era about warfare.

Chapter 2:

The Invention of Shell Shock

"The world is suffering from shell-shock."

Lloyd George

"An apparition made its first appearance on the battlefield in the last week of August, 1914. As the British official medical history of the war records: 'During 1914, several men were evacuated from France to England owing to having been 'broken' by their experiences in the retreat from Mons.' Within a month, at the base hospitals in France, Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon Holmes, an expert on nervous disorders, 'saw frequent examples of gross hysterical conditions which were associated with trivial bullet and shell wounds, or even with only slight contusions of the back, arms, and legs.' By the end of the year more than a hundred British officers and eight hundred men had been treated for nervous diseases, mostly what the official history called 'a severe mental disability which rendered the individual affected temporarily, at any rate, incapable of further service.' By the end of the war, as many as 80,000 officers and men had been unable to continue in the trenches, and many had been invalided out of the army altogether for nervous disorders, including what came to be known as 'shell-shock.'"[47]

Understanding of the psychology and physiology of combat is necessary to make clear that physical trauma is always present in combat, that psychological trauma

[47] Martin Gilbert. *The First World War: A Complete History*. Holt, 1994, p. 61.

might or might not be present, and that, though different, the two are sometimes confused. In other words, physical battle trauma is sometimes mistaken as psychological battle trauma. Physical stresses of battle are unavoidable. No one is immune to the physiology of battle. No one can be strong enough or stout enough to escape the physiology of battle conditions. This reality is true for soldiers of any war, from Greek hoplites to American soldiers in Iraq. The same is not true for the psychology of combat. Psychological reactions to combat differ from soldier to soldier and from era to era. Twentieth-century ideas of the psychological effects of war are vastly different from those of earlier times. Soldiers in twentieth-century wars are expected to suffer psychological effects of the "more dangerous" modern battlefield. Indeed, psychological breakdown as a result of combat is closely connected to twentieth-century warfare; each twentieth-century war has its own label for the condition, with some wars boasting many labels. Evidence of psychological battle trauma is recorded for twentieth-century wars, yet even in the twentieth century, psychological reaction to combat is still open to some debate. Battle conditions and soldier life in previous eras offered just as much potential for psychiatric trauma for soldiers, including soldiers of the American Civil War. Civil War soldiers, however, lived in a time of different expectations and beliefs about manhood, honor, and battle. As a result, expectations for psychiatric trauma for these soldiers did not exist. In fact, behaviors suggesting psychological or emotional weakness were strongly discouraged. The roots of these expectations can be traced

back to classical Greece and the Western way of war and back to ideas of manhood and honor. Though the possibility of psychiatric breakdown existed for Civil War soldiers, evidence of psychological battle trauma is not present.

All wars are terrible for those who have to fight them. All wars have the potential for numbers of soldiers to suffer from psychiatric casualties as a result of their experiences in battle. This chapter discusses the history of changing attitudes towards the psychological aspects of battle. Cultural expectations determine to a great extent whether psychiatric casualties will be expected or accepted – and whether these casualties will even occur. In the twentieth century, historians, medical personnel, psychiatrists, military personnel, soldiers, civilians, and journalists have spent much effort discussing several important key questions concerning psychiatric breakdown resulting from battle. What exactly is it? Is it mental, emotional, physical, or a combination of these? Will some soldiers break down and others not, or will all eventually break? Can breakdown be prevented? Is it treatable or curable? What are some of the social and financial impacts of psychiatric casualties in war? The most important questions for this discussion are: how have attitudes toward psychiatric breakdown as a result of battle changed over time? What were the expectations for the Civil War soldier? What indicators reinforced and supported these expectations? Two factors make the answer difficult. Physiological reactions have commonly been mistaken for psychological conditions. Attitudes about courage, manhood, honor, battle, and psychology have changed over time. This chapter will briefly focus on the

changing attitudes concerning the psychology of battle from the beginnings of Western warfare to the present. The chapter will then argue that psychological breakdown was not expected for Civil War soldiers, nor was it an option.

Soldiers have always been expected to exercise extreme self-control on the battlefield, no matter what the conditions. The measure of a good soldier was his courage under fire at all times. Battle was considered the ultimate test of a soldier's manliness; dying was better than being a coward or even being thought of as a coward. In fact, men who had not seen the elephant expressed eagerness for the opportunity to prove themselves in battle, believing like Lord Moran that "a man of character in peace is a man of courage in war."[48] Soldiers who broke down as a result of anything outside an obvious physical wound were labeled as cowards with weak character. If these soldiers were not executed for cowardice, which was sometimes the case, they not only had to function as best they could after returning home, usually with no help, but they also had to carry the label of coward for the rest of their lives, which sometimes meant exclusion from communities and groups. This belief of character and courage under fire was widely held through the centuries. Roger Spiller said "this complex of ideas, prejudices, and self-congratulatory fantasies persisted well into the 20th century, and very likely into the 21st."[49] These attitudes underwent significant changes in the twentieth century, beginning with World War I. The reasons for the changes in attitude, for the acceptance that psychological

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[48] Lord Moran. *The Anatomy of Courage.* New York: Avery Publishing, 1987. p. xviii.
[49] Roger Spiller. George C. Marshall Professor emeritus, US Army Command and General Staff College. "The Psychological Battlefield." Article in the possession of this writer.

breakdown as a result of battle was not cowardice and not weak character, for the idea that it was a consequence of battle and that even the most courageous could and would succumb to it, and a search for solutions, have been a matter of debate throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.[50]

The 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War attracted some attention to the problem of psychological breakdown, when the Russian army experienced an avalanche of psychiatric casualties. Dr. Paul Jacoby, a Russian physician, argued that the physical privations and strains of modern warfare resulted in breakdown. He also argued that removal a short distance from the battlefield and rest and food usually helped soldiers recover enough to return to battle. The Russians provided a record of and laid a possible foundation for military psychiatry, but the West paid little heed, so when the First World War brought forth strange behaviors in soldiers as a result of battle, Western military psychiatry had to start from scratch. The numbers of psychiatric casualties from World War I were so high that, by the armistice, all the participating nations had a psychiatric section in their military medical department, and there began lively debate about psychiatric breakdown as a result of battle.[51]

A minor part of the discussion centered on the plethora of names and labels applied to psychiatric casualties over the decades and over the wars. Former editor of the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Charles Myers, was a middle-aged professor by the

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[50] Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely. *Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900 to the Gulf War*. *Maudsley Monographs 47*. Hove and New York: Psychology Press, 2005, p. 16.
[51] Richard A. Gabriel, ed. *Military Psychiatry: A Comparative Perspective*. Contributions in Military Studies, Number 57. Greenwood Press, 1986. p. 67.

time of the outbreak of hostilities in the First World War. The British army recruited him in 1914 as a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, where in December of that year, he received as a patient a soldier who had been trapped in the barbed wire of no man's land, where several shells had burst quite near him. Though he appeared to have no physical injuries, he was partially blind and had lost his sense of taste and his sense of smell. Myers concluded that the extreme proximity of the shell burst concussions had rendered some sort of physical effect on the soldier, perhaps some sort of physical concussion to the brain, and called the condition shell shock. Myers is sometimes credited for the original diagnosis and use of the term shell shock, perhaps because shell shock did not become a widespread problem until World War I, but he did not invent the term or the theory of shell shock. He had read of shell shock in the works of others, including Brussels physician Dr. Octave Laurent, who encountered the condition in Bulgaria, and Frederick Mott, pathologist to the London County Council asylums.[52] Myers later rejected the term, because, in light of subsequent cases, he realized it was an incorrect and inaccurate misnomer, but it was too late. The already-popular term shell shock became the favorite buzzword for World War I doctors, soldiers, the press, and civilians. It traveled quickly to Britain, across Europe, across oceans to Canada, the United States, and Australia. Myers and others applied other more appropriate labels over the years, to the point where confusion abounded and no one knew what to call it. Just a few of the names were

[52] Jones and Wessely, pp. 17-18.

hysterical paralysis, war neurosis, nostalgia, irritable heart, exhaustion, neurasthenia, hysteria, emotional disturbance, fatigue, trauma, war nervousness (kriegsneurose), mental confusion from the war (la confusion mentale de la guerre), nerve shock, wounded mind, combat stress reaction, battle stress, combat stress, battle fatigue, combat fatigue, post-Vietnam syndrome, and the list goes on.[53] Treating physicians and psychiatrists recorded other terms, to which we can match the appropriate war. In summary, when psychological breakdown "first became widely recognized during World War I, such breakdown was called 'shell shock.' By the end of World War I, shell shock had been replaced by 'war neurosis' and psychoneurosis,' which gave way during World War II to 'combat exhaustion' and then 'combat fatigue.' Combat fatigue remained in use through Korea and Vietnam but was supplemented by terms such as 'combat reaction.'"[54] The Iraq War has provided yet a new term: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which is the result, once again, of explosive concussion. These soldiers have no visible wounds but suffer from brain trauma as a result of the concussive force of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Regardless of better descriptors, and perhaps to Myers' disappointment, shell shock is still the most widely-recognized and most-often used label. Ironically, TBI suggests shell shock.

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[53] Hans Binneveld. *From Shellshock to Combat Stress: A Comparative History of Military Psychiatry.* Amsterdam University Press, 1997. Shephard, *A War of Nerves.*

[54] Peter S. Kindsvatter S. *American Soldiers: Ground Combat in the World Wars, Korea, & Vietnam.* University of Kansas Press, 2003, p. 155.

A larger part of the debate centers on the idea of the reality and nature of the condition, whether it indeed exists and whether it is physical or psychological. Fear and courage were traditional cornerstones of the debate, part of a bigger discussion on the cause or causes of breakdown in battle. Some medical professionals, military personnel, soldiers, and civilians believed that breakdown in battle was simply a sign of cowardice, lack of character, weakness, in other words, psychological in nature. Physicians, especially, continued to believe the condition was the result of physical causes and conditions and tried to explain it in somatic terms. These disparate attitudes conflicted even through much of the twentieth century. Military professionals wrote these men off as deficient; the military executed many of them; fellow soldiers scorned them; Patton slapped them; and everyone abandoned them if they were among the lucky ones to return home alive. Emotional self-control was simply a requirement of character, and battle simply a test of manhood – and these men had failed. A few lone voices, usually military medical and psychiatric personnel, claimed that these men were not simply cowards, shirkers, malingerers, or lunatics, but that they were suffering actual damage resulting from their experiences on the battlefield, that their conditions were beyond their control, and that they needed treatment and disability pensions. Grafton Elliot Smith, in *Shellshock and its Lessons*, wrote of the First World War that "the war has shown us one indisputable fact, that a psychoneurosis may be produced in almost anyone if only his environment be made 'difficult' enough for him." This statement was radical because a common

conception had been that shell-shockers, like lunatics, were inferior individuals. Walter Bradford Cannon made a significant contribution in 1915 in *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage.* Cannon's work on the effects of emotion on the human endocrine system, emotional shock, a psychosomatic approach that suggested the mind and body interact in illness, led to a new branch of medicine in 1913 – endocrinology. The possible role of the endocrine system in shell shock became apparent as an explanation for breakdown in battle and as an explanation for the concept of fight, flight, or freeze.[55] Finally, during the First World War, because these casualties became such a big problem, other voices joined these lone voices, and 'shell shock' was taken seriously.

Lord Charles Moran addressed the part of the debate concerned with the concepts of fear and courage in *The Anatomy of Courage.* Moran served as physician with the First World War's First Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers and eventually became Churchill's personal physician. He wrote,

> Courage is a moral quality; it is not a chance gift of nature like an aptitude for games. It is a cold choice between two alternatives, the fixed resolve not to quit; an act of renunciation which must be made not once but many times by the power of the will. Courage is will power, but that power is in limited supply; a man's courage is his capital and he is always spending. The call on the bank may be only the daily drain of the frontline or it may be a sudden draft which threatens to close the account. His will is perhaps almost destroyed by intensive shelling, by heavy bombing, or by a bloody battle, or it is gradually used up by monotony, by exposure, by the loss of the

[55] Shephard, 111-112.

> support of stauncher spirits on whom he has come to depend, by physical exhaustion, by a wrong attitude to danger, to casualties, to war, to death itself.[56]

Moran believed that men had a limited supply of courage, like a bank account, and that it no doubt would be used up and leave men with psychological and emotional consequences, that even the most stable, staunch, reliable, tried and proven courageous men would simply run out of courage and break down. Moran was not naïve, however. He did believe that some men were simply unfit for service and should be screened out. Of those remaining, preventive measures were needed to sustain them: health and discipline, unit cohesion and comradeship, and most importantly, excellent leadership to help with the care and management of fear, to prevent what he called the "birth of fear."[57]

At the start of the Second World War, neurosis and psychoneurosis were recognized to the point that psychiatrists were placed in a few combat areas using a forward treatment system usually attributed to World War I physician Thomas Salmon known as PIES (proximity, immediacy, expectancy, and simplicity). Proximity meant that treatment of those suffering from battle fatigue occurred as far forward as possible. Immediacy called for treating them expeditiously. Expectancy meant that casualties should be reassured that they would quickly recover and return to duty. Proven treatment consisted of removing the victim from the worst of the battle but not very far from his unit. He was then rested, while being treated as a

[56] Moran, pp. 61, xvi, xx.
[57] Ibid, 162, 174, 180.

soldier, not a patient, and was encouraged to discuss his feelings with those who had similar experiences. He was rehabilitated into useful work and returned to his unit. Simplicity kept the treatment process simple and straightforward.[58] This forward treatment system was actually used in France originally. Myers adapted PIES for treatment of British soldiers. Controversy persisted within the British military and medical personnel whether shell shock was a legitimate condition or the work of shirkers.

United States Army physician Major Thomas Salmon arrived in Europe in May 1917 to observe British and French handling of the problem of shell shock. In preparation for the arrival of American forces in Europe, Salmon further adapted the PIES treatment system and established forward treatment bases in France to treat American soldiers. Treatment at the forward bases returned a higher percentage of soldiers to combat than treatment far behind the lines, once again suggesting that the condition was physiological and not psychological and fueling the controversy. Perhaps as a result of the controversial nature of the condition, the experiences and knowledge gained from World War I were largely laid aside and ignored during the interwar years, with the condition receiving little attention. The attention shell shock did receive in the interwar years mainly consisted of civilians, especially British civilians, believing the idea that shell shock was an honorable physical injury which veterans silently and helplessly suffered, romanticized in the form of popular novels

[58] Kindsvatter, p. 169. Salmon's plan had been successfully used in World War I, but had largely been abandoned at the beginning of World War II. When it became obvious that screening had failed, in the face lf extremely high psychiatric casualty numbers, it was again used toward the end of World War II.

portraying shell shock in the form of the suffering wounded warrior. Jones and Wessely note that "it was a culturally conditioned diagnosis of particular significance to the British people" and that France and Germany had no equivalent terminology for shell shock in the interwar years.[59] On the eve of World War II, nations were once again ill-prepared to handle shell shock. Conventional wisdom still considered shell shock more physical than psychological. The British plan in the late 1930s consisted of a plan to use a treatment similar to the PIES treatment system, if needed. In addition, both the United States and Britain designed and implemented screening programs, which offered false confidence.

Even with the efforts of some military and medical personnel to deny recognition of shell shock as a valid condition, by the end of the First World War, the British Army had recorded 100,000 cases of 'shell shock,' with 38% of all hospitalized soldiers suffering from neuropsychiatric maladies. Two years later, the British still had 65,000 veterans receiving pension for shell shock, of whom 9,000 were still being treated! Lloyd George said, "The world is suffering from shell-shock."[60] Between 1923 and 1941, the United States spent approximately $344,000,000 on treatment and compensation for shell shock. Even after Pearl Harbor, 58% of all the patients in America's Veteran's Hospitals were shell shock soldiers from the First World War (68,000 patients).[61] Just prior to the outbreak of hostilities that would come to be

[59] Jones and Wessely, p. 61.
[60] Shephard, p. 152.
[61] Menninger, W. C. *Psychiatry in a Troubled World.* New York, 1948, p. 380.

known as World War II, both Britain and the United States used screening to eliminate potential psychiatric casualties. Psychiatrists prepared a battery of questions and other measures to screen those psychologically unfit for military service. Failure of the screening process began early on, with non-specialist screeners given about three minutes with each inductee. Some screening procedures came down to a process as simple as asking the inductee if he liked girls. Nevertheless, nearly two million men were rejected for psychological reasons as a result of the screening program, and the problem of potential psychiatric breakdown on the battlefield was declared solved. As a result of perceived success of the screening program, few psychiatrists were deployed with American troops to Africa, Europe, or Japan, in the belief that screening had effectively eliminated the need for them.

According to Spiller,

> Ten million men served in the American Army in World War II. Two-hundred and thirteen thousand were killed, and 723,560 were wounded. For every five men wounded, one was killed, and one was 'psychology disturbed.' Almost a million men were admitted to Army hospitals for neuropsychiatric reasons during the war. In the Army's ground forces, 504,000 men were evacuated from the battlefield as psychiatric casualties. From January 1942 to the end of 1945, 380,000 men were discharged from the Army for neuropsychiatric reasons – 39% of all medical discharges. By the end of 1945, 240,000 men were already receiving pensions for neuropsychiatric disabilities. Screening did not work.[62]

American psychiatric casualties in World War II ran at twenty to thirty for every 100 battle casualties in general, though there were times, as with the U. S. 1st

[62] Spiller, p. 21.

Armoured Division in Italy in 1944, when they exceeded fifty.[63] A wealth of primary and secondary literature on the subject appeared. Lord Moran in 1946 had this to say: "How is courage spent in war? Courage is will-power, whereof no man has an unlimited stock; and when in war it is used up, he is finished."[64] Paul Fussell supported Moran's premise that almost all soldiers will eventually break under the stress of battle, when he remarked, "We came to understand what more have known than spoken of, that normally each man begins with a certain full reservoir, or bank account, of bravery, but that each time it's called upon, some is expended, never to be regained. After several months, it has all been expended, and it's time for your breakdown."[65] The time soldiers might endure varied according to circumstances: it might be a matter of hours for the individual who had low morale, was poorly led and was subjected to shocks for which he was ill-prepared, or hundreds of days for a well-motivated soldier in a good unit. A Second World War American study suggested that the average man could tolerate only 200 to 240 combat days, while the British, who rotated units more frequently, reckoned on 400 days. Observations also showed that breakdown could be delayed or prevented by training and preparation, and that most soldiers who did become psychiatric casualties could be cured quickly and completely using PIE. The PIE treatment system did seem to work for many at the

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[63] John Keegan, and Richard Holmes. *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle*. Viking, 1986, p. 156.
[64] Lord Moran. *The Anatomy of Courage.* London: Constable & Co., 1987, xvi.

[65] Paul Fussell. *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic.* NY: Little Brown, 1996, p. 138.

time, but delayed stress reaction was a common occurrence later on – often times after the soldier had returned home to civilian life.

The end of World War II did not resolve the long argument whether battlefield breakdown was physical or psychological. Jones and Wessely do make an important observation about cultural changes after World War II. "Changes in culture towards the end of the twentieth century witnessed a greater acceptance of disclosure, ventilation and the expression of feelings."[66] These cultural changes crept into the debate about breakdown being a physical or a psychological manifestation. These cultural changes reflected enormous shifts in attitudes toward battle, war, manhood, and honor.

Other historians and soldiers agreed with Moran and Fussell that psychological breakdown is inevitable. Richard Gabriel wrote, "In every war in which American soldiers have fought in this century, the chances of becoming a psychiatric casualty – of being debilitated for some period of time as a consequence of the stresses of military life – were greater than the chances of being killed by enemy fire."[67] Peter Kindsvatter presented hundreds of individual examples throughout *American Soldiers* to show that breakdown is inevitable. Kindsvatter showed that soldiers, even soldiers eager to get into battle, found themselves spiraling into depths of behavior they never dreamed possible and moving from the idea that 'it can't happen to me' to 'it can

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[66] Jones and Wessely, p. 99.
[67] Richard A. Gabriel. *The Painful Field: The Psychiatric Dimension of Modern War*. New York, London: Greenwood Press, 1988, p. 30.

happen to me' to 'it will happen to me.'[68] Richard Ogden, a private in Vietnam, summed it up well, "The fight to remain alive was one problem. The fight to remain human was quite another." Gerald Linderman convincingly presented a harrowing study of five hundred American World War II infantry soldiers and Marines to support the inevitability of breakdown even in those who are experienced in battle and those who seem courageous and fearless.[69] However, Kindsvatter and Richard Holmes both mentioned physical elements as ingredients of breakdown, once again suggesting that breakdown from battle is physiological, not psychological. According to Holmes,

> A study of American soldiers in Italy in 1944 established that 31 per cent averaged less than four hours sleep a night, while another 54 per cent enjoyed less than six. Research on both sides of the Atlantic indicates that an adequate performance can be sustained for several weeks with as little as four hours sleep in a twenty-four-hour period, with six hours for more protracted operations. Even these small amounts of sleep are denied many soldiers. This lack of sleep interferes with the body's diurnal cycle which regulates many physiological functions. It is also highly likely to decrease his vigilance, interfere with his ability to think logically, concentrate and remember, and it can produce uncharacteristic behaviour patterns ranging from deep gloom to wild elation. Moreover, sleep loss is cumulative: a man deprived of sleep for forty-eight hours will recover after twelve hours of normal sleep, while a man who staggers on for ninety-six hours will need no less that 120 to recover. The effects of hunger are similar. Hungry men are very susceptible to cold, get bored easily, take increasingly little interest in others, and can eventually assume a 'don't care' attitude which resembles the zombie-like trance of utter exhaustion.[70]

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[68] Kindsvatter. pp. 67, 80-87.
[69] Gerald F. Linderman. *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II.* Free Press, 1997.
[70] Kindsvatter, p. 37. Holmes, Richard. *Acts of War: The Behaviour of Men in Battle.* Free Press, 1986, pp. 124-25.

The idea that breakdown is a result of physical conditions rather than psychological ones remains a large part of the debate today and is an important aspect of the argument that Civil War soldiers did not suffer psychological breakdown but did suffer physical breakdown. Later chapters will expand this argument, showing that soldiers such as the ones Patton slapped for cowardice were actually suffering from physiological aspects of warfare.

Whether physical or psychological, breakdown on the battlefield was clearly a huge military, financial, and social problem. Anthony Kellett provided numbers that reflect a continuation of the problem through Korea and Vietnam. "The rates of psychiatric casualty for Korea and Vietnam were 37 and 12 per 1000 troops per year, respectively."[71]

American psychiatric casualties in Korea initially approached those of the Second World War, but soon dropped to 6% of medical evacuations once proper first-line treatment centers had been set up. A battery of psychiatrists deployed right along with American soldiers in Korea, and the problem seemed to diminish. The Army's full-time psychiatrists established forward bases and used Salmon's treatment method. Cohesion and quick return to the combat group were stressed, morale became a buzzword, and new labels came into use: 'combat fatigue' and 'combat exhaustion'. Psychiatric casualties were indeed lower in Korea than they had been in

[71] Kellet

World War II. This created an atmosphere of hope that psychiatric casualty was a problem well on its way to solution.

In Vietnam, evacuations for psychiatric reasons fell to a mere 2-3% of all evacuations in 1967-8.[72] Jonathan Shay said of the 776,000 combat troops in Vietnam, 250,000 suffered from combat trauma.[73] Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas estimated that fully one half of Vietnam combat troops suffered from the disorder, which they cited as around 450,000.[74] Both Kellett and Peter Bourne cited the following numbers for psychiatric casualties in Korea and Vietnam: 37 per 1,000 troops per year in Korea and 12 per 1,000 troops per year in Vietnam.[75] Eric Dean, Jr., however, claimed that estimates of 50% or more of the three million Vietnam veterans who claim to suffer from PTSD was grossly overstated, to the point where it became known as "Vietnam Disease," especially when only 15% saw combat. Obviously, disagreement exists for psychiatric casualty numbers for Vietnam (perhaps because of the delayed stress reaction characteristic of many of these soldiers, which comes from suspension of emotions during combat, and is a condition found in studies of Vietnam veterans but is actually a reaffirmation of conditions observed in veterans of earlier wars), but, for whatever reasons, the

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[72] Keegan and Holmes, 156.

[73] Jonathan Shay. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. Touchstone: Simon & Schuster, 1995, p.138.

[74] Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas. *Wounds of War: The Psychological Aftermath of Combat in Vietnam.* New York, Basic Books, 1984, pp. 6-7.

[75] Anthony Kellet. *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Men in Battle*. Crown Copyright: Canadian Department of National Defense, 1982, p. 272; Peter G. Bourne. *Men, Stress, and Vietnam.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970, p. 75.

Vietnam veteran was the one that finally commanded more widespread attention concerning combat trauma.[76]

The twentieth century war that created the biggest firestorm of controversy and heated debate actually came in with the lowest number of psychiatric casualties. The PIES system of treatment was discovered to be less effective in Vietnam, where there were not really any front lines. However, army planners for Vietnam congratulated themselves in having finally found and implemented a successful preventive measure: the one-year rotation of troops. All seemed well – or at least better – at first, with psychiatric casualty numbers as low as five percent.[77] Psychiatrists felt better equipped to treat those who did suffer for two reasons: new psychiatric miracle drugs and a solid checklist of symptoms, which grew to include nightmares, insomnia, excessive startle reaction to loud noise, outbursts of anger, suspicion, mistrust, hypersensitivity, readiness to fight, cold and unemotional way of relating to people, lack of pleasure, loss of vitality, substance abuse, emotional numbing, memory and concentration problems, emotional withdrawal, physical aggression, flashbacks, guilt, anxiety, and depression.[78] The debate over the causes subsided in the hope that the causes of breakdown were no longer important; the rotation system could prevent most cases, and miracle drugs could successfully treat the rest.

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[76] Dean, Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War.
[77] Binneveld, p. 180.
[78] Roy W. Menninger. *American Psychiatry After World War II, 1944-1994.* American Psychiatric Association, June, 2000, chapter 1.

Into this hopefulness emerged a problem that had received little attention before: delayed stress reaction. Mardi Horowitz, a psychiatrist, explained that delayed reactions were characteristic of certain kinds of combat, namely the guerilla warfare found in the Vietnam War.[79] Delayed stress reaction was no longer a problem experienced by so few that it could remain on the fringes of the debate. The financial and social facets of this aspect of breakdown brought the debate to its most heated and controversial times. The numbers were so high that a new name came into existence, the Vietnam Disease. In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association officially recognized Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a valid disorder. Eric Dean, Jr., in *Shook Over Hell*, sympathized with Vietnam veterans who truly suffered with PTSD and did not wish to deny their condition or needs; however, he claimed that estimates of 60% or more of the three million Vietnam veterans who claim to suffer from PTSD was grossly overstated, especially when only 15% saw combat, suggesting that the condition was becoming an expected military and societal diagnosis of almost anyone who has gone to war, regardless of whether or not they saw combat. Obviously, disagreement exists for psychiatric casualty numbers for Vietnam, perhaps because of the delayed stress reaction characteristic of many of these soldiers, which comes from suspension of emotions during combat, and is a condition found in studies of Vietnam veterans but is actually a reaffirmation of

[79] Binneveld, p. 180.

conditions observed in veterans of earlier wars.[80] Dean's analysis offered six convincing contributors to support both the commonly-held emotionally-crippled, psycho, baby-killer image of the Vietnam veteran and the idea that PTSD strikes all who put on a uniform and march off to war, no matter what their role in that war. According to Dean, popular belief blames veterans' deviant behaviors on the domestic opposition to the Vietnam War, the quick demobilization (the miraculous one-year rotation credited with reducing and nearly eliminating breakdown while deployed, but was actually shown later to have contributed to the crumbling of unit cohesion, a proven bastion against breakdown[81]) that created a temporary unemployment problem, a supposed heroin epidemic, and the mixed reception veterans received when they returned home. Suicides, homelessness, criminal activity, family violence, and the like led to the mental health profession's recognition of PTSD in 1980, which in turn led to acceptance of the Vietnam veteran as different from all veterans before, as "having received 'shameful' and 'disgraceful' treatment at the hands of an ungrateful American public and U.S. government." Dean objected to this "ludicrous blubbering and psychobabble" image created by psychiatrists and

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[80] Peter G. Bourne. *Men, Stress, and Vietnam.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1970. Bourne, Peter G., ed. *The Psychology and Physiology of Stress: With Reference to Special Studies of the Viet Nam War.* New York, London: Academic Press, 1969. Glenn, Russell W. *Reading Athena's Dance Card: Men Against Fire in Vietnam.* Naval Institute Press, August, 2000. Hendin, Herbert, and Ann Pollinger Haas. *Wounds of War:The Psychological After Aftermath of Combat in Vietnam.* Basic Books, September, 1984, pp. 6-7. Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*. Scribner, October, 1995, p. 138. Shay, Jonathan. *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. Scribner, November, 2003. Sonnenberg, Stephen M., Arthur S. Blank, Jr,. and John A. Talbott. *The Trauma of War: Stress and Recovery in Vietnam Veterans.* American Psychiatric Publishing, June, 1985.

[81] Russell W. Glenn. *Reading Athena's Dance Card: Men Against Fire in Vietnam.* Naval Institute Press, August, 2000.

leftist anti-war critics such as Robert Jay Lifton, who "seem to have grossly exaggerated the problems of those returning veterans in order to achieve a social and political agenda. The image of the Vietnam veteran as nearly demented and drenched in blood and gore from the victims of his atrocities could also be used as a way of demonizing those in favor of the war." In the 1980s, conservatives contributed when people such as Ronald Reagan started calling them "frustrated patriots, betrayed by their own country" needing to be reconciled and deserving compensation.[82] This image management resulted in a strong veterans' lobby that seeks special treatment for Vietnam veterans. Dean did not intend to suggest that those truly suffering from PTSD (and they do exist) do not deserve all the care they need. Three consequences of PTSD do concern Dean. The first is that making Vietnam veterans special above all other veterans lessens the contributions, suffering, and needs of veterans of previous (and perhaps even subsequent) wars. The second is that some Vietnam veterans not suffering have made claims that spread skepticism on Vietnam veterans who truly suffer. While these two issues are disturbing, the third is alarming. Dean said that official recognition of PTSD and the subsequent "rights revolution" campaign on behalf of Vietnam veterans has led to an extension of application of PTSD to citizens who never saw war or battle but claim they suffer from PTSD for any number of experiences, experiences that traditionally existed in the realm of ordinary, everyday life, any kind of perceived abuse or wrong, from broken marriage

[82] Dean, pp. 182, 24, 183.

to watching the news. PTSD became the fastest-growing and most influential diagnosis in the history of psychiatry. The dangerous part of this is the greatly expanded rights of individuals to sue corporations and governmental entities in the area of tort law.[83] This trend is socially and financially destructive; it also, like non-suffering veterans who claim to suffer, lessens the meaning of PTSD and the suffering of those combat veterans struggling with the problems resulting from their battle experiences.

According to Wendy Holden, "The fashionable trend towards compensation and victimization has done little to help those trying to come to terms with their experiences of war. In a culture of complaint and indifference, the experiences of real victims of real tragedies are belittled, and counseling is available for anything from pet bereavement to minor theft. More than half of the population of the United States and Western Europe are now believed to be suffering from some type of depression, personality disorder, or psychosis. Too many people are jumping on the trauma bandwagon in a society where to be a victim confers upon people a state of innocence. What they don't realize is that it also saps them of the ability to take responsibility for their own lives. PTSD in the United States has been used in a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity on at least twenty-eight occasions in American courts, with the defendants claiming that their offenses occurred during flashbacks, because the plea carries a relatively light sentence. After some ridiculous court

[83] Ibid, p. 190.

rulings (like a woman awarded L90,000 because her landlady's destruction of a wren's nest outside her window caused her acute anxiety), John Keegan wrote: 'What, I wonder, would the psychiatrists make of the condition of men who fought continuously from 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945, some of whom returned to duty three times after wounding? Every D-Day veteran I have ever met reckons himself lucky to be alive. Most of them are still only seventy or so. They could break the bank if they made a mass claim and yet they are, in one way, as normal a group of people as it is possible to meet.'"[84] H. Stuart Hughes, a psychiatrist, asks in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, "Is there a danger that the increasingly standard perception that we live in a 'sick society' also carries with it the idea that nothing is anyone's fault any longer?"[85] Ben Shephard shares these concerns, claiming that military psychiatry did not disappear after Vietnam, as it has traditionally done after other wars, but became part of a burgeoning socio-medical movement he calls "traumatology." The point here is that these twentieth-century beliefs might lead us to think that soldiers in every war in history suffered from psychological combat trauma. We would be wrong to think that.

Clearly, combat soldiers in all wars might reflect a wide range of psychological impact as a result of combat – from positive psychological energy (yes, some do

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[84] Wendy Holden. *Shell Shock: The Psychological Impact of War*. PanMacMillan, April, 2001.

[85] H. Stuart Hughes. "Emotional Disturbance and American Social Change." *American Journal of Psychiatry.* 126 (1969), p. 21.

thrive on the stress of battle[86]) to no ill effects to extreme, lasting, and debilitating trauma. Since the First World War, we have begun to believe that killing, sustained exposure to the possibility of death, and witnessing the violent deaths of others have lasting traumatic consequences for a high percentage of combat soldiers – in any war. During World War II, measures were taken in an attempt to reduce the number of incidents and the severity of the trauma. After Vietnam, PTSD was diagnosed as a clinical disorder, and treatments and programs flourished for the many Vietnam War sufferers. Indeed, all American soldiers returning from tours of duty in Iraq must endure days of mandatory psychological screening even before contacting their families. Historians have discussed key aspects of the problem over the decades, identifying several important facets: causes and symptoms, prevention, treatments, compensation, and social and financial repercussions. One thing has not changed over the decades and throughout the discussions: all wars are terrible for those who have to fight them. When it comes to the consequences of the horrors men experience in battle, the discussions have not reflected preventions or solutions but have shown us that the problem is more puzzling, more complex, and more of a problem than ever. We also need to realize that the problem is a twentieth-century one.

Modern war has prompted historians and participants to take another look at American soldiers in all twentieth-century wars, and the list of publications is

[86] Earl J. Hess. *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat.* University of Kansas Press, 1997.

lengthy, especially for World War II and Vietnam. Since modern warfare, with its more sophisticated technology, increased soldier isolation, and "more dangerous" battlefields, is the most-often cited reason for psychological breakdown, some might argue that psychiatric combat trauma appears to be a twentieth-century phenomenon, and we need not worry about soldiers before that time.[87] Historians and political scientists have clearly tried to document the condition in wars of earlier centuries, proving that battle for infantry soldiers has always been dangerous and terrifying.[88]

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[87] Paddy Griffith. *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*. Yale Nota Bene: Yale UP, 2001, says it is "certainly to the First World War that most people turn for a parallel to the horrors of the Civil War. Joseph B. Mitchell, in *Decisive Battles of the Civil War*. Fawcett, New York: Premier Civil War Classics, 1962, says "The war became one of attrition, typical of what took place later in World War II." Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, in *How the North Won*. University of Illinois Press, 1983, believe "Grant's decision to seek confrontation in a frontal fight made the campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg a dress rehearsal for World War I" (692). Binneveld says, "The American Civil War marked the beginning of a new era in the history of warfare. During that conflict, the combined effect of massive volume and fire power was made manifest for the first time and had no less than 48 major battles….Broadly speaking, the First World War presents the same picture" 31. Edward Hagerman, in *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1992, introduction, agrees: "The American Civil War ushered in a new era in land warfare. In this war, mass armies first experienced the widespread impact of industrial technology. The rifled musket, with its devastating increase in firepower, doomed the open frontal assault and ushered in the entrenched battlefield, scenes of trench warfare anticipating World War I."

[88] Hans Binneveld. *From Shell Shock to Combat Stress: A Comparative History of Military Psychiatry*. Translated from the Dutch by John O'Kane. Amsterdam University Press, 1997, 3. Warfare of previous centuries possessed the major contributory battlefield conditions. Hans Binneveld wrote: "That soldiers can become wounded not only in the physical sense, but mentally as well, has been recognized for centuries. During the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), Spanish military doctors used the expression *estar roto* (to be on the point of breakdown) to characterize soldiers who could no longer endure combat. Swiss medical practitioners, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, regularly diagnosed nostalgia. Their German colleagues in the same period used the term *Heimwee*. The diagnosis of nostalgia was also regularly applied to French soldiers in the Napoleonic wars of conquest, especially during the retreat from Moscow. The American Civil War was the last conflict in which the term nostalgia was confirmed. Thereafter new terms came into use, but the psychologically wounded soldier remained. The phenomenon is therefore age-old." See also Adam Zamoyski. *Moscow 1812: Napoleon's Fatal March*. HarperCollins, 2004.
See Paul Wanke. *Russian/Soviet Military Psychiatry, 1904-1945*. London and New York: Frank Cass, 2005. Also helpful is Richard Gabriel. The Painful Field: The Psychiatric Dimension of Modern War. New York, Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1988.

In fact, historians are quick to point out that psychiatric consequences are perhaps not new to the twentieth century. What is different, however, is the reason behind the trauma. Hoplites and legionaries whose formations broke suffered appalling casualties. The survivors, who were quite incapacitated for further action for some time after that, suffered trauma as a result of the physiology of battle and as a result of the dishonor of failure in battle, not as a result of their fear or their casualties. According to Livy's *History of Rome*, at Cannae in August, 216 BC, when Hannibal's Carthaginians faced 80,000 Romans, 50,000 were killed (100 each minute). Corpses were discovered with their heads buried in the earth. Apparently, they had dug holes for themselves and then, by smothering their mouths in the dirt, had choked themselves to death. These soldiers at Cannae who buried their heads in the sand were committing suicide because of their dishonor for failing in battle – not because of cowardice or weakness. Both Homer and Virgil wrote of the horrors of battle for soldiers.[89] Napoleon's troops suffered the psychological effects of battle.[90] Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq, a nineteenth-century French infantry officer, spent a great deal of time in his classic *Battle Studies* writing of the critical problem of controlling fear on the battlefield.[91] John Keegan addressed the problem of hardening men to endure battle in a time-frame that spans from Agincourt in 1415 through World War II.[92] A number of works revealed the problem of "nostalgia" in the American Civil

[89] Virgil's *The Aeneid*. Homer's *The Iliad*.
[90] Adam Zamoyski. *Moscow 1812: Napoleon's Fatal March*. HarperCollins, 2004.
[91] Charles Ardant Du Picq. *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*. AmsPr, 1947.
[92] John Keegan. *The Face of Battle*. Penguin, 1976.

War.[93] Indeed, readings from nearly any war will contain references to this issue, some of them offering suggested solutions. According to Albert Deutsch, in 1863-64, there was "a marked increase in the number of military patients admitted to the institution, in the proportion of insanity and of cases of derangement supervening upon greater or less imbecility, explained by latter accessions to the Union armies that included a large portion of men who are more readily affected by the exciting causes of insanity than were to be found during the first two years of the war." Hospital authorities urged a better system of selective service as a barrier to mental breakdown in the armed forces. Since psychological breakdown as a result of battle was considered cowardice or weakness during this era, this plea, along with the entire problem of what was then called "nostalgia" or "irritable heart," was largely ignored.[94] Physicians who did address it still maintained that it was physiological in nature. I argue that it was ignored or in fact did not exist because of cultural beliefs of the era about manhood and honor, not because of the characteristics of battle.

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[93] Eric T. Dean, Jr. *Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War.* Harvard University Press, 1997. Deutsch, Albert. "Military Psychiatry: The Civil War, 1861-1865: in *One Hundred Years of American Psychiatry, 1844-1944.* Published for the American Psychiatric Association, New York: Columbia University Press, 1944, pp. 367-384. Frank, Joseph Allan, and George A. Reaves. *Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh.* University of Illinois Press, 1989. Hess, Earl J. *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat.* University of Kansas Press, 1997. Kellett, Anthony. *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Men in Battle.* Crown Copyright, Canadian Department of National Defense, 1982. Lande, Gregory. *Madness, Malingering, and Malfeasance: The Transformation of Psychiatry and Law in the Civil War Era.* Potomac Books, 2003. Linderman, Gerals E. *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War.* The Free Press, 1987. McPherson, James M. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War.* Oxford, 1997. Talbott, John. "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War." *History Today.* London: March 1996. Vol. 46, Iss. 3: pp41ff.

[94] Deutsch, 382.

From Anthony Kellet's *Combat Motivation:* "An occupational analysis of American enlisted personnel, based on a 1955 report for the President's Commission on Veterans' Pension, showed that during the Civil War 93.2 percent of soldiers had combat-related tasks while only 0.6 percent had mechanical or maintenance tasks, 0.7 percent had administrative and clerical tasks, and 0.2 percent had technical and scientific tasks." Combat troops in Vietnam comprised fifteen percent of the three million military personnel in Vietnam, yet Vietnam is the war primarily associated with combat trauma, to the extent that a new term came into use as a result: post-traumatic-stress-disorder (PTSD). According to Kellett, "the first acknowledgement of combat exhaustion (which has historically made up the bulk of psychiatric casualties) as a clinical entity occurred during the American Civil War." The Union Surgeon-General identified a disabling psychiatric condition, which he termed 'nostalgia,' and which affected 2.34 men per 1,000 during the first year of the war, and in 3.3 men per 1,000 during the second. An additional 26.8 men per 1,000 were discharged for "paralysis" and "insanity". If as many as half of the fifteen percent combat troops in Vietnam were clearly diagnosed as suffering from PTSD, and if 93.2 percent of Civil War soldiers were in combat, can we expect significant incidence of PTSD in the Civil War soldiers? Any study of Civil War combat will reveal that the combat was just as brutal, just as horrific as that in Vietnam, and perhaps even more so when we consider the extended periods that the Civil War

soldiers were under combat conditions as compared to the Vietnam soldier.[95] According to Paul Boesch, a combatant in the Huertgen Forest during World War II, "It is difficult to recall the sequence in which events occurred. Each episode appears to claim precedence over the others. But though it is hard to recall exactly when a thing happened, it is impossible to erase the events themselves, for the sheer, stark, exhausting terror burned them inextricably in our memory."[96] Dozens of soldiers from every twentieth-century war and from the Civil War express this same impression. We have returned to our two questions: does lack of evidence of psychiatric battle trauma in Civil War soldiers suggest that they returned home and hid their combat trauma in the closet, or did they not suffer from psychiatric combat trauma? Evidence will strongly suggest that they did not suffer from it.

Evidence indicates that the Civil War veteran could have suffered from combat trauma. Some of the reasons this has been ignored are no surprise, while others perhaps might be. Not surprising is the difficulty in gathering substantiating evidence. After all, no one conducted immediate postwar studies or surveys to detect the presence of PTSD. By the time it was clinically recognized after World War I, few if any Civil War veterans were available for studies and surveys. Even had they been, the information might not have been forthcoming, especially if the veterans themselves decided – for various reasons – to refuse to admit it or talk about it after

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[95] Kellet, 59.
[96] Paul Boesch. *Road to Huertgen: Forest in Hell.* 1962. Reprint, Houston: Paul M. Boesch, 1985, p. 165.

their return home. The evidence we do have has not been of primary importance to historians, even with the shift of attention from generals to common soldiers, perhaps as a result of John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* in 1976. Most historians who do attend to the common Civil War soldier only briefly mention combat trauma, if they mention it at all. A few have recently given the topic a bit more space, yet even that is inadequate.

Some classic titles that seemingly promise to survey the full range of experiences and attitudes of the common soldier do not mention combat trauma. Bell Irvin Wiley's *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* made no mention of combat trauma. James I. Robertson, Jr., had this to say in *Soldiers Blue and Gray:* "With the passing years, the men of blue and gray aged gracefully. Time healed most wounds and obliterated scars of body and mind."[97]

Reid Mitchell's title is encouraging to those seeking address to PTSD and the Civil War soldier, but while *Civil War Soldiers* spoke to many issues the soldier faced before and during the Civil War, combat trauma is not one of them. Mitchell admitted that "the Civil War experience changed men. Most men who were soldiers for any period of time underwent a psychological transformation. Those men who volunteered for an extended period tended to lose their prewar identities." He did note some of the changes: men becoming numb enough to "cook and eat, talk and

[97] James I. Robertson, Jr. *Soldiers Blue and Gray.* U South Carolina P, 1998. p. 227.

laugh with the enemy's dead lying all about us as though they were so many hogs." Mitchell wrote that the psychological transformation was insidious and possibly impossible to eradicate, but he also suggested that this dehumanization into beasts could be offset by the gratitude of one's country. Mitchell left the issue at that and drew no further conclusions.[98]

Another suggestive title is James McPherson's *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. McPherson treated the subject a bit more thoroughly than Mitchell, though the treatment is still limited to only a few pages, and conclusions are disappointing. The last chapter in the book started out on the right track, that though Civil War soldiers understood combat trauma as a loss of courage, they still suffered from it, more so in the last year of the war than in the preceding three, as combat became more prolonged and horrific and as soldiers became numb to death and dying all around them. The most important part of this chapter is McPherson's discussion of the current debate among historians concerning this issue, the debate on soldier motivation for enlisting and fighting and what sustained them through years of battle, which in turn reflected on their success or failure when reintegrating into society at war's end. McPherson maintained that soldiers at war's end held close the same ideology – "the values of duty, honor, courage, and belief in the Cause" – for which

[98] Reid Mitchell. *Civil War Soldiers.* Penguin, 1988, pp. 56, 64.

they initially enlisted; this ideology not only sustained them throughout the war but after the war as well.[99]

Earl Hess agreed that Union soldiers fought for and were sustained by patriotism and the ideology of the Union cause, and argued that Union soldiers saw the elephant but were not crippled by the experience. *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* interpreted the soldiers' combat experience and concluded that Northern soldiers were victorious over the horrors of combat; they found ways to cope with battlefield horrors, they continued to function successfully as soldiers through years of hard battles, and they then re-entered civilian life with virtually no ill effects.[100]

Another work dealing exclusively with Union soldiers and combat trauma is James Marten's article "Exempt From the Ordinary Rules of Life: Researching Postwar Adjustment Problems of Union Veterans," which looked at the transition to civilian life of Union soldiers through a study of records of the Milwaukee branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS). Marten agreed that, with few exceptions, historians have ignored the transition of Civil War soldiers to civilian life, even though studies acknowledge that they did indeed suffer from something like combat trauma and that those veterans suffering lingering effects of combat trauma have not been adequately examined. The records at NHDVS "reveal an astonishing

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[99] James M. McPherson. For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War. Oxford, 1997, p. 168.

[100] Hess. *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat.*

variety of war-induced conditions" present in veterans over the years following the war. Marten offered this study as a beginning proof suggestive of the existence of combat trauma in the Civil War soldier and as a starting point for additional investigation, but he drew no further conclusions and so did not make a convincing argument on the existence of the problem for Civil War soldiers.[101]

John Talbott drew more defined conclusions in "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War," stating that "human response to stress did not change between the Civil War and the Vietnam War, but understanding and interpreting the response were transformed" and that "men who might have been diagnosed with combat trauma in 1916, 1944, or 1968 were brought before court martials in 1864." Talbott offered an argument for the existence of combat trauma in 1864 and concluded that, though its existence is phantom-like and hard to prove, it was as much a reality in the Civil War as in Vietnam.[102] What Talbott did not consider were the social and cultural conditions which prohibited Civil War era Americans from considering psychological consequences of battle.

Joseph Allan Frank and George A. Reaves, in *Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh* examined soldiers' experiences in first seeing the elephant at Shiloh, detailing the now-familiar images and reactions and descriptions of men

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[101] James Marten. "Exempt from the Ordinary Rules of Life: Researching Postwar Adjustment Problems of Union Veterans." *Civil War History*. Kent: March 2001. Vol. 47, Iss. 1; pgs. 57ff.
[102] John Talbott. "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War." *History Today*. London: March 1996. Vol. 46, Iss. 3: pgs. 41ff.

before, during, and after the battle. The descriptions are nearly identical to those of other Civil War soldiers and to soldiers of other wars: men chatted and ate amidst dying men and corpses in various conditions, hardly noticing them. Other times, they would "examine brains, heart, stomach, layers of muscles, etc.," …things which previously had made them squeamish but were now gazed upon with no emotion. The book has a long catalog of these items, but authors Frank and Reaves concluded with this: these volunteers disproved the assumption that "seeing the elephant would be such a wrenching experience that they would be forever transformed by its horrors. Their initiation to combat did not change them as much as would have been expected."[103]

Gerald Linderman moved a bit closer in *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War*. He contended that uninitiated soldiers viewed battle as opportunity for glory through the public display of courage and manliness so important to the Victorian attitudes prevalent in the Civil War era. Courage was not only its own reward but was also protection itself against injury or death on the battlefield. Those soldiers who could not continue in battle believed it a loss of courage. Linderman argued that combat transformed them permanently and

[103] Joseph Allan Frank, and George A. Reaves. *Seeing the Elephant: Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh.* University of Illinois Press, 1989, pp. 164, 181.

negatively, making it impossible to continue successfully during the war or to re-enter civilian life after the war.[104]

Only one work primarily addresses combat trauma in relation to the Civil War. In *Shook Over Hell*, Eric Dean presents an analysis of 291 case studies of Civil War veterans committed to the Indiana Hospital for the Insane, most of whom "exhibited symptoms that would today be diagnosed as PTSD." What Dean claimed is that Civil War veterans suffered from PTSD – and suffered in the extreme for several reasons. Unlike the Vietnam veteran, the Civil War veteran suffering symptoms of PTSD had nowhere to turn for help or support. In an era when mental illness was not understood and when men, especially soldiers, were supposed to be manly and courageous, he was nearly always labeled a coward or shirker – and treated as such by family, friends, and society. He also had no access to professional or financial assistance, unless he was lucky enough to be awarded a disability pension. Dean concluded that Civil War veterans suffered the same sort of mental disorders as a result of combat as the Vietnam (and other twentieth-century) veterans. The sight of dead bodies, atrocities, comrades in agony from wounds, suffering civilians, prolonged artillery bombardment, abuse by captors, and terror could do the same thing to soldiers (and to doctors and nurses as well) in the 1860s as in the 1960s. Flashbacks and nightmares, it is clear, were not something new in the Vietnam

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[104] Gerald E. Linderman. *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War*. The Free Press, 1987.

generation or the World War II generation or the generation of any other twentieth-century war. The end result of combat for the Civil War soldier was a "disturbing transformation" with psychological problems as a result of that combat becoming a "common medical occurrence" for many of them.[105] When we look at Kellet's numbers for Civil War soldiers, Dean's argument weakens. In addition, we have no way to know if these 291 soldiers would have ended up in the Indiana Hospital for the Insane even had they not experienced combat.

"The most vivid change was the casual manner in which the soldiers talked about killing. They had made the psychological transition from their normal belief that taking human life was sinful, over to a new professional outlook where killing was a craft. No longer was there anything morally wrong about killing. In fact, it was an admirable thing." These words sound like many we encounter from the Civil War soldier. Ernie Pyle penned these words during the Africa Campaign in World War II, but we can hear the echoes of Civil War soldiers – at least during the war.[106] The final question is: why did these same Civil War soldiers who talked so freely of their negative transformations as a result of battle apparently change their stories after the war? Perhaps they did not change their stories; perhaps distance from battle offered the chance to reflect upon other aspects of the war and of battle. Their initial motivations to go to war, manhood and honor, survived the horrors of battle and

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[105] Dean, *Shook Over Hell*.
[106] Ernest T. Pyle. *Here Is Your War*. New York: Holt, 1943.

persisted for the remainder of their lives. The fading into the background of the horrors of battle suggest that initial reaction to battle was physiological and that Civil War soldiers returned to normal after the war.

Not only have historians tended to neglect the issue of combat trauma for the Civil War soldier, but several postwar trends – and even veterans themselves – worked to deny or reduce the existence of combat trauma, veiling it from themselves and from future generations. Why? Our need to see our soldiers as heroes in war, to forget them in peace, and to regard their postwar difficulties as weaknesses interfering with our idealized picture of them has caused us not to notice that even heroes pay a high price for their wartime actions. Veterans are torn by these same expectations of themselves, perhaps more so in the Civil War era than in any other time. Civil War soldiers might have returned home with a trunk load of psychological baggage. Even had they wanted to or been willing to talk to family or those who had not experienced the war in the same way, no one wanted to listen. Postwar adjustment was difficult in many ways outside the psychological damage they might have had. The Victorian mindset of the era said that it was not manly to admit any negative psychological consequences of war, and it was a personal problem, not a public problem. In light of all this, veterans, if they were suffering negative psychological consequences from the war, might have decided to be silent and try to forget the war, which was what most Americans tried to do for a number of years after the war. When people were ready to look again at the war, society decided to popularize the war, to romanticize

not only it but the courage of the veteran as well. Again, veterans remained isolated in all ways except as manly warriors, an image they accepted and even promoted. In doing so, were they hiding damaged minds from the world – and themselves – and promoting a lie? Linderman says a purification process started in the 1880s contributed to the continuing refusal to consider that the Civil War soldier had experienced anything like combat trauma or had any lasting ill effects. Veterans came to espouse that combat had been the most important chapter in their lives.[107] Another contributor to this romanticizing of the Civil War and war in general was American business at that time, which was seen as a negative influence to American society and values. War became desirable and essential to preserve cherished values against the corrupting influences of big business. Veterans told their sons gallant, exciting stories about their experiences in battle; their sons wanted a war to fight. Negative psychological consequences had no place in this picture.

Evidence of psychiatric combat trauma in Civil War soldiers is sketchy at best. Historians cannot agree on its existence. Perhaps it did exist and eludes us. Another explanation is that it simply did not exist, an argument for which evidence is abundant. The Civil War was a modern war in some ways, especially concerning weapons and technology, but in many other ways, it still reflected expectations and characteristics of different times, with roots reaching back much earlier, to classical Greece and the Western way of war. In fact, psychologically, people of the Civil War

[107] Linderman, 287.

era had psychological roots that reached far into the past – to classical Greece. In some ways, Civil War soldiers had more in common with Greek Hoplites and the Spartans at Thermopylae than with twentieth-century American soldiers. They shared similar attitudes toward honor and the psychology of battle.

At the root of infantry battle in classical Greece was the value of personal courage. According to John Keegan, soldiers met the enemy in head-on, face-to-face battle, shoulder to shoulder, without flinching, until "either the enemy had broken or they themselves lay dead where they had stood."[108] Victor Hanson Davis added, this stark way of battle "left us with what is now a burdensome legacy in the West: a presumption that battle under any guise other than a no-nonsense, head-to-head confrontation between sober enemies is unpalatable."[109] This method of fighting battles was the method of battle in the Civil War. Greek hoplites and Civil War soldiers agreed on ideas of courage and cowardice. The events of Thermopylae provide an excellent example of hoplite attitudes toward battle.

Civil War soldiers shared these attitudes. They were eager to show their courage through bravery in battle. One of their biggest fears was not death itself but displaying cowardice. They did not tolerate cowardice in their fellow soldiers. Desertion was a primary sign of cowardice during the Civil War. Civil War soldiers and commanders mention military executions after charges of desertion (commonly considered an act of cowardice), even if the accused had previous documentation of

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[108] John Keegan introduction to Victor Hanson Davis. *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989.
[109] Hanson, xv.

mental conditions that interfered with performance of duty. Sometimes, units would volunteer to serve as executioners for deserters from their own unit. Participants' own words suggest this was more than just a breakdown of small-group cohesion. General Sheridan recounts, "Three men of my division had deserted their colors at the beginning of the siege and made their way north. They were soon arrested and were brought back to stand trial for the worst offense that can be committed by a soldier, convicted of the crime, and ordered to be shot."[110] Colonel Charles Wainwright records, "Several [deserters] are to be shot tomorrow morning. Now is the time to do it; the punishment should be so sure and speedy that cowards will be more afraid of running away than of standing…the President commutes the death punishment of all deserters to imprisonment during the war. Poor, weak, well-meaning Lincoln!"[111] According to John Billings, fellow members of a deserter's company were so enraged at his offense that they all requested to be part of the firing squad.[112] Deserters were labeled as cowards, and cowardice was the most shameful of all behaviors. It violated the codes of honor and manhood and was not tolerated.

Courage and manhood were the most important qualities a man could possess during the Civil War era. Courage and manhood determined his reputation and his standing in his family and community. Loss of either was considered worse than

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[110] Richard Wheeler. *Voices of the Civil War*. Foreward by Bruce Catton. (New York: Meridian, 1976), 240.
[111] Allan Nevins, ed. *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865*. New Introduction by Stephen W. Sears. Da Capo Press, 1998), 379, 431.
[112] John D. Billings. *Hardtack & Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life*. Introduction by William L. Shea. Illustrated by Charles W. Reed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 199), 160.

death. Failure as a soldier most assuredly meant loss of both. Protecting these aspects of his reputation was a man's first priority. As we will see in the coming chapters, soldiers in both the North and the South held tightly to these beliefs, especially in the face of battle.

Chapter 3:

Some Things Never Change – Combat Physiology

"A real man will never let the fear of death overpower his honor and his manhood."

General George Patton[113]

On August 3, 1943, Private Charles H. Kuhl reeled back from the blow and accompanying abuse in a tent at the 15th Evacuation Hospital near Messina, Sicily. Kuhl, from the 1st Armored Division, though exhibiting no evident physical wounds, had been sent to the field hospital with a diagnosis of psychoneurosis. Lt. General George Patton, possibly the allied commander most feared by the Germans during World War II, was visiting the wounded that day. Patton had accomplished smashing military successes in the preceding months: in French North Africa in the Torch landings, in Tunisia, and in Sicily. These successes had not only gotten the attention of the German command, but Patton had been featured on the July, 1943 covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*, as the "conqueror" of Sicily. These successes also meant that Patton was the clear choice to command U. S. ground forces preparing for Operation Overlord. His actions on that August day launched a sequence of events that nearly ruined his career. General Patton's attack on Private Kuhl was only the first of two slapping incidents. On August 10, at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital Sicily, Patton, outraged by what he perceived to be blatant cowardice, slapped another

[113] General George Patton. "Speech to the Third Army" on June 5th, 1944, the eve of the Allied invasion of France, code named "Overlord."

soldier. The victim of his rage this time was Private Paul Bennett of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, a twenty-year-old who had been fighting on the front lines for six months and who had been sent by his company surgeon to hospital. Patton perceived these two soldiers as malingerers and cowards. Witnessed by other soldiers, doctors, and nurses, and by reporters, he screamed that Bennett was "a goddamned coward and a yellow son of a bitch" and said: "I won't have these brave men here who have been shot seeing a yellow bastard sitting here crying." He then slapped Bennett, shoved his pistol in his face, and claimed he should be shot for cowardice. In fact, Patton appeared to be on the verge of shooting Bennett himself. As a result of these incidents, Patton was not given a combat command in the upcoming campaigns in Northwest Europe. Moreover, he was reprimanded and ordered to apologize to the two soldiers and to medical personnel stationed at the two evacuation hospitals. Some called for Patton to apologize to the entire Seventh Army.[114]

In earlier times, General George Patton's desire for immediate execution of shell-shocked soldiers such as Kuhl and Bennett might have come to pass. We have already seen the treatment Aristodamus received when his fellow soldiers labeled him the Trembler and ostracized him. During the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and American Civil War, soldiers were indeed executed for cowardice. World War I and World War II marked changes in attitudes toward combat behavior of soldiers and strides in understanding the psychology of combat as distinct from the physiology of

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[114] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily*. New York: Dutton, 1988, pp. 483-84. *Patton: AGenius for War*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995, pp. 532ff.

combat. As one who believed in courage and duty and strength in the face of whatever war presented, Patton was forced to face changing ideas about combat performance, courage, and the effects of battle on men. He was not alone.

Kuhl's and Bennett's physical reactions to combat and the symptoms they exhibited are common in acute stress situations where physiology affects combat performance. Kuhl was suffering from malaria and diarrhea. Diarrhea is among the common symptoms of physiological acute stress reaction. Bennett had witnessed a buddy wounded in battle and had experienced sixty days of combat. He appeared disoriented. His company surgeon recorded that he was suffering from extreme nervousness and ordered him evacuated. He also had probably undergone sleep deprivation, a physical contributor to poor combat performance. No one is immune to acute stress reactions in combat situations. This reality is true for all soldiers of all wars – from Greek hoplites to Kuhl and Bennett to American soldiers in Iraq. Though the physiology of combat is as old as combat itself, the study of that physiology is only a few decades old, which means that a gross lack of information and understanding has existed for most soldiers throughout recorded history. This lack of recognition and understanding of acute stress reaction has led to a lack of understanding of combat and to confusion concerning soldier performance. In recent times, especially in the twentieth century, physiological combat reactions have been confused with psychological combat reactions. Patton's infamous slapping incidents precisely illustrated this phenomenon. Patton had mistaken physiological symptoms

for psychological weakness, malingering, and cowardice. In the past, this lack of understanding of common physical reaction to acute stress has resulted in serious consequences for soldiers and for armies. Armies experienced greatly reduced manpower. Soldiers suffered dire consequences, such as imprisonment and even execution for cowardice.

In recent decades, research into the physiology and acute stress reaction has received the most attention in the criminal justice and special operations fields. That research has provided applications useful to police officers and soldiers. World War I, World War II, and certainly Civil War era soldiers, commanders, and medical personnel had little or no awareness of the physiology of acute stress reaction. When soldiers experienced symptoms such as perceptual and visual narrowing or auditory exclusion, they thought they were going crazy. Most typically, their commanders concluded that they were cowards. In the last half of the twentieth century, soldiers and commanders eventually understood these reactions to be a part of the process of battle and that soldiers would recover with food and rest. This understanding came too late for Civil War soldiers and commanders.

In 1984, the Army Research Institute charged a committee of experts from psychological sciences and the field of cognitive neuroscience to construct teaching and learning methods and models to prepare Americans engaged in high stress situations – soldiers, firefighters, and police officers – for deadly force encounters, for combat, or for complex technical operations. Even now, “a true profile on the

psychology of survival stress and combat performance has not surfaced…and there is no reference that clearly identifies the affects of survival stress on performance and why skills deteriorate."[115] These experts found that the relationship between survival stress, escalating heart rates, and combat or deadly force encounter performance "creates a combat paradox, a state where a perceived high-threat stimulus automatically engages the sympathetic nervous system. The activation of this system increases the heart rate, which in turn has a crucial affect on motor performance, visual processing, and cognitive reaction time." Heart rate alone is critical to the success of soldier performance. At 115 beats per minute, fine motor skills of precision and accuracy deteriorate. Research indicates that 115 to 145 beats per minute is the optimal heart rate for motor skill performance and cognitive processing required of soldiers in combat situations. At 145 beats per minute, complex motor skills deteriorate, and the visual system begins to narrow. Studies show that any survival situation, such as battle, will probably raise the heart rate to levels higher than 145 beats per minutes. At 175 beats per minute, soldiers experience auditory exclusion and loss of peripheral vision and depth perception, which initiates catastrophic failure of the cognitive processing capabilities, leading to fatal increases in reaction time or even hypervigilance – freezing in place or irrational behaviors.[116] In other words, anxiety and fear initiate the sympathetic nervous system, escalating

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[115] Bruce K. Siddle. *Sharpening the Warrior's Edge: The Psychology & Science of Training*. Belleville, Il: PPCT Research Publications, 1995, pp. 6-7. For the Army Research Institute, see *Enhancing Human Performance*. National Research Council, National Academy Press, 1988, and *In the Mind's Eye*. National Research Council, National Academy Press, 1991.
[116] Siddle, p. 8.

the heart rate, and directly decrease combat effectiveness. Though some of these conditions are the result of mental stress – anxiety, apprehension, anger, hopelessness, or fear – they create and are combined with physical reactions – increased heart rate and adrenaline – and can lead to immediate catastrophic failure of individuals or even of groups, the most dangerous of which is hypervigilance – freezing in place and becoming incapable of action. Hypervigilance is a state of panic, in which soldiers cannot react or exhibit irrational or ineffective behaviors that can result in their own death or the death of others. These reactions are physical, not psychological, and every soldier is affected, though to varying degrees. Patton had undergone battlefield conditions and had apparently suffered only minor physiological symptoms. As a result, he believed that men could be strong enough or brave enough to overcome battlefield conditions and their consequences.

Historians and soldiers have documented this phenomenon for us. Ardant du Picq, a nineteenth-century French soldier who died in battle at Metz in 1870, emphasized the importance of the control of fear in soldiers on the battlefield. He perceived fear and men's hearts as the most important element in battle success or failure. Part of the fear reaction du Picq perceived was undoubtedly the physiology of acute stress reaction. World War I British physician Charles McMoran Wilson (Lord Moran) wrote, "Men are not afraid of death, they are afraid of dying."[117] Moran wrote in a time when poor combat performance was equated with weakness or lack of moral

[117]Charles Moran. *Anatomy of Courage*.

fiber. The study of combat performance and the development of the field of endocrinology have proven this incorrect. Modern soldiers receive techniques for controlling anxiety and fear which help maintain effective heart rates, reduce physiological reaction to acute stress, and increase warrior combat effectiveness. Soldiers of earlier times did not receive such training.

What are the common physical reactions to acute stress? Anyone in an acutely stressful situation, but especially soldiers in combat, will experience one, some, many, most, or all of the following reactions: tunnel vision; profound breakdown of speaking ability (being scared speechless); loss of depth perception; loss of near vision; loss of fine motor control (their fingers will not function to load and fire their weapons); auditory exclusion; diminished sound (the brain tunes out sensory input to focus on survival, so soldiers might not hear their own weapons fire); stress diarrhea; insensitivity to pain; sudden visual clarity or temporary blindness; slow-motion time; temporary paralysis; dissociation; intrusive, distracting, and bizarre thoughts; memory loss; memory distortion or hallucination (seeing or hearing things that did not happen); nightmares. Fatigue, insufficient sleep, and malnutrition will only exacerbate the likelihood and extent of these reactions. In addition, the physical hormonal changes the human body undergoes in the stress of battle results in a powerful physiological collapse after battle. During battle, the body produces large quantities of adrenaline. This adrenaline overload and depletion results in complete

exhaustion after battle, and soldiers fall asleep as a result. Battle exhaustion, combat fatigue, is physical, not psychological, and it happens to everyone.[118]

Fear and courage are traditional cornerstones of the debate concerning combat performance and effectiveness, part of a bigger discussion on the cause or causes of breakdown in battle. Traditionally, medical professionals, military personnel, soldiers, and civilians believed that breakdown in battle was simply a sign of cowardice, lack of character, weakness. Attitudes like Patton's show that this was a prevalent attitude even through much of the twentieth century. Medical professionals wrote these men off as deficient; the military executed many of them; fellow soldiers scorned them; and everyone abandoned them if they were among the lucky ones to return home rather than die in battle or face execution. Emotional self-control was simply a requirement of character, and battle simply a test of manhood – and these men had failed.

What some were overlooking was the possibility of physical causes of breakdown in combat. A few lone voices, usually military medical and psychiatric personnel, claimed that these men were not simply cowards, shirkers, malingerers, or lunatics, but that they were suffering actual physical symptoms resulting from their experiences on the battlefield, that their conditions were beyond their control, and that they needed treatment tailored to those symptoms. Walter Bradford Cannon made a

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[118] Peter G. Bourne. *The Psychology and Physiology of Stress, With Reference to Special Studies of the Viet Nam War*. New York and London: Academic Press, 1969. Roy R. Grinker, Lt. Col., M.C. and John P. Spiegel, Major, M.C. *War Neuroses*. Philadelphia and Toronto: The Blakiston Company, 1945.

significant contribution in 1915 in *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage.* Cannon's work on the effects of stress on the human endocrine system suggested the mind and body interact in illness; this work led to a new branch of medicine in 1913 – endocrinology. The possible role of the endocrine system in what was previously believed to be shell shock became apparent as an explanation for breakdown in battle and as an explanation for the concept of fight, flight, or freeze.[119] Still, the attitudes concerning weakness and cowardice persisted. In addition, the search for exclusively psychological explanations persisted as well.

Peter Kindsvatter and Richard Holmes both mention physical elements as ingredients of breakdown. Kindsvatter has written:

> A study of American soldiers in Italy in 1944 established that 31 per cent averaged less than four hours sleep a night, while another 54 per cent enjoyed less than six. Research on both sides of the Atlantic indicates that an adequate performance can be sustained for several weeks with as little as four hours sleep in a twenty-four-hour period, with six hours for more protracted operations. Even these small amounts of sleep are denied many soldiers. This lack of sleep interferes with the body's diurnal cycle which regulates many physiological functions. It is also highly likely to decrease soldier vigilance, interfere with his ability to think logically, concentrate and remember, and it can produce uncharacteristic behaviour patterns ranging from deep gloom to wild elation. Moreover, sleep loss is cumulative: a man deprived of sleep for forty-eight hours will recover after twelve hours of normal sleep, while a man who staggers on for ninety-six hours will need no less than 120 to recover. The effects of hunger are similar. Hungry men are very susceptible to cold, get bored easily, take increasingly little interest in others, and can eventually assume a 'don't care' attitude which resembles the zombie-like trance of utter exhaustion.[120]

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[119] Shephard, 111-112.
[120] Kindsvatter, p. 37. Holmes, Richard. *Acts of War: The Behaviour of Men in Battle.* Free Press, 1986, pp. 124-25.

Adrenaline rush and decline cause physical spirals of energy and fatigue through soldiers and entire armies. The anxiety and physical stress of combat increase adrenaline and heart rate and temporarily boost energy and alertness. The aftermath of adrenaline rush – adrenaline depletion – presses extreme and unavoidable fatigue upon soldiers. Combined with sleep deprivation, lack of regular meals, and typical battlefield incidents, adrenaline rush and depletion will affect the performance of even the strongest soldiers. Both Kuhl and Bennett had experienced many or all of these conditions and exhibited many of these symptoms. Patton's lack of understanding had serious consequences for them. Lack of understanding was far more widespread than just these incidents.

This lack of understanding occurred because symptoms of physiological combat trauma are similar to the psychological characteristics of what we have come to know as shell shock or, since 1980, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The symptoms of each are similar; in fact, some are identical, which could explain why physiological combat trauma was often misdiagnosed as shell shock or PTSD in the past. Symptoms of acute stress reaction are listed as "physical - trembling, sweating, chills, nausea, diarrhea, hyperventilation, dizziness, urge to urinate, jumpiness, thirst: emotional - wide range of emotions, including crying; intense preoccupation with the event; second guessing; elation; anger, irritability, hypersensitivity; paranoia, fear of judgment; self-consciousness; vulnerable, anxious, worried, scared; sad, despondent, sense of loss; numb, robot-like, unusually calm; alone, alienated; confused,

overwhelmed: cognitive - dazed, disoriented; difficulty concentrating; memory impairment."[121]

These symptoms stem directly from the body's physical reaction to fear discussed earlier. Behavioral science consultant, clinical psychologist, and author Dr. Alexis Artwohl and author, Vietnam veteran, and retired police officer Loren Christensen provide a very good definition of fear in their book *Deadly Force Encounters*: "Fear is an automatic physical reaction to a perceived threat that will result in predictable physical, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive changes because of high physical arousal states." Characteristics of physical changes from fear include: pounding heart; muscle tension; trembling; rapid, shallow breathing; dizziness; nausea; gut-wrenching knot; sweating; dry mouth; goose bumps; tingling sensations in limbs and/or face; insensitive to pain; jumpy, easily startled; urge to urinate/defecate. Perceptual changes from fear include: tunnel vision as a result of loss of peripheral vision and depth perception; heightened visual clarity; hearing distortions – either muffled or louder than normal or both at the same time; time distortion – either slow motion or speeded up; dissociation – like being in a dream; temporary paralysis. Cognitive/behavioral changes from fear include: automatic behavior; memory gaps; intrusive thoughts. The body usually takes three to four days to recover from the adrenaline rush resulting from the body's reaction to fear.[122]

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[121] Alexis Artwohl and Loren W. Christensen. *Deadly Force Encounters: What Cops Need to Know to Mentally and Physically Prepare for and Survive a Gunfight*. Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 1997, pp. 180-81.
[122] Ibid., pp. 33, 38-44, 180-81.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* – IV (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association, is the official manual used all over the country to define psychological injuries and mental disorders. It provides a detailed explanation of psychological trauma, its definition and its symptoms. In it, a traumatic event is described as "the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror." …with the following four components:

> 1. Exposure to a traumatic event.
> 2. Intrusive, persistent reliving of the trauma as characterized by at least one of the following symptoms: upsetting recollections, nightmares, feeling or acting as if the event were recurring, psychological distress when reminded of the event, physiological reactivity when reminded of the event.
> 3. Avoidance of reminders of the event and numbing of general responsiveness as characterized by at least three of the following: avoiding thoughts, feelings, and conversations that are reminders; avoiding activities, places, and people that are reminders; inability to recall important aspects of the event; reduced interest in or reduced participation in significant activities; feeling detached or estranged from others; restricted or reduced emotions; sense of foreshortened future
> 4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal as characterized by at least two of the following: difficulty falling or staying asleep; irritability and/or outbursts of anger; difficulty concentrating; hypervigilance (inability to relax, always feeling on guard); exaggerated startle response. These symptoms must be still occurring more than a month after the event to be PTSD.[123]

[123] American Psychiatric Association . *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Washington D.C., 1994, pp. 182ff.

Listing all these details here is important to our discussion in two ways. The definition and symptoms can be compared to those of acute stress reaction. The comparison illustrates that some of these symptoms, such as hypervigilance, inability to sleep, difficulty concentrating, and irritability, are found in both psychological trauma and physiological trauma. The other important point for us is to note that classification as psychological trauma (PTSD) requires that the symptoms must still be occurring more than a month after the event. Soldiers who experienced these symptoms in battle usually recovered after rest and food and did not display the symptoms for more than a month after the event. This strongly suggests that the symptoms were physiological, not psychological.

Du Picq and Moran were correct in suggesting that fear was contagious and that men only had limited amounts of immunity (courage) against it. We now know that these reactions are not emotionally-based or signs of weak character. We now know that these reactions are physically-based and that no one is immune to some or all of the reactions involved. Yes, fear is contagious, because all will experience elevated heart levels and an adrenaline rush as a result, which triggers the sympathetic nervous system and begins the breakdown process. No amount of sheer courage can provide immunity. Today, soldiers are provided with mental and physical techniques during training to lessen the impact of acute stress reaction and reduce the possibility of breakdown. These techniques were not known until the last few decades of the twentieth century. Soldiers from Vietnam and before could not benefit from this

knowledge or these techniques. Thomas Salmon's World War I PIE (Proximity, Immediacy, Expectancy) treatment was a success because it alleviated the physical trauma and allowed the three to four days needed for recovery from an adrenaline overload. Soldiers were sent to a safe place, given support, food and rest, and most were sent back recovered and refreshed. This treatment method became standard for subsequent wars. American psychiatric casualties in Korea initially approached those of the Second World War, but soon dropped to 6% of medical evacuations once proper first-line treatment centers had been established, and in Vietnam, evacuations for psychiatric reasons fell to a mere 2-3% of all evacuations in 1967-8.[124] Kuhl and Bennett had been sent back to hospital for symptoms of physical combat trauma. Had they received first-line PIE treatment instead of a slap, they probably would have returned to the lines in a few days and been, once again, effective soldiers.

Lack of understanding was even more widespread for Civil War soldiers. Of the three million soldiers who served in the Civil War, ninety-three percent were combat soldiers.[125] Soldier roles in the Civil War were not differentiated as in later armies, where a percentage of soldiers served as combat soldiers and other soldiers served in support roles. Nearly all Civil War soldiers carried or served weapons and participated in combat. Thus, ninety-three percent of Civil War soldiers experienced what today is termed combat trauma – physiological combat trauma, the same physiological trauma that any human exposed to combat conditions would most

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[124] Keegan and Holmes, 156.
[125] Anthony Kellet. *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Men in Battle.* Crown Copyright: Canadian Department of National Defense, 1982.

certainly experience, regardless of psychological condition, physical condition, or training. As mentioned before, in the twentieth century, these symptoms of common and normal physical reaction to acute stress, as combat always is, were often diagnosed as symptoms of psychological damage or deficiency. Since soldiers were unprepared for these physical reactions, they presumed they must be going crazy. Anyone not aware of these common physical reactions might think the same. The resulting diagnoses were shell shock in World War I and psychoneurosis in World War II. The same diagnoses could have happened in the Civil War, but they did not. The reasons, however, are not what we might first think. Psychology as a discipline did not exist at the time, but even if it had, other factors account for differences in attitudes toward successful or poor combat performance.

Most of the three million soldiers in the Civil War were citizen-soldiers, not professional soldiers. Even professional soldiers during this time, however, did not understand all the physiological facets of battle. Some things were obvious: soldiers fell asleep after combat; soldiers experienced stress diarrhea; and soldiers needed to be reminded to fire their weapons (probably because they could not hear them fire during battle as a result of auditory exclusion).[126] Civil War soldiers did not at first expect or understand these physical symptoms, so deciding that they were

[126] Weapons retrieved from the battlefield after the Battle of Gettysburg had multiple loads, some with a dozen or more. S.L.A. Marshall's ratio of fire and psychological reasons have been offered as explanation for these multiple loads, but Civil War officers record the need for soldiers to be reminded to fire their weapons between loads. Battle stress and auditory exclusion could well explain weapons with multiple loads. See S. L. A. Marshall. *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command*. Introduction by Russell W. Glenn. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, Red River Books, 2000.

psychological in nature could have happened. In other words, the potential for psychological breakdown was present in every Civil War battle. Evidence of psychological breakdown is extremely elusive or even non-existent, but evidence of physiological reactions is prevalent. As with Kuhl and Bennett, too often, Civil War soldiers suffering from the physiology of combat were considered shirkers, malingerers, or even cowards. Granted, shirkers, malingerers, and cowards no doubt took up space in the ranks of Civil War armies, as in other armies in history, but lack of information about stress reaction applied these labels to the undeserving as well as the deserving. Deserters were sentenced to be executed; sometimes the men in their own units volunteered for inclusion on the firing squad. Why? Desertion was considered an act of cowardice, the ultimate sin for a soldier, and death as punishment was not considered the least harsh or unwarranted. However, not all desertion received or deserved the label of cowardice. Chapter 1 illustrated that desertion as a result of governmental failure to meet contractual enlistment obligations was acceptable as early as the colonial wars and the American Revolution. Civil War soldiers shared this acceptance of desertion as justifiable. Not all Civil War participants shared this view. Commanders were especially disinclined to accept explanations other than cowardice, coloring all deserters with the label of coward and making them all eligible for punishment. We will take a closer look at another aspect of acceptable desertion – its causes and its consequences - in the chapter on honor.

Civil War soldiers experienced physiological combat trauma long before it was understood and long before training techniques were developed to counter it. Moreover, Civil War soldiers also did not know anything about psychiatry, since it did not yet exist as a discipline. When they experienced physical stress reactions, their realm of possible explanations was much more limited; hence, their conclusions were far different from those of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. We cannot expect them to consider psychological explanations beyond those of insanity or temporary insanity. What we are left with, then, is a confluence of influences resulting in a mindset foreign to Americans of today. Their descriptions of their experiences and reactions illustrate that for us.

Leander Stillwell was only eighteen years old when he enlisted with Company D of the 61st Illinois Infantry Regiment. He served for three and a half years and fought at Shiloh and Vicksburg. In his memoirs, he described his military service as the highest prize and proudest recollection of his life. He described combat conditions for the common soldier. "The extent of a battlefield seen by the common soldier is that only which comes within the range of the raised sights of his musket. And what little he does see is as 'through a glass, darkly.' The dense banks of powder smoke obstruct his gaze; he catches but fitful glimpses of his adversaries as the smoke veers or rises." More telling is his description of the soldier's part in battle itself. "The handling, tearing, and charging of his cartridge, ramming it home, the capping of his gun, the aiming and firing, with furious haste and desperate energy, - for every shot

may be his last,- these things require the soldier's close personal attention and make him oblivious to matters transpiring beyond his immediate neighborhood." His detailed descriptions of his own experiences of combat suggest acute stress reaction. A soldier's "sense of hearing is well-nigh overcome by the deafening uproar going on around him. The incessant and terrible crash of musketry, the roar of the cannon, the continual zip, zip, of the bullets as they hiss by him, interspersed with the agonizing screams of the wounded, or the death shrieks of comrades falling in dying convulsions right in the face of the living are not conducive to serene mental equipoise."[127] Stillwell could well be describing visual reduction and audio exclusion, both common symptoms of the physiology of acute stress reaction. Battle conditions and physiology both contribute to Stillwell's experience. Modern studies show that battle conditions raise the heart rate to levels of 145 or higher, releasing adrenaline and other chemicals into the body and initiating the sympathetic nervous system. This reduces the soldier's ability to make judgments on the battlefield, reduces a soldier's ability to perform fine motor skill applications, reduces the soldier's visual ability, and reduces the soldier's sense of hearing. Stillwell described a reduced field of vision and a reduction of his sense of hearing – from both the battlefield conditions encountered in the Civil War in the form of smoke and noise and from the anxiety soldiers faced loading and firing their weapons. Additional anxiety came from seeing and hearing injury and death all around his immediate area.

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[127] Leander Stillwell. *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War 1861-1865*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2005, pp. 38-39.

Other soldiers describe similar conditions and experiences, all of which can be seen as symptomatic of physiological reaction to the acute stress related with combat. Alfred Davenport was twenty-four when he enlisted into Company G of the 5th New York Infantry. In a letter to his father dated September 3, 1862, he described Second Bull Run. "Such is war. Men and artillery flying, the horses galloping like mad, the drivers bewildered; officers with drawn swords and revolvers, shouting, cursing, threatening, no one to obey; bullets flying, shells bursting, the rattle of musketry and roar of artillery, every thing enveloped in smoke; aids and orderlies riding back and forth as if mad; here and there a general with anxious look, giving hurried orders to aids, and, all together, the din and confusion like pandemonium, such as we might picture to ourselves hell in the day of Judgment." John Camden West, Jr., enlisted at age twenty-seven in Company E of the Fourth Regiment of Hood's Confederate Army in Texas. Gettysburg and Chickamauga were among his battle experiences. He assured his brother in a letter dated July 27, 1863, that at Gettysburg, "such a thundering and crashing and roaring surely was never heard. An eagle in the very midst of a tremendous thunderstorm might possibly have experienced such confusion. All agreed that Sharpsburg and second Manassas was not a priming to it. Milton's account of the great battle between the combined forces of good and evil, which originated in this same question of secession, gives some faint idea of this artillery duel." John Gardner Perry of Massachusetts in a May, 1864, letter wrote of the utter exhaustion described by countless other Civil War soldiers. "Exhaustion and

confusion worse confounded. Although perfectly well, I am tired and hot, having slept only a couple of hours out of the last forty… the thought of sleep makes me absolutely silly." Charles Kuhl and Paul Bennett might have used the same words. Or they might have used Chauncey Herbert Cooke's words. In a May 17, 1864, letter to his parents in Wisconsin, Chauncey said, "we have been night and day for several days. As I write this, cannons are roaring on our left toward Buzzard Roost and no soldier knows what the next hour may bring. I can scarcely keep my eyes open to write, altho it is but ten o'clock in the morning. We have had so little sleep for a week, night or day." Union Rear-Admiral Charles Steedman described what he called the physical breakdown of a fellow commander named Taylor in a January 6, 1865 letter to Sally Steedman. Their fleet had been involved in the assault on Fort Fisher off the North Carolina coast. All of them had experienced severe sleep deprivation for days. Taylor's ship had taken the brunt of the enemy fire with the loss of several men. A Parrott gun on board the ship had burst, killing and wounding several more sailors. "He was so depressed and wretched in spirits at the idea of having to leave on the eve of a second attack. His health, at no time robust, with an extremely nervous temperament, broke down under the excitement incidental to our exposure, flood and field, in the last two or three weeks." Taylor's condition was the result of several physical factors. Sleep deprivation caused disorientation and reduced ability to think clearly or make decisions. Rations were low, so the men were all malnourished. Battle of the previous days had left him exhausted as a result of activity of the

sympathetic nervous system. Seeing men wounded and killed combined with knowing they were under his command had caused physical anxiety. The Parrot gun incident caused additional distress and anxiety for Taylor. Steedman's letter makes clear his view that Taylor was having a physical breakdown; he does not suggest any other type of breakdown. Taylor's appearance and behavior was probably very similar to that of Kuhl and Bennett. Like Patton, Steedman did not consider the possibility of psychological breakdown because it was outside the realm of possibilities in mid-nineteenth-century America.[128]

Physical evidence from the war corroborates soldier accounts. A closer look at Gettysburg will provide evidence of the battle conditions found in soldier letters and diaries. Union forces numbering 85,000 clashed for three days with 70,000 Confederates. Losses were staggering. Three thousand sixty three Yankees died in those three days; Confederate deaths totaled 2,592. Battle conditions during those three long days meant that all soldiers would experience symptoms of the physiology of battle. Both armies were completely exhausted. The aftermath of the July 1863

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[128] Davenport, Alfred, 1837(?)-, Letter from Alfred Davenport, September 3, 1862, in *Soldiers' Letters, from Camp, Battle-field and Prison*. New York, NY: Bunce & Huntington, 1865, pp. 472. West, John Camden, 1834-1927, Letter from John Camden West to Charles S. West, fl.1863, July 27, 1863, in *A Texan in Search of a Fight*. Waco, TX: Press of J.S. Hill & Co., 1901, pp. 163. Perry, John Gardner, 1840-1926, Letter from John Gardner Perry, May 8, 1864, in *Letters from a Surgeon of the Civil War*. Perry, Martha Derby, comp.. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Co., 1906, pp. 236. Cooke, Chauncey Herbert, 1846(?)-, Letter from Chauncey Herbert Cooke, May 17, 1864, in *Soldier Boy's Letters to His Father and Mother, 1861-5*. News-Office, 1915, pp. 97. Steedman, Charles, 1811-1890, Letter from Charles Steedman to Sally Steedman, January 6, 1865, in *Memoir and Correspondence of Charles Steedman, Rear Admiral, United States Navy, with His Autobiography and Private journals, 1811-1890*. Mason, Amos Lawrence, ed.. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1912, pp. 556.

battle at Gettysburg included 12,000 discarded weapons, all with multiple loads. Explanations for this include application of S. L. A Marshall's controversial ratio of fire theory, with the idea that discarded weapons had multiple loads because the soldiers of those weapons did not want to fire on another human being. This cannot be disproven. However, eyewitness accounts and other possibilities provide better explanations. Civil War battle was confusing, noisy, blinding. Officers had to remind soldiers to fire their weapons after they loaded them. Reasons for this could include soldier panic. Loading their weapons was a dangerous process, in that soldiers had to stand to load the weapons and loading the weapon was a process in itself. Soldiers would worry so about loading that they would simply forget to fire because they were concerned with re-loading. Leander Stillwell's comments about his own battle experiences support this idea. Another reason could well be the simple and common physiology of combat. Civil War battlefield conditions increased the already probable acute stress reaction of soldiers. Anxiety and possible fear would automatically increase the heart rate to levels high enough to stimulate the sympathetic nervous system. As we have seen, this alone would diminish soldier effectiveness in the forms of diminished effectiveness with weapons usage and battlefield perceptions and decision-making. This physical reaction included perceptual and visual narrowing – sometimes to the point of temporary blindness – and auditory exclusion. In other words, common reaction could diminish the sensory perceptions of soldiers to the point where they actually did not know they had not

fired their weapons or that their weapons had not fired. Characteristics of Civil War weapons added to this. After only a few shots, the weapons of Civil War soldiers would become so fouled that they would not fire properly. Auditory exclusion would make it harder for them to notice that their weapons had not fired; hence, they would apply additional loads to their weapons. Elisha Hunt Rhodes experienced confusion and weapon difficulty during his first battle experience at Bull Run in July 1861. "On what followed I have very confused ideas. I remember that my smooth bore gun became so foul that I was obliged to strike the ramrod against a fence to force the cartridge home, and soon exchanged it for another."[129] Leander Stillwell discovered with surprise that his weapon contained multiple loads because he had not heard it misfire during battle. The weapon fired with "a kick that sent me a-sprawling on my back. My last preceding charge had missed fire, and in the excitement of the moment and the confusion and uproar around me, I had failed to notice it, and rammed home another load."[130] Weapon characteristics combined with battle conditions and physiology could easily explain why many of the discarded weapons found on the field after Gettysburg contained multiple loads.

If anyone could have been expected to advocate that breakdown in battle was psychological, it would be physicians and nurses. These hard-working people were completely on board with soldiers, commanders, and battlefield evidence in support

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[129] Elisha Hunt Rhodes. *All For the Union: The Civil War Diary and Letters of Elisha Hunt Rhodes*. Edited by Robert Hunt Rhodes. Forward by Geoffrey C. Ward. New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Randon House, 1985, p. 18.
[130] Stillwell, p. 252.

of the idea that men should not break down or be weak as a result of battle. They dedicated great effort to getting men back to battle. If soldiers were not wounded, they needed to be sent back to their units. Like Du Picq later, they believed that fear was weakness and that it was dangerously contagious. They kept diligent watch for signs of weakness or fear and stamped it out when they found it. The medical profession during the Civil War offered one remotely-possible label for psychiatric breakdown – nostalgia. Some historians have indeed accepted nostalgia as the Civil War term for psychiatric breakdown. Though *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* mentions nostalgia 5,213 times and doctors, nurses, and even generals mentioned nostalgia, their meaning is clear and does not indicate a psychological condition. In fact, comments of physicians and nurses from the Civil War suggest they would have implemented the same treatment strategy as Salmon did in World War I. More often, doctors, nurses, commanders, and soldiers used words such as shirker, malingerer, deserter, coward, and hospital rat in unflattering ways to describe apparently unwounded soldiers who did not want to fight.

Physicians mentioned nostalgia. Union physician Alfred Lewis Castleman wrote about nostalgia in a diary entry dated October 21, 1861. "I omitted in the proper place the record of the first death in our regiment. It occurred on the 3d of this month. The poor fellow died of Nostalgia (home-sickness), raving to the last breath about wife and children. It seems strange that such an affection of the mind should kill strong, healthy men; but deaths from this cause are very frequent in the army; the

sufferer, towards the last showing evidences of broken down nervous system, accompanied by most of the symptoms of typhoid fever." What makes this journal entry interesting is that Dr. Caslteman attributed the soldier's death to nostalgia instead of to typhoid, and typhoid was a major killer in the Civil War. He recorded nostalgia as the beginning of typhoid on more than one occasion. "Letters from home to-day, but they are from twelve to twenty days old. The comfort of a regular mail, the Government, with a very little well directed effort, might easily afford to the soldier, and it would be, even as a sanitary measure, a great stroke of economy. How many a poor fellow would be saved by regular cheering letters from home, from a depressing nostalgia, lapsing rapidly into typhoid fever, and death. Symptoms of typhoid include high fever, delirium, and dehydration resulting from severe diarrhea." Untreated, typhoid results in death. Typhoid fever and dysentery killed many soldiers in the Civil War.[131] In searching for an explanation for symptoms which could well fit the descriptions of combat physiology, Dr. Castleman attributed nostalgia as a physical symptom in the disease process of typhoid.

Nurses mentioned nostalgia. Union nurse Elvira Powers wrote a tribute to female nurses in her diary dated June 18, 1865: "You have been a blessing to the patients and a help to me -- have attended to your own duties as nurse without interfering with those of mine as physician. And there are those whose lives are due

[131] Castleman, Alfred Lewis, 1808(?)-1877, Diary of Alfred Lewis Castleman, October, 1861, in *The Army of the Potomac, Behind the Scenes: a Diary of Unwritten History: from the Organization of the Army ... to the Close of the Campaign in Virginia, About the First Day of January, 1863*. Milwaukee, WI: Strickland & Co., 1863, pp. 288.

to your care. Some were very low with nervous prostration and nostalgia -- another name for home-sickness -- and your conversation and attention has aroused, cheered, strengthened and saved them." Confederate nurse and hospital administrator Phoebe Yates Pember at Richmond's Chimborazo Hospital wrote in her memoir, "That *maladie du pays* called commonly nostalgia, the home-sickness which wrings the heart and impoverishes the blood, killed many a brave soldier; and the matron who day by day had to stand helpless and powerless by the bed of the sufferer, knowing that a week's furlough would make his heart sing for joy, and save his wife from widowhood, learned the most bitter lesson of endurance that could be taught."[132]

Commanders spoke of nostalgia. Union Major-General Benjamin Butler wrote a letter to President Lincoln dated May 1, 1864, in which he made a plea for pardon of a deserter, Daniel W. Russell. Russell enlisted on September 16, 1861, at age nineteen, as a private in the K Company, 19th Infantry Massachusetts. When that three-month enlistment ended, he re-enlisted. He served "faithfully and bravely." Finding himself close to home in late 1862, he deserted on August 1, 1862. After three weeks at home, he felt guilty about abandoning his duty and enlisted again on August 25, 1862, into the 10th Infantry New Hampshire. In response to the letter from Major-General Butler, President Lincoln pardoned Russell of the desertion

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[132] Powers, Elvira J., fl. 1864-1866, Diary of Elvira J. Powers, June, 1865, in *Hospital Pencillings: Being a Diary While in Jefferson General Hospital, Jeffersonville, Indiana and Others at Nashville, Tennessee, as Matron and Visitor*. Boston, MA: E.L. Mitchell, 1866, pp. 218. Pember, Phoebe Yates, 1823-1913, Memoir of Phoebe Yates Pember, in *Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond*. Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1959, pp. 199.

charges on May 15, 1864. Russell was killed in action serving with the 10th Infantry New Hampshire at Cold Harbor on June 2, 1864, as a Lieutenant. Major-General Butler requested a formal pardon for the desertion charges, citing nostalgia as the reason for Russell's desertion: "home-sickness to such a degree as to amount to the disease *nostalgia."* Butler referred to nostalgia as a disease in his plea to Lincoln, but later spoke of his own nostalgia resulting from homesickness in a letter to his wife Sarah dated August 19, 1864, "Don't write me to come home any more. You make me so homesick. I shall have *nostalgia* like a Swiss soldier."[133] Like Castleman, Butler saw nostalgia as dangerous and deadly, meaning that it had to be more than simple homesickness; however, since there was no existing explanation for combat physiology, these symptoms fell under the label of nostalgia and persuaded people to believe that it was debilitating or even deadly.

Soldiers spoke of their own nostalgia and that of others. In a March 26, 1862, letter, William Wheeler described his own nostalgia. "I can't help feeling "low" and soft, with glimpses of a home-life somewhere, and a strong touch of nostalgia under the ribs."[134] Participants used the words nostalgia and homesick or homesickness interchangeably. Georgia Confederate Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb wrote to his wife

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[133] Butler, Benjamin Franklin, 1818-1893, Letter from Benjamin Franklin Butler to Abraham Lincoln, May 1, 1864, in *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, During the Period of the Civil War, vol. 4*. Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917, pp. 628.

[134] Wheeler, William, 1836-1864, Letter from William Wheeler, March 26, 1862, in *Letters of William Wheeler of the Class of 1855, Y.C.*. Privately published, 1875, pp. 468.

Marion on May 6, 1861, that, “I was dreaming about you all night and in every dream you were all kindness and goodness and love. It has made me homesick to-day and I am tempted to drop everything and leave at once for home.”[135] Cobb died in battle the next year, probably without seeing Marion or his children again. South Carolina Confederate John Bratton told wife Bettie Bratton in a July 17, 1861 letter, that, “I feel sick at the idea of the eighteen hours to be passed through here. Yes, I am sick, sick, a poor, wretched homesick boy. It is weakling in a soldier that ought to be all iron, but it is a truth and I do not wish to conceal it from you, but I will write no more now, for as I write I fill up with misery.”[136] Charles Wright Wills of Illinois wrote in his September 1861 diary, “I thank goodness that none of them get homesick like some do that I know in our right. I do despise these whiners.”[137] Pennsylvanian Alexander Hays wrote to his wife Annie on June 15, 1862, "Last night as the whippor[will] sang on the outskirts of camp, I thought of you all, and felt homesick, but I dare not entertain even that disease, for the thought is followed with serious consequences. I have a holy calling, when that is fulfilled I will be with you again.”

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[135] Cobb, Thomas Reade Rootes, 1823-1862, Letter from Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb to Marion Lumpkin Cobb, May 6, 1861, in *The Correspondence of Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, 1860-1862*. Cobb, Thomas Read Rootes; Hull, Augustus Longstreet. District of Columbia: Southern History Association, 1907, pp. 80.

[136] Bratton, John, 1831-1898, Letter from John Bratton to Bettie Bratton, July 17, 1861, in *Letters of John Bratton to his Wife*. Bratton, Elizabeth Porcher. Privately published, 1942, pp. 206.

[137] Wills, Charles Wright, 1840-1883, Diary of Charles Wright Wills, September, 1861, in *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier: Including a Day by Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea : Letters and Diary of the Late Charles W. Wills, Private and Sergeant 8th Illinois Infantry, Lieutenant and Battalion Adjutant 7th Illinois Cavalry, Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel 103rd Illinois Infantry*. Kellogg, Mary E., comp.. Globe Print. Co., 1906, pp. 383.

Hays died in battle in 1964 at the age of 44.[138] In a letter to his sister, Union soldier Rodney Webster Torrey wrote on January 4, 1863, "Henry Packard is not very tough. I think he is homesick."[139] Stillwell noted high levels of homesickness in camp at Owl Creek near Corinth in April and May, 1862. "A genuine case of home-sickness is most depressing. I had some touches of it myself, so I can speak from experience. The poor fellows would sit around in their tents, and whine, and talk about home, and what good things they would have there to eat, and kindred subjects, until apparently they lost every spark of energy. I kept away from such cases all I could, for their talk was demoralizing."[140] Union Major-General Benjamin Butler made repeated pleas to his wife, Sarah. On August 20, 1864, he wrote, "You must not write me any more about coming home. You have made me so homesick now I am almost unfit for duty." On August 25, 1864, he wrote, "But one thing I must lay strict commands not to write, and that is about my coming home. You make me absolutely so homesick that I shan't be fit for duty."[141] Chauncey Herbert Cooke of Wisconsin wrote his mother on August 14, 1863, that, "Poor William Thomas of Mondovi is very low and

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[138] Hays, Alexander, 1819-1864, Letter from Alexander Hays to Annie Adams McFadden Hays, June 15, 1862, in *Life and Letters of Alexander Hays, Brevet Colonel United States Army, Brigadier General and Brevet Major General United States Volunteers*. Fleming, George Thornton, ed.; Hays, Gilbert Adams, comp. Pittsburgh, PA: Privately published, 1919, pp. 708.

[139] Torrey, Rodney Webster, 1836-1913, Letter from Rodney Webster Torrey, January 4, 1863, in *War Diary of Rodney W. Torrey, 1862-1863*. Privately published, 9999, pp. 93.

[140] Stillwell, p. 70.

[141] Butler, Benjamin Franklin, 1818-1893, Letter from Benjamin Franklin Butler to Sarah Hildreth Butler, August 25, 1864, in *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, During the Period of the Civil War, vol. 5*. Springfield, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917, pp. 748.

they say he cannot live. What seems strange, the doctor says it is homesickness that is killing him."[142] Union physician John Gardner Perry wrote in a letter dated September 26, 1863, "Home! Oh, how that word still haunts me! Yet I am calmer now and take the situation more reasonably; but an awful sinking at the heart still sweeps over me, and I can easily understand how soldiers die of homesickness."[143] Doctors thought that both nostalgia and homesickness were lethal. The idea that nostalgia and homesickness were lethal illustrates the fact that physically unwounded soldiers suffered debilitating symptoms, making them unfit for duty.

Soldiers, doctors, nurses, and commanders sought explanations. Some decided that nostalgia and homesickness must be diseases. Doctors thought that nostalgia was an early symptom of typhoid fever. Soldiers, doctors, nurses, and commanders thought people could die as a result of homesickness or nostalgia. Others had no sympathy or patience with soldiers exhibiting these symptoms. Acute stress reaction can easily explain these symptoms. Soldiers, doctors, and nurses commented that rest and food cured homesickness, nostalgia, and conditions such as nervous heart. They were right. Rest and food cure acute stress reaction. Many Civil War soldiers were probably simply suffering from a combination of adrenaline and other chemicals being dumped into the body, lack of food, fatigue, and sleep deprivation.

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[142] Cooke, Chauncey Herbert, 1846(?)-, Letter from Chauncey Herbert Cooke, August 14, 1863, in *Soldier Boy's Letters to His Father and Mother, 1861-5*. News-Office, 1915, pp. 97.

[143] Perry, John Gardner, 1840-1926, Letter from John Gardner Perry, September 26, 1863, in *Letters from a Surgeon of the Civil War*. Perry, Martha Derby, comp. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Co., 1906, pp. 236.

Other words used to describe the physically unwounded but apparently debilitated were not so sympathetic as nostalgia and homesickness. These included malingerers, shirkers, hospital rats, and deserters. People using these words possessed an attitude similar to Patton's. Doctors and nurses were constantly on the look-out for these men who feigned continued illness or insufficient healing in order to remain in the hospital rather than return to their units. Fellow soldiers had no use for those who tried to shirk their duty for no valid reasons. Commanders were probably the most sensitive to signs of soldiers trying to avoid duty. Malingerers, shirkers, hospital rats, and especially deserters were considered cowards and deserved punishment, possibly as severe as execution. Like Kuhl and Bennett, certainly not all, but many of the soldiers receiving these labels could have been suffering from physical combat trauma and simply needed food and rest. Those imbued with the values and beliefs of nineteenth-century American society thought otherwise. How and why that "mindset" affected attitudes toward behavior in combat will be set forth in following chapters.

Chapter 4:

Dying in the Face of Death

"Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

Stonewall Jackson

As of May 10, 1863, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson did not think his time to die had arrived. He was "persuaded the Almighty has yet a work for me to perform." Eight days earlier, on the evening of May 2, Stonewall had been riding the battlefield of Chancellorsville to determine how best to launch a nighttime attack on General Joe Hooker's Union forces, which had badly suffered under the Confederate onslaughts earlier that day. Jackson saw advantage for the South if a nighttime attack could keep pressure on the already-weakened northern forces. At approximately 9:30 PM, friendly fire broke out against Jackson and his two staff officers, Captain Richard Eggleston Wilbourn and Lieutenant W. T. Wynn. The second fusillade from Confederate soldiers wounded Jackson twice in the left arm and once in the right hand. Captain Wilbourn tried to stop the profuse bleeding while Lieutenant Wynn left to get help for their general. Jackson was transported as quickly as possible to the aid station near Wilderness Tavern, where Dr. Hunter H. McGuire

determined that Jackson, who was in considerable pain, would need to lose his left arm to live. The surgery was performed immediately, leaving a two-inch stump and a good prognosis for recovery. His amputated arm was buried nearby with a marker.

The next day, Jackson was moved from the aid station to a cottage near Guiney Station belonging to Thomas Chandler. Jackson made excellent progress, was in good spirits, and was feeling well through Wednesday, May 6. Late that night and into the next morning, however, the situation spiraled downward suddenly. Jackson became restless and uncomfortable. He was suffering from the dreaded killer pneumonia. Doctors could usually predict the hour of death for those in pneumonia's grip, but they were helpless to stop its progress and ultimate end. Jackson's wife, Anna, with their young daughter, Julia, arrived on Thursday to find his condition much deteriorated. As was the custom, Dr. McGuire told her frankly of the hopeless situation her husband faced. On Friday and Saturday, Anna watched her husband's condition steadily worsen. Though Jackson was not yet convinced he would succumb, he insisted on Friday, "I am not afraid to die. I am willing to abide by the will of my Heavenly Father." On Saturday, Dr. McGuire assured Anna that Jackson would not make it through the day. Also as was then the custom, Anna told her husband that he was indeed dying. The first time

she told him, he seemed not to fully comprehend and went to sleep. When he awakened, she told him again and asked if he understood. Jackson asked McGuire to confirm the news, "Doctor, Anna informs me that you have told her I am to die today. Is it so?" Upon hearing the doctor's affirmation, he said, "Very good, very good. It is all right…It is the Lord's day; my wish is fulfilled. I have always desired to die on Sunday." Surrounding Jackson in his last hours were his wife, his young daughter, and the doctors. Had Stonewall died at his home or had the aftermath of the Battle of Chancellorsville not still been raging, many more friends and family would have been present in the room where Jackson lay. The deathbed vigil continued until shortly after 3 PM on Sunday, May 10, 1863, when Jackson smiled, having said, "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees," drew a final breath.[144]

Mighty Stonewall's death sent shockwaves throughout the Confederacy. Important for our analysis, however, was Jackson's conduct and the conduct of those surrounding him through those last days, hours, and minutes. His death illustrates several aspects of nineteenth-century American attitudes toward acceptable and desired

[144] Edward J. Stackpole. *Chancellorsville: Lee's Greatest Battle*. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1988. Frank E. Vandiver. *Mighty Stonewall*. Texas A&M University Military History Series No. 9. Greenwood Press, 1974. Lenoir Chambers. *Stonewall Jackson*. William Morrow & Co., 1959.

behavior concerning death and dying. In contrast to Stonewall Jackson's example is one of unacceptable conduct during the final moments before death, as found in Mary Ashton Rice Livermore's description of a wounded and dying soldier after the Battle at Fort Donelson.

Livermore served as a Union Army nurse in St. Louis, Missouri during what she called the War of the Rebellion. After a few weeks of performing duties on grossly-wounded men in hospital, she had learned to maintain the necessary discipline and expected "iron control" from herself and from her patients in the face of all the horrendous sights and sounds and smells of war's aftermath. Wounded soldiers from Fort Donelson filled a large ward; horror after horror filled rows of beds. Livermore had nearly completed a morning tour of the ward, doing what she could for the grievously injured, when she "halted beside one on whose handsome face the unmistakable look of death was settling. He labored painfully for breath and gasped, 'I can't die! I am afraid to die!'" Mary went to the surgeon. The poor fellow was right; there was no chance for him. The surgeon said, "He was horribly cut up. One leg had been amputated, the other had suffered two amputations, the last one taking off the leg between the knee and the hip; the right arm had been broken, a caisson had crushed the lower left arm, and he had been shot twice through the abdomen." Returning to the mortally-wounded soldier,

Livermore drew a camp-stool to his bedside, sat down, put her hands on his shoulders, and spoke in commanding tones, as to an excited child: "Stop screaming. Be quiet. This excitement is shortening your life. If you *must* die, die like a man, and not like a coward."[145]

The dying soldier acknowledged Livermore's indictment. Her words reflected the attitude of Civil War-era Americans concerning displays of emotion or weakness, especially with regard to the expected behaviors surrounding the deathbed ritual and ceremony – both of the dying and of witnesses to mortality. We have seen how attitudes of nineteenth-century Americans differed from those of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Americans about issues such as war and psychological battle trauma. Not surprisingly, from ancient times to the present, attitudes and behaviors toward death and dying have manifested sharp variations from one society to another and within cultures. Innumerable studies document these attitudes and behaviors over time and between societies. This chapter will not attempt an exhaustive discussion, but it will offer a brief overview of western attitudes toward death and dying to help us better

[145] Mary A. Livermore. *My Story of the War: A Woman's Narrative of Four Years Personal Experience As Nurse in the Union Army, and in Relief Work at Home, in Hospitals, Camps, and at the Front, During the War of the Rebellion with Anecdotes, Pathetic Incidents, and Thrilling Reminiscences Portraying the Lights and Shadows of Hospital Life and the Sanitary Service of the War* (Hartford, Conn.: A.D. Worthington and Company, 1889), 189-192.

understand those of nineteenth-century Americans.[146] Their attitudes toward dying and death, in consonance with their attitudes toward war and the consequences of battle, differed radically from ours. Indeed, it may be presumed that differences in attitudes toward dying and death contributed greatly to the sharply different stances regarding war and battle held by those before the twentieth century. Familiarity with the views of nineteenth-century Americans toward dying and death is thus critical to understanding their attitudes about war and battle.

French sociologist and historian Philippe Aries presents a history of Western man's changing attitudes toward life, death, and dying covering the last one thousand years.[147] While historians and sociologists, such as John Hick, David Stannard, Lewis Saum, Geoffrey Gorer, Robert Wells, Ann Douglas, Jack Goody, and others, disagree with some aspects of Aries' analysis, his general conclusions appear to be widely accepted. As

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[146] David E. Stannard. *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change*. Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977. John H. Hick. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976. Paul Binski. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996. Jon Davies. *Death, Burial, and Rebirth In the Religions of Antiquity*. Religion in the First Christian Centuries Series. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. Philippe Aries. *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Translated by Patricia M. Ranum. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. Robert V. Wells. *Facing the "King of Terrors": Death and Society in an American Community, 1750-1900*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. Edelgard Dubruck. *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*. New York: Peter Lang 2001. Publishing, 1999. Philippe Aries. *The Hour of Our Death*. Translated from the 2002. French by Helen Weaver. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

[147] See Philippe Aries. *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. Translated by Patricia M. Ranum. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. Also Aries' *The Hour of Our Death*. Translated from the French by Helen Weaver. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

we will see, though scholars writing since the publication of Aries' pathbreaking study disagree with Aries on minor points, they continue to rely on his work. Aries presented two aspects of western attitudes toward death which are important for our discussion. He divided death into two types: tame death and wild death. Tame death existed for the one thousand years before the twelfth century; wild death emerged after that point and became the more prevalent category in the twentieth century. These two types of death contained aspects which were separate but also intimately linked. One aspect involved the rituals, ceremonies, the experience of death and dying, and the after-life; the other involved rituals, ceremonies, and customs surrounding corpse disposal and the after-life.

The oldest, longest held, and most common attitudes toward death reflected familiar resignation to the collective destiny of the species. Each person knew he or she would die. Some cultures accepted that reality and did not despair death. Sometimes cultures feared death. Sometimes they even welcomed death. In many western cultures, the dying person accepted death in a public ceremony with rituals dictated by custom. The ceremony of death was just as important as the ceremony of the funeral and mourning. Evidence of ceremonies which reflected familiarity with and acceptance of death and which suggest belief in an

after-life exists among the earliest of literary and archaeological indicators. According to David E. Stannard, historian, sociologist, and author of *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change*, "Scholars no longer have any doubt that man was engaging in purposeful and elaborate funeral ritual and almost certainly believed in a postmortem existence" as early as the Upper Pleistocene Period (ca. 50,000-60,000 B.C.). Bodies were painted with red ochre, bound into a fetal position, and buried with ornaments, suggesting belief in some kind of after-life.[148] John Hick notes that the earliest archaeological evidence suggests that man did not consider death the end of existence. In caves near Peking, Neanderthal man "placed food and flint implements in the graves with the dead….Old Stone Age men, the Cro-Magnons, who roamed through southern Europe and Africa from about 25,000 to about 10,000 years ago, buried weapons, ornaments, and food with their dead. In the New Stone Age, from about 10,000 to about 5,000 years ago, Neolithic men sacrificed wives and slaves of chieftains and placed them in the grave" with the corpse.[149]

A brief review of the general contours of traditional Western attitudes toward dying, death, corpse disposal, and the after-life will provide

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[148] David E. Stannard. *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change*. Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 5.
[149] John H. Hick. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976, p. 55.

context for our discussion of the Civil War era. These generalities are not all-inclusive, and exceptions exist, but they are widely accepted. Mesopotamian belief in a universal after-life can be found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, from around 2,000 B.C., which describes man's quest for immortality, indicating a belief in an after-life. The after-life described in the poem is gruesome, with dust for food, clay for existence, and being surrounded by total darkness. All who died went to that grim place and stayed there. Grieving over the death of Enkidu, the wandering Gilgamesh arrives at the tavern of Shiduri. He tells Shiduri the story of his journey and contemplates his own death: "Then I was frightened, I was terrified by death…And won't I too lie down in the dirt like him, and never arise again?" Shiduri compels Gilgamesh to live life to the fullest because the after-life involves wretched and eternal suffering:

> You will never find the eternal life
> that you seek. When the gods created mankind,
> they also created death, and they held back
> eternal life for themselves alone.
> Humans are born, they live, then they die,
> this is the order that the gods have decreed.
> But until the end comes, enjoy your life,
> spend it in happiness, not despair.
> Savor your food, make each of your days
> a delight, bathe and anoint yourself,
> wear bright clothes that are sparkling clean,
> let music and dancing fill your house,
> love the child who holds you by the hand,
> and give your wife pleasure in your embrace.

That is the best way for a man to live.[150]

Mesopotamian burial sites indicated burial practices involved mostly simple inhumation, with bodies wrapped in organic materials or sometimes placed in coffins or urns. Individuals were buried with clothing, belongings, and a cup; royalty were buried much more elaborately, with servants, guards, and more elaborate material possessions. Families often had a tomb under the house which contained multiple bodies. Cities also had common graveyards. Cremation was not practiced, and secondary burial is not evident. Not clear is their attitude toward actually handling the dead.[151]

The Ancient Egyptian *Coffin Texts* of about 2,000 B. C., which eventually became the *Book of the Dead*, contain funerary spells and texts intended to aid the individual in after-life and indicate widely-held belief that all deceased individuals would undergo post-mortem judgment under the guidance Osiris, who weighed the individual's heart against the weight of a feather. Negative individual behavior during life had to weigh less than the feather of truth. If the judgment did not favor the

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[150] Stephen Mitchell. *Gilgamesh: A New English Version*. Free Press, 2006, pp. 167-168.

[151] Stuart Campbell and Anthony Green, eds. *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East*. (Oxbow Monographs in Archaeology, Number 51), 2005. Jeffrey Zorn. "More on Mesopotamian Burial Practices in Ancient Israel." http://www.arts.cornell.edu/jrz3/More_on_MesopotamianHQ.pdf. Retrieved February 1, 2008.

deceased, punishment ensued involving a second death and damnation. Those who passed the judgment were resurrected into a new life much similar to the one they had before. Hence, Egyptians feared death and viewed death as the enemy. However, Egyptians believed that death could end in resurrection. Resurrection and after-life determined funerary practices. Since the after-life would continue in the next world much as it had in the previous one, the deceased needed all their worldly goods with them in the tomb. The body needed to be intact and undamaged, so mummification was a common practice. The mummified body and possessions were placed in a casket and then placed in a tomb. Burials were primary and individual rather than secondary or common.[152]

The Homeric Greeks devised the concept of the soul and believed the disembodied spirits of their dead continued to live under the earth. The idea of a disembodied spirit might have led to the practice of cremation. The worship of Dionysus, with various accounts of his rebirth, and the writings of sixth-century BCE Greek philosopher Heraclitus, which proposed the re-birth and re-cycling of the soul, promoted the idea of the soul's immortality. During the Hellenistic period, Plato developed the idea of ideal reality, placing ideas above the physical world. Part of Plato's idea was anamnesis, the idea that people can have knowledge

[152] *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*. Introduction & Commentary by Dr. Ogden Goelet. Translation by Dr. Raymond Faulkner. Preface by Carol Andrews. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994.

outside of experience. Since people can know things they have not experienced, people must have existed in some form in a previous life. Plato used this idea to prove the soul's immortality. The early Greek conception of life after death, as found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, focused upon the soul, which descended into Hades or Erebus, the place beneath the earth where the Greek dead went to await final judgment. The dead led a shadowy, grey existence during their time in Hades. There, they received judgment and were either damned or sent to the Elysian Fields. Romans also used the name Hades, but more often used the name Tartarus to name the place where the souls of the dead went. Burial practices were varied, with inhumation and cremation both options, cremation being the more common pagan practice in Roma. Because the Greeks and Romans considered the dead extremely polluting and dangerous to the living, inhumations were forbidden within city walls and were restricted to locations outside the city, along the roadways leading into the city. In ancient times, Romans had allowed burial of the dead within houses, but "intramural burial, within city walls, was eventually prohibited with implementation of the Roman imperial Law of the Twelve Tables and was later repeated in the Code of Theodosius, which stated that the dead must be removed from the city of Constantinople. Only people in extreme cases, such as the Emperor

Trajan, were allowed burial within city walls as an honour."[153] The Romans also "had places for collective, anonymous corpse disposal – the puticuli. The Jews had Gehenna, a valley to the west of Jerusalem, later becoming the place where dead animals, the city's garbage and the body's of criminals were burnt."[154]

As Stannard has written, "The spiritual answer to man's fear of cessation became part of one of the central tenets of Christianity in the idea of resurrection."[155] In the fourth century, St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, was not unhappy for his mother's death because he believed she was neither unhappy in her death nor altogether dead. St. Ambrose, fourth century bishop of Milan, believed that death was not to be feared because it was the end of sin and life was restored through resurrection. Christians promoted the idea of resurrection, including judgment with Heaven, Hell, and thirteenth-century Thomas Aquinas's idea of Purgatory. Belief in Heaven, Hell, and judgment led to a shunning of this world as evil and to St. Ignatius's "passion for death" and the popularity of suicide in the early centuries of Christianity. "In North Africa a Christian militancy developed, and the supreme ambition was to be granted a martyr's crown. In Numidia (southern Algeria) zealous

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[153] Paul Binski. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 10.
[154] Jon Davies. *Death, Burial, and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity*. Religion in the First Christian Centuries Series. London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 21.
[155] Stannard, p. 19.

believers greeted one another with the wish 'May you gain your crown.'" Augustine's writings promoted Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, with souls assigned based on earthly behavior. This gave Christians a foundation on which they could believe they were armed against fear when death approached. According to Stannard, "Christian optimism, the principal weapon against the fear of death, was not shaken by the morbidity of the Middle Ages."[156] In the face of the plague and the medieval fascination with the physical horrors of death stood the Christian tradition of the contemptus mundi, Pope Innocent III's twelfth-century message that all earthly things were less than nothing and needed to be rejected so souls would have a good final judgment.[157] A good final judgment meant entry into heaven, making the horrors of medieval death and the sacrificial death of martyrdom unimportant.

Christians had as the center-piece of their religion the idea of a dead body and its resurrection. As we have seen, in tandem with this belief was the idea of martyrdom. Jesus was the first martyr, but martyrdom became a goal for many early Christians. The bodies of martyrs were cherished relics of the religion. As a result, Christians started burying their dead within the church. According to Paul Binski, "The

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[156] Stannard, p. 10.
[157] Stannard, pp. 10-11, 19. Henry Chadwick. "The Early Christian Community" in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, John McManners, ed. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 42.

construction within city walls of basilican churches, where the dead were also buried, effectively helped to urbanize the dead. This accelerated roughly from the time of the Emperor Constantine's Edict of 313 granting freedom of worship to Christians."[158] Christians usually did not practice cremation, perhaps because they considered it a pagan custom, but possibly as a result of the importance of keeping the body intact for resurrection. They washed and wrapped the body and placed it in a tomb or practiced inhumation.[159] These Christian practices went against ancient barriers and taboos concerning the impure dead. This was part of the Christian attitude of not fearing death or dead bodies. Other groups, including Romans, began practicing inhumation more than cremation and began placing the dead ad sanctum during the Middle Ages, even during a time when the physical horrors of death and dead bodies were at heightened levels as a result of possible contamination from dead bodies.

Fascination with the physical horrors of death dominated art and literature of the Middle Ages, perhaps as a result of the loss of Roman order and influence. Paintings and funerary art moved from portrayal of the deceased as serene and in their best appearance to portrayal of the deceased using macabre and grotesque images, in varying stages of decomposition. Death was portrayed in the form of fiendish monsters in

[158] Binski, p. 11.
[159] Ibid, p. 11.

nightmare surroundings representing the devil and hell. Gravestone forms popular at this time sported deaths heads. Also present is medieval man's tendency to create a society of oppositions, most apparent in their views toward religion. Medieval Christianity emphasized either the positive image of man as a divine being or the negative image of man as a sinner. Their thinking reflected a basis of good or bad, superior or inferior, eternal life or eternal death, cleric or layman, rich or poor.[160] During the early Middle Ages, from about the fourth to the ninth centuries, and again in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, people held a pessimistic image of man as weak and flawed and humbled before God. More optimistic views of man emerged from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onward. Within this binary view of life existed a tri-functional societal structure, especially in the Christian West of the ninth and tenth centuries, categorizing people as those who prayed, those who fought, and those who worked. Those who prayed were clearly the clergy, and the monk was a specialist in death, called upon for issues of death and dying. Chivalric warrior knights were the heroic fighting members of society. The working population of the society consisted of the peasants. Attitudes toward death and dying during these times can be found in the

[160] Jacques LeGoff, ed. *The Medieval World: A History of European Society*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. London: Collins & Brown, 1990, pp. 4, 10.

chansons de geste and other literary pieces, as well as in art and in death ceremonies and funeral rituals and objects.

Frequently, literary portrayals revolved around the death of knights. How did the knights face death? They nearly always knew they were dying, either through natural signs or innate convictions. They understood the behaviors that custom and ritual demanded. Songs, poems and plays explain that death was a ritual organized by the dying person in a public ceremony which included children, strict control of emotion, and a prescribed agenda. Death was familiar and ever-present. A "good" death, one where the dying person was calm and accepting of death, was highly desirable, even required, and these pieces show that this ritual was centuries old. Philippe Aries, a French social historian who studied death and its history for decades and was recognized as a noted expert on the study of death, called this attitude "tamed death" and argued that it was the prevailing attitude for a thousand years before the twelfth century. Aries contrasted the tame death of that era to the wild death of today, wild because we now think death is so frightful that we dare not utter its name.[161]

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[161] Philippe Aries. *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Translated by Patricia M. Ranum. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, part I.. John Hick. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976. Robert V. Wells. *Facing the "King of Terrors": Death and Society in an American Community, 1750-1900*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Literature abounds with examples of tame death. We will look more closely at literary influences on nineteenth-century American thought in a later chapter, but a couple of earlier examples here will further our understanding of the importance of the deathbed ritual and the "good" death. These examples contain the necessary elements we observed in the death of Stonewall Jackson and noted as possibly absent in the death of the Fort Donelson soldier. First, the dying person knew death was near. He needed to be in bed if possible, surrounded by family and friends and children – and sometimes even strangers. He was in control of the proceedings of the deathbed ceremony. His demeanor was critical, and his duties were clear. He was to address those closest to him and offer comfort and advice. He was also to calmly distribute his properties. He might announce the nearness of his death. He was to remain composed until the end. Family and friends would then carry out his deathbed wishes, as well as care for his remains.

The sixth-century death of Beowulf did not occur in bed but on the field of battle. Still, Beowulf knew he was dying and acknowledged that awareness. His only remaining companion, Wiglaf, helped him lie down comfortably and attended his deathbed ceremony, which, though grievously wounded, he managed with the serenity required. Beowulf died a "good" death. Previously, Beowulf was victorious against Grendel

and Grendel's mother in two separate and especially fierce battles. Grendel and his mother were inhuman, larger-than-life, more formidable foes than most mortal men could have faced. With courage and God on his side, Beowulf had conquered each of them single-handedly. These deeds were widely known, and Beowulf was a hero to all who knew him or heard of him. His third and last struggle pitted him against a dragon. By this time, Beowulf was fifty years old. His warriors had fled in fear of this latest threat. His single remaining warrior was Wiglaf, who entered the fray only in the last moments when Beowulf was already grievously wounded, when it became obvious that Beowulf needed help to defeat the monster. The poet makes clear, however, that Beowulf was the one who delivered the deathblow, cutting the beast in half with his dagger. Beowulf himself was mortally wounded in the neck and knew he did not have long to live. His deathbed scene is presented in two parts. Wiglaf laid him down and made him as comfortable as possible. Beowulf lamented the fact that he had no heirs to receive his worldly possessions, especially his weapons, which were traditionally handed from father to son. However, Beowulf assured Wiglaf that he could leave this life happy upon the completion of one more event and asked Wiglaf to perform some last tasks for him. Beowulf sent Wiglaf to collect the

dragon's treasure, for which he had fought so well, and bring it to him before he died,

> Death will be softer,
> Leaving life and this people I've ruled
> So long, if I look at this last of all prizes (2749-2751).

Wiglaf completed this task just as quickly as possible to return before his king joined those who had gone before him. Upon his return, he showed Beowulf the treasure and awaited his king's final words. Beowulf instructed Wiglaf how to care for his body and his people. Beowulf then gave Wiglaf his treasured helmet, rings, and mail shirt. With his final words,

> "Fate has swept our race away,
> Taken warriors in their strength and led them
> To the death that was waiting. And now I follow them…"
> His soul
> Left his flesh, flew to glory. (2814-2810)[162]

Beowulf's death illustrates the good death. Beowulf knew he was dying and knew the role he needed to play in that ceremony. He lay down and instructed his only deathbed attendee to perform final tasks for him. Wiglaf was to bring Beowulf the treasure he had earned in his battle against the dragon. Following instructions on how Wiglaf was to care for Beowulf's body and their people, he bestowed his weapons and jewels upon Wiglaf and advised him to use them well. He then announced that

[162] *Beowulf*. Translated, and with an Introduction by Burton Raffel. New York and Scarborough, Ontario: A Mentor Book, New American Library, 1963.

he was soon to follow other warriors whom death had claimed. He closed his eyes and calmly awaited death's arrival.

A good death was not just expected of warriors; it was the responsibility of everyone. The death of Queen Guenivere illustrates the good death. Sir Thomas Malory's 1469 account in *Le Morte Darthur* does not provide much detail as to Guenivere's death, but the information he does provide tells us that Guenivere died a good death. Guenivere had betrayed her king and husband Arthur by having an affair with one of Arthur's most trusted and capable knights, Sir Lancelot. This affair had been the source of much trouble, and Guenivere was remorseful and repentant. After Arthur's death, she sequestered herself in the nunnery at Amesbury and vowed not to see Lancelot again. Guenivere's final days were spent on her deathbed surrounded by all those familiar to her at the nunnery. The nuns assured Lancelot, who arrived a half hour after her death to take her corpse and bury it next to Arthur, that she had prayed for the two days preceding her death that God not let her see Lancelot with her worldly eyes. Since she had no heirs to instruct and no property to distribute, she was following another important part of the ritual ceremony, concern for her life and soul. She faced death calmly and with resignation.[163]

[163] Sir Thomas Malory. *Le Morte Darthur*. Edited by R. M. Lumiansky. New York and London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1982, pp. 746-747.

Historical accounts also reflect the importance of good death. Louis IX, King of France from 1226 to 1270, died of the plague while on crusade in Tunis. Like Beowulf, he was not in bed at the time of his death, but arranged to be placed on the floor on a layer of ashes in the shape of a cross. His son Philippe came to his side and dutifully listened as the king instructed him concerning his burial, advice on Philippe's behavior, and conferred his blessings. When these ritualistic duties were completed, Louis IX became quiet and awaited death.[164]

Historical and literary accounts are numerous, and while a ceremony was important for a good death, the collective aspect of death was still reflected in people's acceptance of common graves and charnel houses, with no permanent graves for individuals throughout the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries of the Middle Ages. Burial practices included entrusting the dead to the care of the Church, which used common graves and charnel houses. As common graves became filled, older corpses were removed and placed in charnel houses for primary and secondary burial. Since these activities occurred in an area of the churchyard where many other activities took place, people were accustomed to seeing corpses in various stages of decomposition as they were removed from

[164] Paul Binski. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 36.

common graves and placed in charnel houses.[165] Act V, Scene I, of *Hamlet* opens with two gravediggers, out to dig a grave for Ophelia, who has committed suicide. The gravediggers remove previous corpses to make room for the new ones. One of the gravediggers throws skulls up out of the common grave. Hamlet and Horatio are strolling through the cemetery. Hamlet, Horatio, and the gravediggers discuss how long it takes for corpses to decompose. The gravediggers know how long it takes for decomposition, assuring Hamlet that the longest time is for a tanner because the chemicals he uses in his trade essentially make his body waterproof. The gravediggers can also tell the age the person died by examining the skull. The one at hand is recognizable as the King's court jester, Yorick, who died at age twenty-three. Hamlet recalls fond memories of Yorick from his childhood. None of those present, Hamlet, the gravediggers, or Horatio, is shocked at the presence of a skull or bodies in various states of decomposition; in fact, Hamlet holds Yorick's skull in his hand and has a conversation with it, then casually tosses it back to the ground.

Aries noted subtle changes in western attitudes toward death beginning in the twelfth century, with the rise of the importance of the individual and one's own death in the individual sense rather than in the

[165] Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, pp. 30, 33-34.

collective sense reflected in customs such as secondary burial and charnel houses. For centuries, death for Christians had meant a long sleep followed at the end by the resurrection and last judgment. Beginning about the twelfth century, according to Aries, people started believing the last judgment moved to the moment of death. As a result, the way one died and the good death became even more important, because it was a major factor in determining one's destiny after death. The hour of death, the moment of death, became a test so essential that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, authors began to offer advice on the art of dying. Aries has written, "The dying person remained the central actor in the drama of death, while tombs and inscriptions personalized death and memory."[166] Personalized inscription, which had disappeared around the fifth century, reappeared around the thirteenth century, as people became concerned with remembering their dead loved ones as individuals. By the last half of the eighteenth century, this led to the end of common graves and eventual removal of remains to another location in secondary burial. Storage of the dead in churchyards and bone houses became intolerable. It led to the development of cemeteries outside the town, with permanent individual graves and markers. Reasons for this included a developing revulsion of the horrors of death and decomposition, fear about public

[166] Aries, *Hour*, p. 34.

health, violations of the dignity of the dead, and the fact that people wanted to have a permanent place for their loved ones' remains. They no longer accepted the idea of a loved one's remains being reburied in another location or in a communal grave or charnel house.[167]

Other changes occurred in this time when dying well became even more critically important. Beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a good death at the moment of judgment persuaded people to begin thinking that a virtuous life was perhaps not necessary, since the good death would provide redemption. A good death could redeem any life, however evil. This attitude had earlier been present in the fourth century deathbed custom of deferring baptism until the end of life. Roman ruler Constantine had waited until his 337 death to be baptized, even though he had issued an edict in 313 granting freedom of worship to Christians in the city of Constantinople. Aries claims that in the seventeenth century, the subordination of virtuous living to the importance of the good death became more common because more people believed judgment occurred at the moment of death rather than after death.

This nexus of attitudes remained prevalent until the twentieth century. The deathbed ritual remained essentially the same. People did begin to

[167] Aries, part III.

write wills to take care of property, so that part of the deathbed ritual concerning distribution of wealth began to disappear, which led to separation of emotional and economic concerns. Family and friends still gathered around the deathbed to await the final moment. The behavior and demeanor of the dying remained all-important, since judgment took place at the moment of death. How one died determined final destiny to Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Gathered spectators expected good and proper behavior; the dying knew it was the most important moment of their lives. Death was still familiar and not to be feared but accepted calmly and serenely. A good death meant a good judgment to the dying and encouragement about death and dying to the attendees. This renewed emphasis on the good death was not only found in literary accounts; it was also now promoted in fifteenth-century advice manuals, such as *Ars Moriendi*. The most common version of the *Ars Moriendi* presented the dying Moriens facing a series of temptations and having to make choices that determined his final destiny. The message was the inevitability of death, yes, but even more so is the importance of the dying person's decisions. Moriens was clearly in control. What others were supposed to see in this scene (and its reinforcement in medieval art) was the importance of preparation by having time to ponder and confess sins in a deathbed ritual. Instead of hell and bodies in various stages of

decomposition, art began showing angels and devils waiting along with family and friends. All awaited the same experience – the good death. Moriens's behavior and choices reflected his condition at the moment of death and determined whether the hovering demon or the angel took possession of his soul. Once again, we turn to *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene III, as he hesitates to kill the king, his father's murderer, while the king is praying. Hamlet well knows that honor requires him to kill his father's killer, but the moment has to be right for the proper destination of the king's evil soul:

> And am I then revenged,
> To take him in the purging of his soul,
> When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
> No!
> When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
> Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
> At game, a-swearing, or about some act
> That has no relish of salvation in't—
> Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
> And that his soul may be as damned and black
> As hell, whereto it goes.

Hamlet clearly understands that the most evil souls, even the souls of murderers, can receive a good last judgment and entry to heaven if the person behaves appropriately at the time of death.

Thus, a good death was more important than a good life. As the possibility of entry into heaven moved to the moment of death, other aspects of the omnipresent fact of mortality became apparent as well.

Instead of simply accepting death or fearing one's end, death came to be desired and welcomed. Edelgard Dubrick has offered evidentiary support for this hypothesis using literary analysis. Renaissance poetry on the theme of death "stressed immortality and the afterlife. The word 'death' was often avoided and replaced by euphemisms, depiction of the realistic aspects of death was carefully suppressed…In the early sixteenth century, French poets dwelt upon fame and immortality rather than death, and in the Reformation writings death had at least lost its sting, and both Lutherans and Calvinists insisted that death was at long last vanquished with the help of Christ."[168] Stannard agrees with this assessment:

> Indeed, more than vanquished, there is every indication that in the early states of the Reformation death – linked with repentance and conversion – took on a renewed sense of optimism. The deathbed torments and fears preceding the peaceful death depicted in the *Ars Moriendi* became anachronistic as the power of good works waned in the face of redemption through a good death; but the contemptus mundi theme held sway. The horror of death was transformed…Heavenly existence had clearly been resolved in Heaven's favor. Rejection of this world totally dominated the Christian confrontation with death.[169]

[168] Edelgard Dubrick. *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999, p. 152.
[169] Stannard, p. 22.

Moreover, literature and art reflect the idea of the desirability of death. Death was eventually welcomed and preferred to life.[170] A 1554 poem by John Harrington illustrates these changing views:

> Death is a porte whereby we pass to joye;
> Lyfe is a lake that drowneth all in payne;
> Death is so dear, it killeth all annoye;
> Life is so lewd, that all it yields is vayne;
> For, as by life to bondage man was brought,
> Even so by death all freedom too was wrought.[171]

Seventeenth-century writers reflected similar belief. William Drumond saw death as "but a short, nay, sweet sigh…not worthy the remembrance."[172] Jeremy Taylor wrote, "it is so harmless a thing, that no good man was ever thought the more miserable for dying, but much the happier."[173]

Welcoming of death as a reward for a good life lived or a redeeming demise resulted from two seemingly different influences. Attitudes toward death and the deathbed ceremony began to take on very different meanings from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Beginning with the eighteenth century, western societies began to exalt and dramatize death. Moreover, people were starting to be more concerned with the

[170] Dubruck, p. 152, 154. Stannard, 22.
[171] Quoted in Stannard, p. 30.
[172] Ibid, p. 31.
[173] Ibid, p. 31.

deaths of others than with their own ends. Death became an unwelcome interruption to life.

At the same time, death was bestowed with new erotic meaning – Thanatos and Eros. In the Romantic era, mortality was no longer merely accepted; it came to be seen as grotesque, macabre, beautiful, romantic, and fascinating, perhaps even as a reward. Nineteenth-century deathbed rituals reflected the changes in attitude. The role of the dying remained the same, and the good death was still critically important. Family and friends still cared for the remains in the traditional ways, by washing and dressing the body and arranging burial. The carpenter constructed the coffin, family and friends transported it to the cemetery or the family plot, and the local pastor and gravediggers took care of the service. However, those in attendance were no longer calm and solemn observers; they were emotional and involved participants, who saw death as a macabre interrupter of life at the same time they saw it as beautiful and desirable. Stannard has asserted that this "romanticism and sentimentalism of death emerged full-blown in America with the dawning of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century Americans saw death as a beautiful transformation, release, and heavenly reunion – no visions of Hell and damnation – but entry into a new glorious life. Romantics celebrated death for its beauty. The cult of the dead emerged during this time:

mourning pictures, long periods of seclusion for the bereaved, the 'rural cemetery' movement."[174]

Cemeteries in the years before the Romantic era had experienced decay and neglect. In New York during the late seventeenth century, funeral ceremonies and cemeteries became "so neglected that legislation had to be passed requiring that some attention be paid to the dead in order that instances of foul play might be discovered."[175] The New York incident of cemetery neglect at that time was mostly an isolated incident. By the end of the Great Awakening in the mid-eighteenth century, however, cemeteries across the country had fallen into decay. Bones were scattered over the ground; gravestones were in shambles; weeds abounded. As part of the Romantic Movement, rural cemeteries emerged in the early nineteenth century as peaceful homes for the dead and places for the living to enjoy regular visits.[176]

These same cemeteries were beginning to be considered profitable economic ventures. Starting in the late nineteenth century, western attitudes and customs toward death changed radically. One major change was the appearance of death professionals, offering services such as transporting the body from the hospital to the funeral parlor and later to the graveside, embalming the body, providing the casket, providing a

[174] Ibid. p. 168.
[175] Ibid, p. 181.
[176] Ibid., p. 181.

place to keep and view the body, planning the services, arranging the burial, and assisting mourners in returning to normal as quickly as possible. All these services were for profit to the professionals, colloquially termed undertakers but who came to be called funeral directors by the 1880s. Death became a business.

By the 1880s, funeral directors joined professional national organizations and participated in embalming contests for money. Embalming was becoming common practice. Coffins changed from plain and simple to elaborate and expensive caskets (jewel boxes). Death was removed from the control of the family and even from the control of the dying. People began sending their loved ones to professionals in hospitals, another aspect of death for profit, to die rather than keeping them at home to die in their own bed surrounded by family and friends. White-clad doctors and nurses surrounded the dying; these medical personnel began making decisions previously left to the dying and the family. Hospitals were initially a place where one could possibly receive medical treatment and recover, but they quickly became known as waystations for the dying, places where people sent loved ones to die.

In America, middle class people became more and more removed from death and dying as a result of professionalism and hospitals. They became unfamiliar with death and uncomfortable with it because they no

longer had contact with it. The average twentieth-century American does not even see a dead body until well into adulthood. More striking is the reality that the same twentieth-century American has no experience with death or dying and the traditional rituals accompanying that event. Combined with the nearly twenty-year increase in life expectancy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the idea that death was a rude interruption to life, the dying were often not aware they were dying, and the family did not, as had Anna Jackson, Dr. McGuire, and Mary Livermore, inform the dying of their imminent mortality. The dying entered the hospital in hope of medical treatment and recovery. While there, medical professionals offered positive prognoses and administered drugs that prevented the dying from knowing their true condition. This freed the family to continue life without interruption, because they could rely on death professionals to perform what had previously been family responsibilities and roles. People have begun hiring themselves out to sit with the sick and dying in hospitals or provide hospice care to free the family from even that task. Since written wills were in place, the family became less concerned with deathbed rituals at which the dying had distributed properties. Mourning became a nuisance that interrupted busy lives and needed to be treated as a morbid condition, to be shortened, or eliminated rather than a necessary and inevitable part of life. Doctors

often determined when people died. People died surrounded by strangers, under heavy medication, and were thus denied any sort of deathbed ritual.

The role of the dying changed dramatically. They were still expected to die a good death, but it was a death that denied they were dying. If they knew they were dying, they were expected to pretend that they did not know, that they expected to recover as a result of medical treatment, and that they were not to make anyone around them uncomfortable. After death, the family no longer cared for the body; that was the job of the funeral director, who would transport the body from the hospital to the funeral parlor for embalming. Since it was convenient to leave the body at the funeral parlor rather than take it home, the embalmed body was laid out in the funeral parlor for viewing. Since embalming created beautiful, life-like corpses, the dead no longer appeared dead. The funeral director made all the arrangements for the viewing. The funeral director provided a beautiful casket, services both at the funeral parlor and at the graveside, transportation of the body to the graveside, where all was made ready by the director and the gravediggers. The family simply attended – and paid the hospital and funeral costs. Once the burial was complete, the family was to return to normal as quickly as possible. Viewings and funerals

were even scheduled at times that did not require people to miss work to attend.[177]

What does all this exposition about death in the western world over the past several millennia have to do with western attitudes toward death during the Civil War era? Members of Western industrialized societies have moved from centuries of treating death as a public spectacle – both dreaded and welcomed - to death as taboo and hidden. Geoffrey Gorer said in a 1955 essay that death had "replaced sex as an unmentionable topic in Great Britain and the United States by the middle of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, death was commonplace and even romanticized, while mention of sex was considered pornographic…By the middle of the twentieth century, Britons and Americans were able to discuss sex more freely than before, but death, a topic so alarming as to produce denial, could no longer be mentioned in polite company." Children were once told that they arrived via stork but they were expected to attend deathbed ceremonies. Now, children are knowledgeable about in the physiology of lovemaking but shielded from death. Hospitals have transformed death from good to acceptable – one which causes family and medical personnel as little discomfort or embarrassment as possible. People die solitary deaths in hospital. Death often is a voluntary decision

[177] Wells, *King of Terrors*. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life*. Aries, *The Hour of Our Death* and *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middles Ages to the Present*. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death.*

made by medical personnel and family behind the dying person's back. Death professionals provide easy disposal of the corpse. Mourning is discouraged rather than expected.

According to Gorer, regarding death as taboo was born in the United States around the beginning of the twentieth century. The birth and development of mortality's exclusion from the routines of life were the result of rapid economic growth and the search for individual happiness linked to the pursuit of profit. Gorer has argued that this process has resulted in the situation of England today, which involves the almost total suppression of everything reminding us of death. In England, cremation is becoming standard practice, and burial ceremonies have been virtually eliminated. In contrast, still today, few Americans opt for cremation. Cremation denies public viewing and the chance for embalming of the body, and that entails lower profits for the funeral industry.[178] We have moved from a good death to the denial of death. Scientists in the twentieth century are busy finding ways to freeze the dead until discovery of a cure for what killed them, when the dead can be unfrozen and treated for the illness and live again. Supporters of the technology of cryonics believe "We don't have long to wait before we shall know how to freeze the human organism without injuring it. When that happens, we shall

[178] Geoffrey Gorer

have to replace cemeteries by dormitories, so that each of us may have the chance for immortality that the present state of knowledge seems to promise. Alan Harrington, another cryogenics enthusiast, says that "death is an imposition on the human race, and no longer acceptable."[179]

Current attitudes of denial toward death might appear to make more difficult understanding attitudes toward death in the Civil War era. We have witnessed both real and literary examples of "good" deaths and a potentially "bad" death. Mary Livermore scolded the dying Fort Donelson soldier about his demeanor in the face of his own death. The account does not include the soldier's actual death, so we do not know if Mary's advice resulted in a good death or not. The important part of the account for us is that Mary saw it as her responsibility to tell the soldier he was indeed dying and to help him manifest the proper behavior for one of his time as he died. Stonewall Jackson was not ready to accept the idea of his death on Friday, May 8, 1863 but when the approach of death was undeniable by that weekend, both Anna and Dr. McGuire told Jackson he was dying and made sure he understood that fact. He then assumed the appropriate role proscribed for one who was dying as death approached.

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[179] Alan Harrington. *The Immortalist: An Approach to the Engineering of Man's Divinity*. New York: Random House and Panther Books, 1973, pp. 214, 11.

We can contrast these examples to one from the twentieth century. Ron C. lay in the hospital bed, but he was possibly unaware of his surroundings in the final days before his death. He was a relatively young man, fifty-four, who had worked hard all his life and never been sick. Eight months earlier, he had been diagnosed with cancer and underwent difficult treatments that made his life a miserable dreamscape. He had always kept his thoughts and wishes rather private, so his family really did not know his wishes in those last months. His family, however, especially his wife, could not bear the thought of losing him and wanted to do everything possible to save him. Medical personnel probably knew there was little hope but did not tell the family or Ron. As he lay in the hospital bed, he did not even look human anymore. He drifted in and out of consciousness as a result of the heavy pain medications, but even when he seemed awake, he was not really aware of what was happening to and around him. He remained in this state until the moment of his death, still surrounded by a hopeful family. Even though his family was present during the last few moments of life, no deathbed conversation or ceremony took place. They simply all waited, possibly all of them still hoping for a cure. If Ron had realized that he was dying, he would not let on to those around him that he knew, for fear of causing discomfort or embarrassment. He died quietly, with no last words, because he was too

drugged to speak and because he had no familiarity with a tradition of bidding farewell. The family left the body for the funeral director to transport to the funeral home, where it would be embalmed and prepared for viewing and burial. The funeral director took care of every detail, leaving the family with nothing to do for Ron. The death professionals, from the hospital personnel to the funeral director to the gravediggers, took care of everything. As soon as the burial was complete, Ron's wife closed the house and moved in with a daughter several states away. Ron's death was professionally handled from the moment he became ill to the moment he was buried. Family and friends were removed from death except for choosing songs for the service and viewing the embalmed body. Ron was present but was not a participant in his own death. Such is the pattern of dying for many Americans today. Death is a stranger to be feared and avoided if possible. Death is now wild.[180]

Jackson's death was a good death, a tame death, not the wild death of the twentieth century which was Ron's situation. What we know as wild death was unknown and would be foreign and unacceptable to Americans of the mid-nineteenth-century. Their own accounts are testimony to their attitudes toward death. A good death was important at the moment of death, but facing death well in other situations was equally important.

[180] Source in possession of the author.

Soldiers going into battle were expected to consider the possibility of death with bravery and resolve. As has been argued in chapter two, this expected resolve left no room for emotional or psychological weakness. When weakness reared its unwelcome head, those nearby, like Livermore, helped the afflicted overcome it.

Soldiers' families preferred death for themselves and their loved ones to signs of weakness. During the war of 1812, Sam Houston's mother wanted him to join in the fight. She gave him a musket and told him, "Never disgrace it; for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than that one of them should turn his back to save his life."[181] Andrew Jackson's mother admonished him to "avoid quarrels as long as you can, but sustain your manhood always."[182] Loss of a loved one was horrible and deeply felt, but "death had to be borne bravely, with resignation."[183] Civil War surgeon John Brinton relates an incident in his memoirs about a young regimental lieutenant at Fort Donelson who was wounded in the back during a cowardly retreat from battle. He died from his wound. The lieutenant's father told Brinton that "under the circumstances, [he] would rather his son should die than live."[184] Walt

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[181] Quoted in Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*. (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1982), 51.
[182] Ibid., 134.
[183] Ibid., 137.
[184] John H. Brinton. *Personal Memoirs of John H. Brinton: Civil War Surgeon, 1861-1865*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1914), 141-42.

Whitman was proud to see the "sick, dying, agonized, and damned" American soldier, always and certainly, holding "himself cool and unquestioned master above all pains and bloody mutilations."[185] A kinswoman of Mary Chesnut was asked in 1865, "Are you like Aunt Mary? Would you be happier if all the men in the family were killed?" The kinswoman, Miss C, responded, "Yes, if their life disgraced them. There are worse things than death."[186] Leander Stillwell's father told one of Leander's friends that he hoped his boy would come through the war all right, yet he would rather **"**Leander should be killed dead, while standing up and fighting like a man, than that he should run, and disgrace his family." Leander knew his father expected the friend to share his words with his Leander, which he did. Leander considered Civil War soldiers "too proud to run" and relied on his dad's sentiment to help him through the war.[187]

Even though accounts reveal that the combat was just as brutal for Civil War soldiers as it was for soldiers of twentieth-century wars, the soldiers themselves made every effort to put forth a brave face no matter what and to deny even the slightest hint of anything that could be deemed cowardice or weakness. Those considering the possibility of death, those

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[185] John Harmon McElroy, ed. *The Sacrificial Years: A Chronicle of Walt Whitman's Experiences in the Civil War.* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1999), 31.
[186] Wyatt-Brown, 39.
[187] Stillwell, pp. 270-271.

wounded, and those actually dying all testify similarly. A private soldier in the Army of the Potomac wrote in 1887 that "enlisted soldiers knew when they were fatally wounded, and after the shock of discovery had passed, they generally braced themselves and died in a manly manner. It was seldom that they flunked in the presence of death."[188] Confederate Colonel Isaac E. Avery of the 6th North Carolina Regiment sent his father this message: "Tell my father that I died with my face to the enemy." Avery wrote these words to Major Samuel M. Tare, after being mortally wounded at Gettysburg. He used a twig dipped in his own blood to write the words.[189] In a July 22, 1864 letter to his sister, George Hamilton Perkins wrote, "I have not even time to write, but will write a long letter to mother as soon as I can. She must not worry about me. I hope everything will come out for the best. Life is not very long anyway, and I am not afraid to die. I should only dread leaving you all at home."[190] Margaret Junkin Preston records the death of family member Willy Preston on the battlefield of Second Manassas, "When he was struck down on the battle field, friends gathered around him with expressions of sympathy (we are told), when he said, 'Don't distress yourselves about

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[188] John D. Wright, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Civil War Quotations*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 425.
[189] Wright, p. 18.
[190] George Hamilton Perkins. Letter from George Hamilton Perkins, July 22, 1864, in *George Hamilton Perkins, Commodore, U. S. N.: His Life and Letters.* Alden, Carroll Storrs. Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1914, pp. 312. S1625-D075

me, I am not afraid to die.' To the surgeon he said, 'I am at peace with God and with all the world.'"[191]

Americans of the Civil War era held beliefs and attitudes about death and dying closer to those of the Middle Ages than to our time. Death was shaped by a physical, everyday, ever-present reality greatly different from our own. These earlier Americans faced death and dying with intensity and stoicism virtually unknown to many modern Americans. They would have approved of the manner of Jackson's death. Even though it occurred in wartime, away from home, aspects of Stonewall's death were universal for nineteenth-century Americans. His wife and doctor made sure he knew and understood that he was dying. His child was present. They surrounded his deathbed in the final days and hours of his life. He fulfilled the requirements of the dying beautifully. They would not have approved of the behavior of the Fort Donelson soldier and would have commended Livermore for her actions. In fact, all evidence suggests that they would not approve or understand twentieth-century death as we commonly know it.

The transition from tame death to wild death in the United States began in the years from 1870 to 1950 and accelerated after 1950. In the early-to-mid nineteenth century, newspapers often ran articles describing

[191]Margaret Junkin Preston. Diary of Margaret Junkin Preston, September, 1862, in *The Life and Letters of Margaret Junkin Preston*. Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1903, pp. 378. S935-D025

proper deathbed behavior. "By 1870, [newspaper] obituary reference to and advice about a good death born with Christian resignation had all but disappeared."[192] A primary explanation can be found in improved longevity rates and reduced mortality rates by less dangerous childbirth and improved treatments for diseases such as fever.

The influences dictating tame death behavior during the Civil War era existed in all facets of life: religion, literature, daily experience. Religion was a part of life for almost all Americans – Union and Confederate – who served in the Civil War. The earliest Christians believed in resurrection and an after-life. By the nineteenth century, these individuals and their families, if in any way religious, believed that judgment occurred at the moment of death, making the traditional deathbed ritual critically important. If soldiers were unable to die at home, like Beowulf and Stonewall, they still conducted the ritual as best they could. Witnesses were careful to record the details of the death and report it to the family of the deceased, so that they could know their loved one died well and could be assured that the soul of their loved one received entry to heaven. The literature of the day, both secular and religious, emphasized this approach to death and resurrection, the after-life, and the importance of a good death. Romantic poetry portrayed

[192] Wells, p. 226.

death as a welcome, beautiful, and sweet release from life. Death in battle was thus a wonderful opportunity, since it offered the promise of release from the travails of life and the chance to prove one's manhood. Indeed, as Stannard has argued, "the shift from fearful anticipation to eager longing for death runs through virtually all the available materials on death and dying during this period."[193]

Daily life in the nineteenth century meant death was familiar and always present, always looming, not just for the very young and the very old, but for everyone. Wells has provided a potent example of this approach to life and death, noting that, "by the 1880s, when reliable evidence first becomes available, [citizens of Schenectady, New York] could expect to live no more than forty years on average." Frequent cholera and smallpox epidemics destroyed large portions of urban populations until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A smallpox epidemic of 1677-78 probably killed more than one-fifth of Boston's entire population. Along with most of the western world, Schenectady experienced unprecedented transitions in the causes of and attitudes about death between 1870 and 1950. The most important was an increase of life expectancy of twenty years or more.[194] Wells continues,

[193] Stannard, p. 150.
[194] Wells, pp. 39, 171.

> The moment of death was still a time of great anticipation, but between 1870 and 1950, its location changed, and so the symbols and roles of this dramatic event were significantly altered as hospital replaced home as the site of the profound transmission…The medicalization of death carried with it profound changes. On the one hand, hospitals became places to combat rather than to accept death, to postpone, if not deny, its ultimate victory. The counterside of this was, however, to transform death into something no longer natural, no longer part of the human condition…In contrast to the nineteenth century, death was no longer an event which almost always occurred in familiar surroundings in the company of familiar faces…Perhaps the most intimate service a family could render the deceased was preparation of the body. For centuries this was done by family and friends in the confines of the home.[195]

Americans of the nineteenth century did not fear death, dread death, deny death, or try to avoid death. They did not view death as the worst calamity that could happen. Several other concerns trumped death on the priority list for these Americans – soldiers and civilians alike. As the first-person accounts in this chapter make clear, reputation was more cherished than life. Fulfilling responsibilities to community and country was far more important than losing one's life. In fact, life became meaningless if reputation was lost as a result of not fulfilling individual responsibilities to community and country. Making a good death was supremely important. The abiding belief of almost all who served in a

[195] Wells, p. 195.

rewarding after-life made death not unpleasant to contemplate but perhaps welcome relief from the struggles of life. Widely disseminated examples of dying well in literature and in life created expectations for others to follow suit and set the same good example. Reputation rested partly, too, on one's deathbed behavior. Facing Civil War battle and the possibility of death was not as difficult as today's Americans imagine it must have been. Most people today see death as the ultimate evil, the ultimate terror. Those persons who grew up in nineteenth-century American or who came from Europe as immigrants before the Civil War were not afraid of dying in the face of what they accepted as a daily reality.

Chapter 5:

That Thing Called Honor

"Honor has caused more deaths than the plague."

Julian Pitt-Rivers

Recently, an incident occurred on a school bus in a community in Kansas. An eighth-grade boy named Brian slugged a seventh-grade boy named Andy. Andy returned the blow, and the fight was on. Both boys were suspended from school. Andy's family was mortified and embarrassed with the shame that his aggressive behavior had brought to the family's reputation. Additional details forth came. On this particular day, Brian had taken Andy's seat. He refused Andy's request to relinquish the seat with a blow to Andy's stomach. Angered rather than intimidated, Andy defended himself with return blows, much to the pain and humiliation of Brian, who ended up crying. Though Andy was deemed a hero in the eyes of his bus mates, school officials and Andy's parents judged otherwise. Witnesses were called, testimony taken. Eyewitness accounts revealed that Brian had habitually subjected Andy and others to abuse. Clearly, Andy had had enough. Andy's mother called his behavior a red flag of a serious nature, and his sister claimed he had disgraced them all. Being privy to this familial angst, I mentioned the possibility that perhaps Andy had stood up for his honor when pushed too far and that this behavior might not

actually be bad. I was the lone approving voice of Andy's defense of his seat and his honor.

The importance of this story to our exploration of honor will become clear when compared to another earlier incident. In late eighteenth-century America, in a Kentucky frontier community, a boy named Walter struck a boy named Daniel and cut his lip. According to a diarist's account, Daniel "did not resent" the blow and "quietly put up with it" and went home. His father then questioned him about the cause of his injuries. Upon learning that Walter not only remained unscathed but unchallenged, Daniel's father raged about the shame occasioned by his son's cowardice. Looking back, Daniel made clear that his father's view was the expected community norm. Daniel's reputation – and that of his family – suffered disgrace because of his failure to defend himself.[196]

Andy and Daniel faced similar situations. Each handled his situation differently, and each faced consequences resulting from expected behaviors of his time. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, society expected Daniel to hit Walter back or face the humiliation of cowardice and dishonor, not only for himself but for his family. At that time, such a fate was deemed worse than death. These more narrowly defined codes of behavior in earlier centuries overshadowed all

[196] Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South*. Austin and London. University of Texas Press, 1979, pp. 96-97 (from Daniel Drake, M.D. *Pioneer Life in Kentucky, 1785-1800*. Edited by Emmet Field Horine, M.D. New York: Henry Schuman, 1948, p. 154).

aspects of life. Boys needed to defend themselves aggressively against insults. Men were required to do the same - in business, work, and war.

Twenty-first-century expectations for Andy were nearly the opposite of those for Daniel. Andy's shame and humiliation were consequences of action rather than non-action. Andy's world frowned when he defended himself because his behavior involved violence. Andy's world expected him to report the incident to authorities and let authorities handle the problem. These two events illustrate a radical change regarding honor's meaning and importance in American society from Daniel's time to Andy's time. Because the definition of what constitutes honor is culturally-constructed over time, its requirements and importance change over time. Additionally, the meanings of honor and the institutionalized codes of honor differ from age to age and from society to society. These differences make the study of honor complex. Understanding changing attitudes toward honor over time is necessary to understand the disparity of ideas of Civil War-era Americans and twentieth-century Americans. These beliefs determined how Americans of these two eras perceived honor, manhood, and war. This chapter is a journey through the history and changes of honor. The material presented here will provide background for the next two chapters concerning honor in nineteenth-century America and the Civil War.

This study will introduce definitions of the word honor, terms necessary to the study of honor, and theories about honor. While not claimed to be exhaustive, a

general understanding of honor theory and honor cultures will help us to understand the honor culture of America over time. The aim is to understand the differences in expectations for Daniel and expectations for Andy and perhaps why expectations were different for each boy. A central hypothesis is that twentieth-century American honor is radically different from American honor of earlier times. To that end, this chapter offers a survey of concepts of honor from colonial times through the present and then concentrates on honor as nineteenth-century Americans understood it, combining lexical and conceptual approaches. Understanding the meaning of honor over time is essential to understanding how nineteenth-century Americans viewed honor and how honor directed their behavior in all aspects of life, including life, death, battle, and war.

Defining honor is not a simple task.[197] Not surprisingly, the meanings and applications of the word have changed over time. If the idea that honor can be a major motive for war and can prevent psychological breakdown as a result of battle

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[197] See J. G. Peristiany, ed. *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974. Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret. *The French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*. Translated by William Doyle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. James Bowman. *Honor: A History*. New York: Encounter Books, 2006. Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Frank Henderson Stewart. *Honor*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994. Peter Spierenburg, ed. *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America.* Ohio State University Press, 1998. J. G. Peristiany and Julian River-Pitts. *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Kenneth S. Greenberg. *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Death, Humanitarianism, Slave Rebellions, The Pro-Slavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "Honour, Irony, and Humiliation in the Era of the American Civil War." *Social Alternatives*. Vol. 25 No. 1, First Quarter, 2006, pp. 22-27. Thucydides. "Speech for the Athenians." *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. A newly revised edition of the Richard Crawley Translation with Maps, Annotation, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Text. Robert B. Strassler, ed. Introduction by Victor David Hanson. New York: A Touchstone Book, Simon & Schuster, 1998.

seems unlikely, Thucydides offered perspective. Thucydides counted interest, fear, and honor as the three motives for going to war. "…it was not a very remarkable action, or contrary to the common practice of mankind, if we did accept an empire that was offered to us, and refused to give it up under the pressure of three of the strongest motives, fear, honor, and interest."[198] This Thucydidean triad may at first seem to miss the mark concerning honor, but as other historians point out and as we shall see in the case of the American Civil War, honor has always played a major role in the decision to go to war. For our study, we need not go back as far as the Peloponnesian War, but we must begin at least as far back as the Middle Ages. From the ninth to the twelfth centuries, *honneur* indicated the possession of worldly material goods, including possession of a wife. Noblemen were usually the possessors of such goods. The more possessions one had, the more *honneur* one received. Loss of possessions resulted in loss of honor, considered more important than physical or psychological damages. By the sixteenth century, in Europe, honor shifted from ownership to an individual's reputation and personal character based on public behaviors. Once again, noblemen were usually the honored ones, reflecting the idea that they were naturally honorable. Honor was sometimes seen largely a matter of birth, but honor was not guaranteed; it could be lost. The words used at this time were *honte* and *honteux*, meaning modest or chaste. In other words, personal

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[198] Thucydides. "Speech of the Athenians." *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. A newly revised edition of the Richard Crawley Translation with Maps, Annotation, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Text. Robert B. Strassler, ed. Introduction by Victor Davis Hanson. New York: A Touchstone Book, Simon & Schuster, 1998, 43.

qualities of modesty and chastity replaced wealth as a requirement to receive *honte* in the sixteenth century. Personal characteristics such as courage became even more important for recognition of honor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While honor was still mostly the possession of the aristocracy, birth and lineage as essential requirements were beginning to weaken. The *point d'honneur* came into use, in the form of the duel. Since dueling was a response to personal insult, insult to one's group, or insult to a woman's reputation, the idea that honor could be lost became more even prevalent as a major facet of honor. One could lose honor in several ways. Honor's opposite, humiliation or shame, also became even more prominent.[199]

Loss of honor had always been a serious matter in many human societies. Alfonso X authored *The Partidas*, a thirteenth-century Castilian legal code. According to this code, the loss of honor equated with the loss of life. "Two crimes are equal, to kill a man or to accuse him of wrong-doing; for a man once he is defamed, although he be innocent, is dead to the good and to the honour of the world; and besides, the slander may be such that death would be better for him than life. A bad reputation is worse than death." Alphonso X asserted that a man guilty of destroying the reputation and honor of another was to be severely sentenced, even to death, or if his life were spared, his tongue was to be cut out. [200]

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[199] See Peristiany, Peristiany and Rivers-Pitt, Henderson.
[200] J. G. Peristiany, J. G., ed. *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, 85.

If one experienced dishonor, one suffered infamy, shame, and death. According to *The Partidas*, infamies arose from a number of things, such as being born out of wedlock, one's father speaking ill of one in his will, one's king or a judge speaking ill of one, a man of good repute speaking ill of one, admitting to theft, a woman committing adultery, a woman living with a man less than a year after becoming a widow, a father remarrying his daughter less than a year after the death of her husband, fighting with wild beasts for pay, or fighting with other men for pay. Those with dishonour, infamy, and shame were doomed to social ruin and social death. Possession of honor meant inclusion into communities and groups; loss of honor meant exclusion.

The honor, fame, and prestige described in the code were usually associated with tribal and collective honor, blood honor, and included the honor won in battle as an important requirement. The losers, especially in battle, were humiliated, with the humiliation reflecting on the entire group. Along with battle, revenge was an important part of this type of honor. Individual or group failure to perform the expected violent revenge resulted in additional humiliation, shame, and dishonor, perhaps in greater measure than the original insult. In the Middle Ages, this type of honor was manifested by nobles challenging one another to duels for real or perceived humiliation or insult to individuals or to members of the individual's group.[201] This code suggests, however, that honor was always an aspect of every

[201] Ibid, 86.

level of society, not just the aristocracy. For example, the research of Peristiany and Rivers-Pitt in tribal communities in the Mediterranean suggest that honor crosses all classes as an important code of conduct and a way to control and construct societies.[202]

The nineteenth century brought major changes to the concept of honor and its various meaning. Honor became a sentiment rather than a characteristic, usually reflecting moral dignity and personal integrity. Notion of honor with its outward standards of behavior became sense of honor. In other words, virtue rather than behavior determined honor. Even more prominent was the idea of the opposite of honor, in the form of dishonor, disgrace, weakness, and indignity in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others. One of honor's biggest shifts at this time was the embrace of the concept by the bourgeois. This application to all classes was evident in England, France, and America. This bestowed all classes with the capabilities of virtue. According to French historian Robert A. Nye, in England,
a vigorous capitalism and a prosperous gentry encouraged English nobles to cultivate marital and business alliances with lesser brethren, which led to less emphasis on heredity as a requirement for honor." Crossing the English Channel, Nye claimed that "the Napoleonic code led to the nationalization of honor. The concept of loyalty

[202] J. G. Peristiany, J. G., ed. *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974. J. G. Peristiany and Julian River-Pitts. *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

which had bound liegeman to lord and soldier to soldier was reconstituted as loyalty to nation…Family honor was inseparable from this stirring love of country.[203]

Agreeing that a basic changed had occurred, historian Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret has written,

> from 1760 onwards the notions of worthiness and honour, which had defined what was special about nobles, were overtaken by a new notion: merit, a middle-class value, typical of the third order, which the nobility took over, made its own, accepted and officially recognized as a criterion of nobility. From that moment on there was no longer any significant difference between nobility and middle classes. A noble was now nothing but a commoner who had made it.[204]

Gordon Wood traced the effects of democracy, citizenship, and economics on the nationalization of honor and the resulting application to the pivotal role of the middle class in America. In the early years, the colonies had very little in the way of an aristocracy. Members of the colonial elite were known as gentlemen. Legislatures started including commoners as a result of the shortage of gentlemen. These commoners started dressing like gentlemen and calling themselves gentlemen. Economic growth, consumerism, population growth, and democracy made possible elevation to gentleman status for those who would otherwise not be eligible. Commoners acquired the ability to purchase luxury items, including the gentlemanly style of clothing, previously preserved for the gentry. Commoners became

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[203] Robert A. Nye. *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1993, 27, 33.
[204] Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret. *The French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*. Translated by William Doyle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 34-35.

gentlemen. According to Wood, "everyone became a gentleman. There were no more commoners." In addition, democracy changed people from subjects to citizens. Subjects looked to a monarch, but citizens thought and acted as equals. The status of equality combined with acceptance as a gentleman also meant acceptance as being honorable.[205]

Possession of honor and the fear of its opposite became increasingly important in relation to individual identity for all classes. Though the idea that honor was the sole possession of nobility was widely disputed, evidence of the practice of honor codes in other classes existed. By the end of the seventeenth century, males of all classes could possess or lose honor. While subjected to repeated changes in meaning, honor consistently embraced the martial virtues of bravery, strength, and courage. As well, honor was closely tied to violence. That conception lasted throughout the nineteenth century.

This brief presentation of definitions and history reflects only those most widely accepted conceptions of what it constituted and how it was manifested. Along with the definition and history of the word honor, familiarity with terminology and an understanding of honor theory are also necessary to understand nineteenth-century American honor codes. What follows is a review of certain of the most often used terms.

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[205] Gordon S. Wood. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1991, 115.

Public honor (external honor): In classical times, during the Middle Ages, and until about the thirteenth century, only public honor existed. Public honor depended upon conduct according to an honor code. Honor determined standing in the community. Public honor was not just the province of the upper classes. All members of a community belonged to an honor group, whether it was family, class, tribe, or nation. Public honor could be separate from private life, an example of which is evident in the Arthurian romances. Launcelot was agreeably Arthur's best knight, which meant he was Arthur's most honored knight. Many other knights knew, including perhaps Arthur himself, of Launcelot's affair with Arthur's queen, Guinevere. As long as that information was kept private, Launcelot retained his honor, and Arthur could ignore it and retain his honor. If Launcelot were publicly accused, especially in front of Arthur, the honor of both Launcelot and Arthur was in jeopardy. Launcelot, having received public insult, would be required to challenge his accuser in a fight to the death. Arthur would be required to challenge Launcelot because, through the affair, Launcelot had broken his oath to Arthur and insulted Arthur. Public honor concerned only public behaviors.

Cultural honor (honor culture): comprises the traditions, stories, habits, and thoughts of a particular society about things such as the proper and improper use of violence and proper and improper behaviors of all sorts. Some honor cultures are hundreds if not thousands of years old. The decline of cultural honor in the West has blurred the distinction between just and unjust violence, which is a central component

of cultural honor. If all violence is wrong and bad, then cultural honor is undermined. The honor group agrees on and understands the honor code and the behaviors the honor code requires. Honor is mostly male-dominated, but women have important roles. For example, women are expected to be chaste; if they are not, the offense reflects on their men. Also, women expect their men to adhere to the code in all its behavioral requirements. For example, in the Civil War and World War I, women gave men who stayed home a white feather to symbolize their cowardice for not going to war.

Honor code: The honor code is the set of behavioral guidelines which justify or control the behavior of members of the honor group or honor culture. Anthropologists, sociologists, and historians study the honor codes of societies to determine how the honor code shapes societies. Different cultures have different honor codes; hence, we can identify different honor cultures. Honor killing is one aspect of the honor code in the Muslim honor culture. If a member of the honor group or a woman for whom they are responsible behaves in a way that violates the code, the men of the honor group are obligated to kill the woman who has disgraced the family. This might not restore the group's honor, but it will be a display that the men of that group can take corrective measures. Western honor cultures no longer have any version of honor killing, though in the past, honor killings of unfaithful wives in the American South did occur and largely went unpunished because of the honor code.

Honor group: Whether family, class, tribe, or nation, one's honor group determines the honor code and the behaviors required of the code. All those in the honor group are expected to fulfill their role. For men, this means behavior and conduct. Men are supposed to be the providers and the protectors. For women, this means chastity. Women are to care for the home, keep themselves sexually pure to ensure proper bloodlines, and produce children. These gender characteristics of honor are just examples of some of the more basic ones. Bravery for men and chastity for women are among the main aspects of reflexive honor, but most honor codes require more than just components of reflexive honor. For both sexes, it means monitoring members of the group to determine whether they deserve honor or whether they deserve to lose their honor. Honor groups differ from region to region and era to era. Some honor groups are familial and tribal, with honor bestowed by members of the family or tribe. During the Middle Ages, lords conferred honor, usually upon knights in return for their service. Later, monarchs, say in England and France, wanted the central control and conference of honor to be in the hands of the king. "Louis XIV was the first monarch who consciously attempted to transform the nobility's conceptions of honor, maintaining that service to the king was the source of supreme honor."[206] The Tudor King Henry VIII established the king as the fount of honor, nationalizing the honor system and giving the state the power to grant honorable

[206] Peter Spierenburg, ed. *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*. Ohio State University Press, 1998, 22.

status. Later again, nations, such as France under Napoleon, required allegiance to the state for honor group membership.

Reflexive honor (savage honor): Reflexive honor is not the same as cultural honor, though they share some components. Reflexive honor is basic savage honor (bravery for men, chastity for women). It requires sensitivity to insult, accompanied with violence as part of the consequences. Dueling, eye gouging, fist fighting, knife fighting – and Daniel hitting Walter – are examples of reflexive honor.

Personal honor (internal honor): Public (external) honor transitioned to personal (internal) honor from the twelfth century to the nineteenth century. Character traits (virtues) replaced conduct. A "sense of honor" replaced "honor" during this time. The transition from public to private honor undermined honor cultures, because the honor group cannot agree on the requirements of the code and because honor as virtue is not outwardly visible. Violence was still a part of the code at all times, but this shift from public to personal created a crisis regarding honor's place in social relationships.

Anthropologists have been the leaders in honor studies since the 1960s, though some historians, psychologists, and sociologists have addressed the subject, and more historians have become involved in recent years. Sociologists see honor as culturally instilled; psychologists see it as natural. Anthropologists, while they have not determined the cultural or natural origins of honor, have constructed honor theories and structures. For example, anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers, the leading authority

in the study of honor, has offered two theories, a three-facet theory and a two-aspect (bipartite) theory. The three-facet theory involves a sentiment (say bravery), a manifestation of that sentiment in conduct, and an evaluation of this conduct by others. In Daniel's case, the sentiment would be bravery, the manifestation of that bravery would be hitting Walter, and the evaluation would be his father's and his community's approval. Unfortunately for Daniel, he did not present the bravery required, nor did he hit Walter. He chose to take Walter's insult and not to seek revenge for the insult. In the eyes of his honor group, Daniel failed to behave according to the code. His father's evaluation of his behavior based on the requirements of the code resulted in his father's disappointment. Andy, on the other hand, manifested bravery with violence against Brian. He refused to allow Brian to insult him. The evaluation Andy received bestowed not honor but shame, since the twenty-first-century code required Andy to simply report Brian's abuse to authorities. Each of these incidents fits Pitt-Rivers's three-aspect honor theory. Pitt-Rivers's two-aspect theory suggests that honor is the value of a person in his own eyes (internal honor, pride), which involves character traits, and the value of a person in the eyes of his society (external, the right to pride), the judgment of others. Daniel felt no shame in his response to Walter; he maintained value in his own eyes, but his society valued him in a negative light, with a poor judgment of his conduct. Andy felt pride as a result of the violence he committed; his personal value remained intact, but his society judged that violence as wrong and therefore shameful. Pitt-Rivers's two-

aspect theory also seems to fit these two incidents. Moritz Liepmann, a German lawyer, offers a two-aspect theory of honor exhibited in three ways. His two aspects of honor are objectified honor (a person's reputation - public value) and subjectified honor (a person's sense of his own self worth – private value). Liepmann sees these two aspects reflected in three ways: personal qualities, reputation, and the feeling of honor. The nuances between theories are fine, and other theories exist, such as a single-aspect theory which values a person's moral worth – esteem, respect, prestige - in the eyes of his peers.[207] Yes, honor theory is complex, but conceptual framework is necessary to study honor. The point here is that several theories exist. While none of these models exactly fits the honor culture or honor cultures of nineteenth-century America, Pitt-Rivers's three-facet theory comes closest. Before outlining the use of this theory for our study, a further word about the history of Western honor is in order.

In the early Middle Ages, honor was public and external, changing from a measure of possessions to reputation, prestige, renown, standing, one's worth in the eyes of others. Until about the early thirteenth century, honor reflected behavior and rarely referred to a character trait. Victory in battle was essential for the maintenance of honor. The leading source of disgrace in German Arthurian romances of the High Middle Ages was to survive defeat in battle. Honor slowly transitioned between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries from public honor to personal, internal honor, using

[207] Stewart, 1.

virtue as a measure. The Renaissance brought the idea that a soldier who fought valiantly and survived might preserve his honor even in defeat. The idea of honor came to include moral qualities of fidelity, mercy, generosity, moderation, courtesy rather than behavioral qualities of bravery and courage, though the internal sense of bravery and courage were still important. Honor moved from medieval and external to modern and internal. The transition from external to internal (internalization) increasingly based honor on the possession of certain moral virtues. Honor came to be considered naturally internal, referring to a person's qualities rather than reputation. Honor came to be morally internal, based on moral virtues. This natural internalization and moral internalization resulted in the use of the phrase "sense of honor" in English literature in the 1660s instead of notion of honor or "honor"; this change in terminology signaled the internalization and modernization of honor. Honor experienced a lull in prominence.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) played a role in the resuscitation of honor for the modern era. Via his romances of honor and chivalry, he created the principle of honor-by-merit, including inward (internal) qualities. Instead of having to kill or injure someone for an insult, instead of having to prove oneself in battle, honor came to be defined more in terms of keeping one's word, being a good family member, a good friend, and a good member of society. Though Scott's pseudo-chivalric ideal was discredited among European intellectuals by the end of the nineteenth century, his influence on nearly the whole of Europe and American in the early nineteenth

century was immense. Rarely read today, he was the most widely read novelist in Europe. He fused traditional aristocratic honor and the new spirit of individual freedom and democracy. He had a great influence in America (Twain said Scott was responsible for the American Civil War). The American counterpart to Scott was James Fenimore Cooper and his *Leatherstocking Tales*. These five novels about white masculine primitive Natty Bumppo modeled after men such as Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone provided not only fantasy and escape for men, especially Northern men, craving manhood and honor, they also provided detailed guidance on attitudes and appropriate manly and honorable behavior for American men. In these novels, as in Scott's, honor became more defined as virtue and included passive individual sacrifice. In other words, personal sacrifice would bring honor. This version of the old aristocratic honor suited middle class Americans in the nineteenth century. It also further internalized honor. These novels still, however, gave violence a central role in honor and manhood, as we will see in chapter 7.

A sense of honor requires understanding of what constitutes honorable behavior, attachment to such behavior, and possession of certain character traits, such as self-control and honesty. These traits are necessary to ensure that attachment to the code always – or almost always – find expression in appropriate and honorable behavior. The shift from honor based on behavior (the notion of honor) to honor based on possession of certain moral qualities (the sense of honor) marks the beginning of the collapse of honor**.** Motive is judged rather than behavior. Individual sets of values

outweigh society's honor culture and undermine the code. The connection between a sense of honor and the collapse of Western honor is evident. The only respect that matters is self-respect. Honor based on moral qualities makes it hard to judge a man as honorable or not, since internal honor is possibly lax in requiring an act.

Honor underwent other changes in the transition from medieval to modern honor. Prestige came increasingly to be a right, and certain moral values gave one the title to this right, comprehensively referred to as a sense of honor. Reflexivity in the form of sensitivity to injury and insult had always been a part of honor codes, seen in Mediterranean societies, in Europe, in Icelandic sagas, in chivalry, in other literatures, and in America, became more prominent and required insistence of one's right to honor and talk of dueling honor. Reflexive honor (also sometimes called personal honor or savage honor) became increasingly prominent in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Reflexive honor still required that one follow the honor code and display the expected behaviors, especially bravery and courage, so Daniel, according to the code, had to hit Walter back. Reflexive honor functioned at all levels of society, but conflicts of honor were linked to class. In other words, Daniel and Walter had to belong to the same honor group (say, class). In early modern Europe, duels were common, but a gentleman would only fight a duel with another gentleman. The class requirement of honor was more public, but the elite were not the only ones who lived by honor codes. Peasant law codes in Germany in the late Middle Ages show that peasants frequently fought duels about matters of honor. Honor was a

possession of all classes. Gentlemen fought ritualistic duels; others fist fought, gouged eyes, and tweaked noses. Daniel and Walter needed to belong to the same class, but they did not have to belong to the upper class to fight in the name of honor. By the nineteenth century, the internal and reflexive aspects of honor were present among speakers of all major European languages. In the United States by the nineteenth century, honor (both internal and external) determined reputation, for more than just the elite. The masses believed honor to be a right – both personal honor and public honor. However, honor's continuing tense relationship with democracy and with Christianity brought about a lull in the importance of honor in the West and in America. Awareness of these changes will help explain the issues surrounding honor in the next two chapters.

Revolutionary Americans held that reputation was a true measure of one's character. Honor became democratized in an aristocracy of nature. Numbers of American men known as gentlemen expanded. Rapid growth of a new elite class of artisans and merchants whose claims to honor depended on their status as working men made work a badge of honor. The following descriptions serve as a general introduction to that American honor code. One's community formed one's honor group. By the mid-nineteenth century, the American honor group functioned at several levels – family, community, and nation. These honor groups agreed on components of the honor code. Honor was not an inborn attribute; men had to earn it, defend it, maintain it, and it could be lost. Honor was the sole possession of men, not

women, though women were an important part of the honor code and were fully engaged with and supportive of the honor code. One's pledge of honor was freely given; no person or state could coerce a pledge of honor; however, men sought honor as their mostly highly-valued possession and a ticket to inclusion and success. Members of one's honor group judged one's reputation as honorable or not, and one's inclusion in the group was based on the judgment of the honor group. The honor group had in its language at least one word or phrase frequently used to refer to honor and also had words for its opposite. Retaining honor required following the honor code.[208] Nineteenth-century Americans shared definitions of honorable behavior, using the words honor, manhood, and duty, with cowardice representing its antithesis. Honor was all or none; a man had honor, or he did not. Failure to abide by the code would lead to exclusion from the group and loss of self-respect. These generalities were true for Northerners and Southerners, though terminology may differ slightly. Ultimately, the study hopes to show that the nineteenth-century honor code may have prevented psychological breakdown as a result of combat – in soldiers of both sides. Our first task is to expand on the definition of honor, the code of honor, how honor

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[208] J. G. Peristiany, and Julian River-Pitts. *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Moritz Liepmann. Die Beledigung. In *Vergleichende Darstellung des deutschen und auslandischen Strafrechts: Besonderer Teil*, by Karl Birkmeyer and others. Berlin: Otto Liebmann (description of Liepmann's theory of honor is found in Frank Henderson Stewart's *Honor*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994. Also found in Stewart in pages 145-146 are the three aspects of honor used in this paper to describe the nineteenth-century honor code Americans recognized, understood, and followed. Kenneth S. Greenberg. *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Death, Humanitarianism, Slave Rebellions, The Pro-Slavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. See also Stillwell, p. 54.

was institutionalized, and how honor affected nineteenth-century behavior and attitudes, especially behaviors and attitudes toward warfare and battle.

Conveniently, changes in warfare accommodated changes in honor. Warfare became more national and ideological than tribal. Thus, the aristocratic style of warfare was not suited to modern warfare. This helped to create egalitarianism in warfare and opportunity for a new elite in military professionals and soldiers. War now provided common soldiers with an opportunity for honor on the battlefield.

The honor theories that make most sense to this study of nineteenth-century America and the Civil War are the three-facet and the bipartite theories. The bipartite theory holds inner honor as a personal quality (honorableness- honor in one's own eyes) and outer honor as reputation (for honorableness- honor in the eyes of others). It might be possible to have one of these without the other. The three-facet theory involves a sentiment, a manifestation of that sentiment in conduct, and an evaluation of this conduct by others. In other words, in a given society, honor codes will prescribe certain rules. One's behavior in relation to those rules can result in the loss of honor, either inner or outer, or perhaps even both. While either of these theories might apply, the three-facet theory provides more distinctions and categories, with its evaluation of conduct by members of the honor group. The three-facet theory might also be better fit for inclusion and treatment of insult. Nineteenth-century American honor was both public and personal – and was also reflexive, especially, but not exclusively, in the South. Bertram Wyatt-Brown claims that without Southern honor,

there would have been no Civil War. Honor was still a way of life. Honor's ideal world was more real than their real world. Honor was just as important to Northerners as to Southerners, perhaps even more so, because Northern honor was undergoing threats from more directions than was Southern honor. Southern honor was tied to slavery and a way of life. Northern honor was tied to manhood. Honor as a motivation to go to war might seem not a good enough reason to us today, but the reality was that honor was a strong cultural force that induced both Northerners and Southerners. The good opinion of their honor group was more important than death. War provided the best possible opportunity for men to prove themselves as men and to maintain their honor. If men did not volunteer to go, they would receive white feathers or aprons from the women of their community, signs of cowardice. Similar to *The Partidas*, loss of honor was more damaging than loss of life. During the war, appearing courageous was still the most important, since cowardice was the quickest way to lose honor.

By 1860, the North and the South were so different, in areas such as slavery, urbanization, labor, and education, as to appear to constitute two different countries and cultures. Northerners struggled with new definitions and roles of manhood as a result of industrialization. Southerners more outwardly maintained the strong traditional ideas of honor formerly obvious in both North and South. During times of crisis, such as the Civil War, both sections reflected similar ideas of honor. If only vestiges of honor were apparent, or if it seemed sectional ideas about honor were

profoundly different in the decades before the Civil War, the war refocused both sides to a similar shared honor code. These cultures of honor and manhood were the reasons Civil War soldiers stoically endured the horrors of battle. They allowed Civil War soldiers only one choice: courage under fire. This strong cultural foundation of honor has roots to much earlier times.[209]

The pursuit of honor has always been an important part of American and United States history. Dueling had been common in both North and South in colonial times. Honor was central to colonial-era politics. Behaviors of honor changed over the centuries, and in the North at the end of the nineteenth century, the term manhood became more widely used, but at the mid-nineteenth century, both North and South, at the deepest levels, clung to ancient ideas of manly honor and used the term to mean reputation, respect, and manhood. Wyatt-Brown agrees concerning Northern honor in contrast to Southern honor,

> Northerners were moving away from the parochial style of the South. Becoming ever more commercial, industrial, and urban in character, Northerners no longer firmly and exclusively linked honour to homeland and face-to-face community. Instead, the ethic was joined to the blessings of self-government and to the abstraction and symbols of national sovereignty, the stars and stripes, the virtues of free labour, and the idea of a perpetual Union. Lincoln's understanding of honour was inseparable from his conception of national unity.[210]

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[209] James Bowman. *Honor: A History*. New York: Encounter Books, 2006; Frank Henderson Stewart. *Honor*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
[210] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "Honour, Irony, and Humiliation in the Era of the American Civil War." *Social Alternatives.* Vol. 25 No. 1, First Quarter, 2006, pp. 22-27.

Proof of the importance of honor in the nineteenth-century America is abundant. When war broke out, nineteenth-century men in both the North and South saw opportunity to show their bravery and protect their honor. Since honor was the most important thing to a nineteenth-century man, breakdown on the battlefield or after battle, not battle itself with all its physical dangers, was the thing most feared. Emotional breakdown was simply not an option. As horrible as battle was, loss of honor for these men would have been far worse. Battle was the lesser evil. Honor was deeply ingrained in all facets of Northern and Southern society. Members lived according to the honor code, which contained a common set of required behaviors and taboos. Men, of course, strictly adhered to it. Women fully supported it. The primacy of honor in the South is widely accepted, but Northerners used most of the same honor language as Southerners and expressed the same expectations of their men.[211] Civil War diaries, memoirs, letters, journals, speeches, and official documents from both sides of the conflict abound with these attitudes and expectations.

Americans had spent twenty-six of the one hundred and twenty-three years between 1689 and 1812 at war; Americans of every generation during that time had faced war or the threat of war. Thus, antebellum young men desired to prove their

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[211] See Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; *Honor and Violence in the Old South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s – 1880s*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Also see W. J. Cash. *The Mind of the South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979.

manhood and gain the coveted honor, and they yearned for a war of their own so that they, like their fathers and grandfathers, could be tested.

The Civil War provided the ultimate measure of manhood: battle. Whether Yankee soldiers fought more for ideology or for manhood is hotly debated, but they clearly saw the war as a chance to re-enter that threatened world of masculinity and prove themselves as men after all.[212] Indicators from letters, diaries, and memoirs of both sides included bravery in the face of the enemy, courage before and during battle, and stoicism when wounded or dying. Death was preferable to being a coward, deserter, shirker, or malingerer – all signs of the lack of manhood and honor. Real men were not weak and did not break down before, during, or after battle. After the war, this code of conduct still applied. If men suffered lingering physical or psychological wounds, they were to endure them stoically. A few decades after the Civil War, people were no longer recoiling from the horrors of the war but were extolling the wondrous benefits for the country and for the men who fought the battles. The men who fought the battles welcomed these attitudes. By 1895, Theodore Roosevelt was calling for another war for the good of the country and for the good of the boys who had not seen battle. Both sides saw this as a matter of honor.

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[212]James M. McPherson. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; Earl J. Hess. *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat.* University of Kansas Press, 1997; Gerald E. Lindermann. *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War.* The Free Press, 1987.

Because sectional differences did exist that could suggest differences in antebellum honor culture between the North and the South, each section will receive its own chapter. The importance of honor for our study is that honor was a way of life for nineteenth-century Americans in the North and in the South. They strongly believed the honor culture and its code were important. They followed the requirements of the code in every aspect of their lives. It determined accepted and appropriate behavior. The code dictated behavior in everyday life. Honor was the most important thing a man could have. Loss of honor was devastating. Not only did honor require that men go to battle and face death bravely, it also dictated bravery in the face of anything war and battle could present. One important consequence of these attitudes was that it left no room for psychological breakdown as a result of battle. In fact, as we will see in the next two chapters, psychological breakdown was the most serious offense of the honor code that a man could commit. In other words, the honor code prevented psychological breakdown as a result of battle in the American Civil War.

Indeed, it still plays a role today, though we might not realize it or recognize it as such. Donald Kagan used the Thucydidean triad of motives to analyze several wars in his *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*. According to Kagan, "The reader may be surprised by how small a role considerations of practical utility and material gain, and even ambitions for power itself, play in bringing on wars and how often some aspect of honor is decisive." The Peloponnesian War had started

mostly over a squabble between Corinth and Corcyra – over honor and dishonor. Corinth had at one time been the dominant power in its region but had watched as its power and prestige dwindled and as that of Corcyra grew.

> The Corcyraeans had acquired a fleet of 120 warships, second in size only to Athens. For years they had challenged Corinthian hegemony in the northwest…To these injuries they added the insult of public disdain for Corinth at the public festivals common to them and Corinth's other colonies. These public insults must have been at least the last straw for the Corinthians. Spoiling for a fight they seized the excuse offered them by the Epidamnian invitation. It was a matter of respect and prestige, that is, honor.[213]

Dishonor and humiliation escalated between the two groups, with the Corcyraeans refusing to surrender to the Corinthians. This minor incident in a remote region of Greece escalated and ultimately sparked the Peloponnesian War. According to Barbara Tuchman, "War is the unfolding of miscalculations." While she was not thinking of the Peloponnesian War when she penned these words, they certainly apply.

> The Corinthians' decision to intervene was neither predetermined nor necessary for the Corinthians' well-being, security, or even prestige. Had they remained aloof, there would have been no crisis and no war, but they seized the opportunity to humiliate and avenge themselves on the hated Corcyraeans. That decision may be judged irrational or

[213] Donald Kagan. *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace.* New York: Anchor Books – A Division of Random House, 1996, 8. Kagan. *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.* Cornell University Press, 2006, 213-218.

> merely a miscalculation of likely consequences, but it is like many similar ones throughout history in which passion inspired by old hatreds and wounded honor are the cause of dangerous actions. Their driving motive was neither interest nor fear but honor, a determination to avenge the slights they had suffered from the Corcyraeans and to elevate their prestige among the Greek states.[214]

Kagan used the Thucydidean triad of fear, interest, and honor to illustrate how honor played a large role in many wars. Kagan also noted,

> …modern politicians and students of politics view anything except palpable or material motives for war merely irrational. But the notion that the only thing rational or real in the conduct of nations is the search for economic benefits or physical security is itself a prejudice of our time. Honor as prestige has played a critical role in national rivalries. But equally compelling is the dread of dishonor, while assaults on their status prompt outpourings of passion and hatred, not calculation.[215]

Lyndon B. Johnson commented on Vietnam, "We love peace. We hate war. But our course is charted always by the compass of honor."[216] Wyatt-Brown agrees. Not only does he cite honor as the cause of the Civil War, he warns today, "Americans must come to an understanding of honor and shame, that the world is not a rational place. Not to do so opens us to enormous risk."[217]

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[214] Ibid, 70-71.
[215] http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/vl/notes/kagan.html Retrieved February 1, 2007.
[216] Ronnie Dugger. *The Politician*. 1982, 146-47.
[217] Wyatt-Brown. "Honor, Shame, and Iraq in American Foreign Policy." Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, Columbia University, New York, November 2004. http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/bert.php Retrieved February 1, 2007.

Clearly, the role of honor is important as a motive for countries to go to war. Honor's role for individual men is just as important. Honor can be lost if men do not participate or if they do not perform well. The absence of the word honor today does not necessarily mean it is not regarded. Modern Americans might not like the idea of honor's role in the world and might choose to ignore both the word and its influence. Nineteenth-century Americans, however, considered honor the most important possession they could have. They were willing to do almost anything to get it or keep it.

James Bowman, author of *Honor: A History*, claimed that "any coherent idea of honor was amputated from Western culture three-quarters of a century or so ago…Victorian honor was the last real form of cultural honor to exist in the official culture of the West."[218] Bowman cited psychotherapy, feminism, and pacifism as the causes of the collapse of honor in the West and especially in America. The late nineteenth century efforts to domesticate men in the effort to eradicate violence resulted in the idea that honor was a destructive force because it involved violence. The idea spread that all violence was bad. Western belief that honor caused World War I created a wave of revulsion against honor. By the time of the Vietnam War, fleeing to Canada to avoid military service was considered the honorable thing to do, since all war was bad. According to Jones and Wessely, in 1972, the "American

[218] James Bowman. *Honor: A History*. New York: Encounter Books, 2006, 35.

Psychiatric Association stated: 'We find it morally repugnant for any government to exact such heavy costs in human suffering for the sake of abstract concepts of national pride or honor.' Such sentiments, especially from august national bodies, would have been unthinkable only a generation earlier."[219] Though he does not seem to agree with Bowman's idea that honor is dead in the West, southern historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown sees honor in decay.

> The process of decay began in the Jeffersonian era, if not sooner, as more and more whites were evangelized by the revival movements and secularized by the forces of democracy and economic development. After Reconstruction, the ethic of honor continued to weaken ever more speedily as class consciousness, secularism, and other forces hastened its departure, especially after World War I.[220]

Indeed, Joanne Freeman's comment that in the early days of the American Republic, "honor was a way of life" seems out of place in twentieth and twenty-first-century America.[221] Internal honor is the antithesis of public honor and the honor code. The internalization of honor from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, with its emphasis on individualism, initiated the disintegration of public honor, the honor code, and honor itself. Precedence shifted from social, public expectation to individual, private expectation. This shift was not exclusive to America. In a speech delivered in November of 1881, Otto von Bismarck talked about honor,

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[219] Jones and Wessely, 135.
[220] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, xvii.
[221] Joanne B. Freeman. *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001, xv.

> Gentlemen, my honor lies in no-one's hand but my own, and it is not something that others can lavish on me; my own honor, which I carry in my heart, suffices me entirely, and no-one is judge of it and able to decide whether I have it. My honor before God and men is my property, I give myself as much as I believe that I have deserved, and I renounce any extra.[222]

Bismarck's comments reflected the completion of the internalization of honor. Widespread presence of internal honor makes it impossible for a society to have an institutional honor code or for others to know if one is honorable or not. According to historian Frank Henderson Stewart, "One's sense of honor can mean that personal integrity guides one's behavior. This reduces the honor code to something like: 'To thine own self be true,' one's own honor code – one's own proper sense of honor. The stress of the sense of honor on honor institutions in the West led to the collapse of honor institutions in the West."[223] Honor in the twentieth century fell further out of favor, with honor actually considered a bad thing after World War I. Today, we have strong elements of anti-honor and post-honor sentiments in the West. Honor to mid-nineteenth-century Americans and earlier was, as Freeman stated, "a way of life." Honor is not a way of life today. Today's anti-honor culture might make earlier honor seem strange and bewildering. Our alienation to honor makes it important for us to understand that earlier American honor culture before we can understand earlier American thinking about life, death, battle, and war.

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[222] Edward Crankshaw. *Bismarck*. New York: The Viking Press, 1981, p. 279
[223] Frank Henderson Stewart. *Honor*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, 49.

Chapter 6:

Manhood Calls for War

"I tell you I do hate a coward. I am a big enough coward my self but never will desert in a trying time like Hart so help me God"

Private Franklin Howard of the 10th Wisconsin

"Whatever was surrendered and laid down, it was not manhood, and not honor. Manhood arose, and honor was plighted and received…"

Joshua Chamberlain

Two armies eyed one another across a valley. Twenty-five thousand Confederate soldiers under the commands of Major General John B. Gordon and General James B. Longstreet were stationed on a hill across the valley surrounding the Appomattox. However, only eight thousand of those Confederates were able to fight in the last days and hours of early April of 1865. The majority of the Southern soldiers were unfit for duty, suffering from malnutrition, illness, and fatigue. Their clothes were ragged, and some had no shoes, but they were all hardened veterans who had seen long years of fighting. Now dawned one of the toughest days of the entire war – the day of surrender to the enemy. Facing them were two Union brigades under the command of General Joshua L. Chamberlain. Three days earlier, Confederate General Robert E. Lee and Union General Ulysses S. Grant had sat in the parlor of the home of Wilmer McLean and negotiated details of the Confederacy's surrender.

Both generals had left the area by the time of the stacking of arms, leaving trusted subordinates Gordon and Chamberlain to play out the final act.

Testimony at the time and later confirmed that the Confederate soldiers, though weary and near starvation, were dreading the stacking of arms and surrendering of all things belonging to their army, including battle flags.[224] General Gordon assembled the proud remnant of the Confederate army and moved them toward the receiving area where the Union army waited. General Gordon himself felt the shame of the moment. According to Chamberlain, "The General was riding in advance of his troops, his chin drooped to his breast, downhearted and dejected in appearance almost beyond description." Chamberlain understood the shame and humiliation of the surrendering troops and their officers. Grant had set the tone to minimize the shame and humiliation by not allowing celebratory cannon firing after the surrender. Chamberlain determined to follow that example. In Chamberlain's words,

> I…instructed my subordinate officers to come to the position of 'salute' in the manual of arms as each body of the Confederates passed before us…It was not a 'present arms,' however, not a 'present,' which then as now was the highest possible honor to be paid even to a president. It was the 'carry arms,' as it was then known, with musket held by the right hand and perpendicular to the shoulder. I may best describe it as a marching salute in review…When General Gordon came opposite me I had the bugle blown and the entire line came to 'attention,' preparatory to executing this movement of the manual successively and by regiments as Gordon's columns should pass before our front, each in turn. At the sound of that machine like snap of arms, however,

[224] Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. *The Passing of the Armies: The Last Campaign of the Armies.* Pennsylvania: Stan Clark Military Books, 1994, pp. 260-261.

> General Gordon started, caught in a moment its significance, and instantly assumed the finest attitude of a soldier. He wheeled his horse facing me, touching him gently with the spur, so that the animal slightly reared, and as he wheeled, horse and rider made one motion, the horse's head swung down with a graceful bow, and General Gordon dropped his swordpoint to his toe in salutation…By word of mouth General Gordon sent back orders to the rear that his own troops take the same position of the manual in the march past as did our line. That was done, and a truly imposing sight was the mutual salutation and farewell.[225]

In a later account, Chamberlain penned these words to describe the surrender,

> Before us in proud humiliation stood the embodiment of manhood: men whom neither toils and sufferings, nor the fact of death, nor disaster, nor hopelessness could bend from their resolve; standing before us now, thin, worn, and famished, but erect, and with eyes looking level into ours, waking memories that bound us together as no other bond;—was not such manhood to be welcomed back into a Union so tested and assured?[226]

Both Northerners and Southerners understood the meaning and importance of manhood and honor in this ceremony of defeat and victory. The existence and power of Southern honor has long been accepted. The influence of honor within the Union army, however, has been overshadowed or ignored to the point of suggesting its nonexistence. As Chamberlain's actions and the Confederate response to those actions reveal, Northerners were speaking a language of honor that Southerners recognized, understood, and returned. Northern honor was alive and well before,

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[225] Joshua L. Chamberlain. Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. XXXII, Richmond, Va. John Brown Gordon. *Reminiscences of the Civil War*. Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2006.
[226] Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. *The Passing of the Armies: The Last Campaign of the Armies.* Pennsylvania: Stan Clark Military Books, 1994, pp. 260-261.

during, and after the war. This chapter will use both a lexical and conceptual approach to illustrate Northern honor. Northerners by the early nineteenth century were using the words manhood and duty as well as honor. We see this in Chamberlain's comment at the beginning of this chapter. According to historian James McPherson, "perhaps the many references to duty, honor, and manhood were only a glorified way of describing community and peer pressure that made a young man a demasculinized pariah if he failed to enlist."[227] Northerners were also using the words coward and dishonor. This preoccupation with the manhood aspect of honor was a reaction to attempts to change men's masculine behaviors during these decades. These changes meant men were expected to avoid certain behaviors, such as violence, that had always been outward signs of manhood and honor. The conceptual framework was shifting. Behaviors which had previously gained men entrance to the community and approval from the honor group were becoming taboo, meaning that criteria for membership in the community and honor group were on shaky ground – and men's identities as men. Since these threats were not as prevalent in the South, the crisis was more immediate in the North. Men looked for entrance into the community and honor group through other avenues, or they sought return to previous standards of the honor code. Since honor was the most important possession for a man, men would do nothing to risk their honor. Breakdown in battle assured immediate loss of one's honor. Breakdown in battle was to be avoided at all costs.

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[227] James M. McPherson. *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 28.

As previously shown, manhood and masculinity are major components of honor codes and honor cultures. During the decades leading up to the war, Northern honor had been under attack in ways that Southern honor was not. Northern men felt that their manhood was threatened from several directions. According to historical sociologist Michael Kimmel, "Proving manhood, manhood as a relentless test – has been and continues to be a dominant one in American life. Beginning in the early part of the nineteenth century, the idea of testing and proving one's manhood became one of the defining experiences in American men's lives."[228] A brief discussion of the progression of Northern manhood from the American Revolution forward will aid understanding of the nineteenth-century crisis for Northern men.

The "Self-Made Man" emerged at the time of the American Revolution and has shaped views of American manhood to the present time. At that time, being a man meant being in charge of one's one life, liberty, and property. It also meant not being a boy. The birth of the nation was also the birth of this new self-made man. According to Kimmel, the economic boon of the market revolution of the new country's first decades produced these self-made men, who then built America. Economic success and economic autonomy partly defined the self-made man. An important part of that success was the embodiment of self-reliance from humble origins to high position. Since success must be earned and could easily be lost, manhood had to be constantly proved in the eyes of other men. By the 1840s and

[228] Michael Kimmel. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: The Free Press, A Division of Simon & Schuster, 1996, ix, 2.

1850s, the Self-Made Man was the dominant American conception of manhood. Changes in the workplace became evident during this time. According to Kimmel, "Before the Civil War, nine out of ten American men owned their own farm, shop, or small crafts workshop. His body and his labor were his own property." Then wage labor became more widespread, leading to loss of workplace autonomy through economic dependence and factory labor, which equated with emasculation. Henry David Thoreau called the marketplace a "site of humiliation." He scornfully called men in these new roles Market Men, then he retreated to Walden's Pond for his own escape.[229]

Another threat to manhood came in the form of advice manuals advocating the evils of sex and the need for men to control their sexual appetites. One of these manuals, John Todd's *The Student Manual: Designed by Specific Directions to Aid in Forming and Strengthening the Intellectual and Moral Character and Habits of the Student*, was first published in 1835 and had undergone twenty-four editions by 1854. In it, Todd "claimed that masturbation enfeebled the mind" and that masturbation has possibly "claimed more lives than war" through premature death as a consequence. Another manual author, Sylvester Graham, warned that masturbation, marital sex more than once a month, and fantasizing about sex would lead to debility, disease, premature death, and loss of 'nobleness, dignity, honor, and manhood.'" Common thought of the era also held that sperm conservation provided more energy for the

[229] Kimmel, 5, 17, 18, 26, 28, 42, 49. Henry David Thoreau. *Walden*. New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, London: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1948.

workplace. The term "spermatic economy" was coined to describe the fusion of sexual and marketplace activities. "Sturdy manhood loses its energy and bends under too frequent expenditure of this important secretion."[230]

Close on the heels of controlling sexual appetites and habits was the importance of controlling alcohol consumption. Americans drank heavily. According to historian William Rorabaugh, "By 1830, Americans over fourteen years of age drank 9.5 gallons of hard liquor a year, over 5 gallons per capita overall, plus 30.3 gallons of hard cider and other intoxicants."[231] The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was founded in 1826. Their efforts, combined with the efforts of women, abolitionists (who linked drinking and slavery), and ministers of the Second Great Awakening, led to the portrayal of drinking as "an expression of masculine protest against feminization."[232] Drinking needed to be eliminated in the eyes of these groups, but in the eyes of the men drinking, this was just one more threat to their masculinity.

Amy Sophia Greenberg examined another threat to manhood which strengthened the argument that Northern men felt threatened. Greenberg examined violence and firemen in the nineteenth-century American cities of Baltimore, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Greenberg did not argue that firemen shared a uniform honor code or

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[230] John Todd. *The Student's Manual: Designed by Specific Directions to Aid in Formng and Strengthening the Intellectual and Moral Character and Habits.* Kennsinger Publishers, LLC, 2008, 147-48. Sylvester Graham. *A Lecture to Young Man.* Providence: Weeden and Cory, 1834, 29, 33-34, 39, 58, 73. G. J. Barker-Benfield. *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in 19th Century America*. New York: Routledge, 2000, 179.
[231] William Rorabaugh. *The Alcoholic Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, ix.
[232] William Rorabaugh. *The Alcoholic Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, ix. Kimmel, 50.

participated in identical modes of behavior, but she did argue that volunteer firemen were violent in specific ways, that urban citizens in the late antebellum period saw this as the behavior of a "masculine culture," and that these same citizens pushed for professionalization of firemen in the hope that this professionalization would end the violence of the volunteer firemen. Urban citizens saw the violence of this masculine culture as a threat which needed to be tamed and eliminated, one more step toward civilizing the behavior of men. We will not settle the argument today of whether these volunteers followed an honor code, though I would argue that, like all nineteenth-century, white American men, they did. What is important for our study is the effort to control the behavior of these men and to eliminate their propensity to violence. I argue that these men did indeed follow the requirements of the honor code and were proud of those manifestations of thought and action traditionally considered to be masculine behaviors. Effort to change their behavior, to civilize them, was considered just one more attack on manhood and honor.[233]

Martin J. Wiener strengthened the argument further in his examination of "The Victorian Criminalization of Men," a process part of which involved concerted efforts to civilize men. His study concentrated mostly on Britain, but he made clear that this process took place "in Britain and elsewhere, in the course of the nineteenth century." This effort to civilize men included the desire to change men, to eliminate certain behaviors, such as violence, and construct the ideal man. This effort was multi-

[233] Amy Sophia Greenberg. "Fights/Fires: Violent Firemen in the Nineteenth-Century American City," in *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America*. Pieter Spierenburg, ed. Ohio State University Press, 1998, 159-189.

pronged. Wiener saw this process starting in the sixteenth century but accelerating in the later eighteenth century. "The readiness to resort to violence that lay at the heart of 'traditional' manhood was then challenged by several new and rapidly advancing cultural movements." The culture of sensibility combined with the evangelical religious revival in efforts to reform and domesticate males and to "turn the macho 'man of honor' into the domestic 'man of feeling.'" In sermons, evangelicals openly denounced honor as evil and strove to reduce the physical nature of men and increase the more nurturing roles of husband and father.[234] Wiener's argument was that women and evangelicals worked to codify more and more male behavior as criminal in an effort to control men by punishing their violence and transforming them into the Victorian gentlemen. The importance of Wiener's argument for this study is documentation of continued threat to manhood and honor.

By the mid-nineteenth century in most regions of the North, masculinity was in question, and in peril, as it came to be more and more constricted, tried, and tested in the marketplace and in the social arenas of religion, temperance, the marketplace, and the law. Traditional male roles were in transformation as a result of the market revolution in the decades before the Civil War. Males were leaving home to participate in new jobs and new careers available through the market revolution; they were also facing new roles as husband and father. All of this meant adjustment to major – and perhaps terrifying – life changes. As men left the home for longer

[234] Martin J. Wiener. "The Victorian Criminalization of Men," in Spierenburg, 197-211.

periods every day to travel to a job away from home and spend hours at the job and perhaps more hours in homosocial activities after work, wives were left to undertake traditional male responsibilities. Women became the primary parent, teaching their sons to be men. Loss of important traditional roles made men start to feel that they were losing their masculinity. Pressure to control their drinking and their sexual habits encroached further on their masculinity. This caused tremendous anxiety. The cultural definition of manhood during this era was changing. Many saw these changes as disturbing. Oliver Wendell Holmes saw danger in the form of a "set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast from our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage."[235] Men sought ways to maintain or regain that lost manhood. Since that could not be achieved in the marketplace or even in the home, men looked elsewhere, away from the marketplace and cities, away from women, to the frontier or to fantasy.

Thousands went West in the decades before the war, nearly 200,000 to the gold mines in California in 1849 and 1850, for example, where women were present only in small numbers and men could recover their manhood by returning to traditional behaviors considered manly and masculine, without the constraints of civilization. According to historian Paula Mitchell Marks,

> Forty-niners cast off the cultural baggage they brought from the East. They took new names, manly and rough, like Texas Jack, Whiskey

[235] Oliver Wendell Holmes. "The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table." *Atlantic Monthly* 1, May 1858, 881.

> Tom; they neither bathed nor changed their clothes, but they gambled, drank incessantly, swore, and attended bare-knuckle prizefights more often than they attended church services. A deck of cards was called the 'California prayer book.'…The forty-niners may have found what they were really looking for in those gold mines: they discovered a 'pure' manhood – even if they didn't find any gold.[236]

This celebration of the return to manly virtues was prevalent in the writings of Francis Parkman, Richard Henry Dana, Charles Webber, and others. Indeed, if men could not physically escape civilization and women, they used fantasy for temporary escape. For those who could not physically relocate to the frontier, the literature of those decades had masculinity and manhood as a major theme. Literature transformed the masculine primitive men – Kit Carson, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett - who went west and tamed it for settlement into mythic national heroes, a myth still prevalent in America today. Leslie Fiedler observes, "Antebellum fiction by men is marked by a startling absence of sexuality, of marriage, of families – the virtual absence of women entirely. James Fenimore Cooper was the most popular American male novelist of the time, with his *Leatherstocking Tales*: *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *Deerslayer* (1841). Cooper's primitive man Natty Bumppo provided urban men with manly adventures. Christopher Lasch says, "Cooper created a prototype of masculinist flight with a solitary hunter, unencumbered by social responsibilities, utterly self-sufficient, uncultivated but endowed with a spontaneous appreciation of natural beauty who

[236] Paula Mitchell Marks. *Precious Dust: The American Gold Rush Era, 1840-1900*. New York: William Morrow, 1994, 326.

became the central figure in the great American romance of the West." D. H. Lawrence describes Natty, "And Natty, what sort of a man is he? Why, he is a man with a gun. He is a killer, a slayer. Patient and gentle, as he is, he is a slayer. Self-effacing…still he is a killer." David Leverenz calls Natty the "first last real man in America."[237]

Why were American men drawn to Natty Bumppo? Simply stated, the five novels are playbooks for regaining lost manhood and honor. Every page offers events and words to demonstrate and guide manly and honorable behavior. A brief look at *The Last of the Mohicans* illustrates. D.H. Lawrence's description on the back of the 1980 New American Classic edition says the book contains the "classic portrait of the man of moral courage who severs all connections with a society whose values he can no longer accept." Natty Bumppo is instantly familiar to today's Americans who have grown up on a diet of mythic heroes, from Daniel Boone and Hondo to Rambo. He is rugged, independent, capable of taking care of himself and those helpless ones around him, an outdoorsman, a killer, and a role model for all men whose manhood and honor were threatened or in question. He is free from civilization and remains that way throughout the story. He lives an outdoor life of adventure in which he is always the central figure and the hero. His adventures range from those as harmless and manly as shooting contests to life-and-death struggles with Hurons and his arch-

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[237] Leslie Fiedler. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. New York: Stein and Day, 1966, 181. Christopher Lasch. *The True and Only Heaven*. New York: Norton, 1991, 94. D. H. Lawrence. *Studies in Classic American Literature*. New York: Grove Press, 1967, 59. David Leverenz. "The Last Real Man in America: From Natty Bumppo to Batman" in *American Literary History* 3, 1991, 754.

enemy, Magua. The obviously civilized white character named David asks Natty, more commonly known as Hawk-eye, "in which of the holy books do you find language to support you?" Hawk-eye retorts,

> Book! Do you take me for a whimpering boy at the apron string of one of your old gals; and this good rifle on my knee for the feather of a goose's wing, my ox's horn for a bottle of ink, and my leathern pouch for a crossbarred handkercher to carry my dinner? Book! What have such as I, who am a warrior of the wilderness, to do with books?

Another out-of-place civilized white man, Major Duncan Heyward, tries his hardest to match the nightwatch vigilance of Hawk-eye and Chingachgook, Natty's Mohican friend, but sleep overcame him, and he "sank into a deep sleep, dreaming that he was a knight of ancient chivalry, holding his midnight vigils before the tent of a recaptured princess." Women are present; Cora and Alice Munroe have made poor decisions and now can only survive in the care and protection of Hawk-eye. Hawk-eye comments,

> A man who is too conscientious to misspend his days among the women, in learning the names of black marks, may never hear of the deeds of his fathers, nor feel a pride in striving to outdo them. For myself, I conclude all the Bumppos could shoot, for I have a natural turn with a rifle, which must have been handed down from generation to generation, as, our holy commandments tell us, all good and evil gifts are bestowed.

Clearly, David's abundance of education, book-learning at the feet of women, lack of knowledge of the outdoors and lack of manly skills passed from one generation to the next, and, indeed, civilization itself, are useless or even dangerous in Hawk-eye's world. There, marketplace and workplace skills are not manly or honorable. Women can only survive if Hawk-eye protects them – and sometimes not even then, because women do not belong in this man's world. Hawk-eye and the other masculine primitives of his world do not break down emotionally or psychologically, even during the worst crises, such as the deaths of Cora and Chingachgook's son, Uncas, at the hands of the enemy Magua. Natty Bumppo embodies manhood and honor.[238]

American men were anxious to regain or retain their manhood. This condition was true for Northerners and Southerners, though probably more for Northerners during the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. Heading to the frontier or escaping the civilized world through fantasy and fiction were a few of the ways men tried to accomplish this goal. However, the best road to manhood was soon to present itself for all American men. That road was war. E. Anthony Rotundo traced the human invention called manhood and how this American cultural construct developed and changed from colonial times. Rotundo offered that "men born from the 1840s to the 1860s became preoccupied with the contrast between the strong, assertive man and the gentle contemplative one."[239] Men of earlier decades were also concerned with

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[238] James Fenimore Cooper. *The Last of the Mohicans*. New York and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1980, 137-38, 152, 35.
[239] E. Anthony Rotundo. *American Manhood: Transformation in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era.* (Basic Books, A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 199), 267.

possible loss of manhood and honor. Vigor, assertiveness, and violence separated true men from the rest. The best way to prove manliness was through warfare and soldiering.

Mark Gerzon agrees with this hypothesis. "To be a warrior," Gerzon writes, "means to be a man, with the test of battle as the ultimate experience, the final arbiter…The history of masculinity is the history of war." The characteristics of the soldier were deeply embedded into the American psyche long before the Revolution. The soldier was the bravest of men, willing to sacrifice himself for the cause, willing to serve as the protector. Without him, survival was slim. He welcomed hardship and suffering, because, "in exchange for his services, his culture conferred upon him a priceless gift. It considered him a man."[240] Those not considered men were considered cowards or boys. Not only did young men in the antebellum era desire to prove their manhood, they felt the need for a war of their own, like their fathers and grandfathers. They craved battle. With the first shot at Fort Sumter, men and women rejoiced in the streets with parades and parties. Men rushed to enlist. This motivation at the beginning of the war did not last, but other types of motivation took its place. All these motivations reflect honor, manhood, and duty as essential ingredients.

James M. McPherson offered credit to John A. Lynn for part of a conceptual framework of soldier motivation in his study of Civil War soldiers. This chapter

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[240] Mark Gerzon. *A Choice of Heroes: The Changing Faces of American Manhood*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 12.

makes use of both Lynn's formulation and McPherson's elaboration of the approach. This framework suggests three categories or angles of approach: initial motivation, reasons why men enlist in the first place; sustaining motivation, reasons why men stay in the army and therefore why armies continue to exist for the duration of a war; and combat motivation, the reasons men face extreme danger in battle, even when all they want to do is escape it.[241] This chapter will refer mainly to Union soldiers' wartime letters and journals, as well as those of family members, commanders, and medical personnel.

Civil War military commanders, soldiers' families, doctors, nurses, and soldiers all reflect the idea that honor was the centerpiece of their culture, based on their usage of the words manhood, duty, and honor, and based on their attitudes toward cowardice. As a result of the strong emphasis on reputation, psychological combat trauma could not exist and could not have been a major medico-problem. Reactions and attitudes differed slightly from group to group, but they all held essentially the same conclusions. Sectionalism in the first half of the nineteenth century resulted in different attitudes in the North and the South about some things, such as slavery. In some ways, nineteenth-century Americans lived in different cultures. Northerners were struggling with new definitions and roles of manhood as a part of honor. Southerners had strong ideas of honor.

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[241] James M. McPherson. *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 12. John A. Lynn. *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France*, 1791-1794. Urbana, Ill: Westview Press, 1996, 35-36, 177-82.

John Talbott argued that desertion and other acts perceived as cowardice were actually symptoms of combat trauma, which, he claimed, did exist in Civil War soldiers. He concluded in "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War," that "human response to stress did not change between the Civil War and the Vietnam War, but understanding and interpreting the response were transformed" and that "men who might have been diagnosed with combat trauma in 1916, 1944, or 1968 were brought before court martials in 1864." Talbott is referring here, of course, to psychological combat trauma, not physiological combat trauma. Talbott believed in the existence of psychological combat trauma in 1864 and concluded that, though its existence is phantom-like and hard to prove, it was as much a reality in the Civil War as in Vietnam.[242] Talbott was correct to assert that psychological combat trauma could have existed and been misdiagnosed or undetected. Its existence is still unproven. He is incorrect, however, in his claim that the human response to stress did not change between the Civil War and the Vietnam War. As we have seen in chapter 3, the physiology of combat does indeed remain the same over time. Civil War soldiers and Vietnam soldiers experienced the exact same physical stress reactions to combat and battle. Beginning in the late twentieth century, training methods emerged to help soldiers understand and cope with the physiology of combat, but the physiology remained the same.

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[242] John Talbott. "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War." *History Today*. London: March 1996. Vol. 46, Iss. 3: pgs. 41ff.

What changed from the Civil War era to the Vietnam era was the cultural construction surrounding expected and appropriate behavioral responses to combat couched in manhood and honor. Talbott argued that the human psychological reaction to stress did not change. A central argument of this dissertation is that it did. Not only did behaviors surrounding human psychological stress reaction change as a result of cultural expectations, the whole idea of psychological reaction radically changed from one era to the other. Psychological breakdown was not in the realm of possibility in the Civil War era. Today's American soldiers cannot even talk to family members upon their return from Iraq until they have undergone three to five days of mandatory psychological evaluation based on cultural expectations that today's soldiers will probably be suffering from psychological breakdown in various levels of severity. Historian and psychologist Ben Shephard has written that American culture today is in a climate of traumatology, because expectation for psychological breakdown is much more widespread than for just the American military. Psychological breakdown has expanded to include the entire spectrum of American society.[243] Talbott was correct when he said that soldiers are no longer court-martialed or executed for cowardice or desertion. Soldiers in the Civil War – and as late as in World War I - were executed for desertion and cowardice because cultural expectations saw those behaviors as acts against cultural expectations. Psychological breakdown or weakness was one of the taboo behaviors for Civil War

[243] Ben Shephard. *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press, 2003.

soldiers based on the honor culture and the honor code of the nineteenth century. Severe penalty, such as execution, was a consequence for breaking a universally-accepted taboo. Today's soldiers are not executed; they are sent to therapy. Today, psychological breakdown is accepted and expected. Today's soldiers who exhibit these behaviors are not punished as a consequence; they are treated. For Civil War soldiers, psychological breakdown was the ultimate humiliation, because it diminished or destroyed their reputation as men. It also resulted in their exclusion from their honor group.

Civil War soldiers and commanders mentioned military executions after charges of desertion (commonly considered an act of cowardice), even if the accused had previous documentation of mental conditions that interfered with performance of duty. Sometimes, members of units would volunteer to serve as executioners for deserters from their own unit. Northern participants' own words suggest this was more than just a breakdown of small-group cohesion. General Sheridan recounted in 1863, "Three men of my division had deserted their colors at the beginning of the siege and made their way north. They were soon arrested and were brought back to stand trial for the worst offense that can be committed by a soldier, convicted of the crime, and ordered to be shot."[244] Colonel Charles Wainwright recorded in his diary, "Several [deserters] are to be shot tomorrow morning. Now is the time to do it; the punishment should be so sure and speedy that cowards will be more afraid of running

[244] Richard Wheeler. *Voices of the Civil War*. Forward by Bruce Catton. (New York: Meridian, 1976), 240.

away than of standing…the President commutes the death punishment of all deserters to imprisonment during the war. Poor, weak, well-meaning Lincoln!"[245] According to John Billings, fellow members of a deserter's company were so enraged at the deserter's offense that they all requested to be part of the firing squad.[246] Deserters were labeled as cowards, and cowardice was the most shameful and humiliating of all behaviors. It violated manhood and the code of honor and was not tolerated. As in every issue, gray areas exist. Desertion was not always the ultimate sin. Desertion was not always a loss of the enthusiasm which prompted the enlistment of initial motivation. If a soldier perceived that the government had broken its part of the honor agreement entered into at the time of enlistment, such as through the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation or even delayed pay, the soldier was no longer bound to the honor code agreement. Also, since family loyalties trumped all others, if a soldier discovered his family was in critical need of his presence, even if the soldier still had strong sustaining motivation as a result of duty or honor or manhood, desertion was not dishonorable. During these times, the honor and manhood of caring for family was the more important event. These exceptions to the honor code, however, were few.

Soldiers' families preferred death for themselves and their loved ones to the label of cowardice. Civil War surgeon John Brinton related an incident in his memoirs

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[245] Allan Nevins, ed. *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865*. New Introduction by Stephen W. Sears. (Da Capo Press, 1998), 379, 431.
[246] John D. Billings. *Hardtack & Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life.* Introduction by William L. Shea. Illustrated by Charles W. Reed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 199), 160.

about a young regimental lieutenant at Fort Donelson wounded in the back during a cowardly retreat from battle. He died from his wound. The lieutenant's father told Brinton that "under the circumstances, [he] would rather his son should die than live."[247] Possible display of cowardice was uppermost in the minds of soldiers, their families, and their communities. A 75th New York Infantryman, after the 1864 battle of Winchester, wrote, "I never felt so bad in my life. I felt as though we were disgraced and had probably lost the day and cared little whether I was shot or not – only when I was going back I thought about being shot in the back and turned and walked backwards.[248] John Lothrop Motley, in a letter to Dr. O. W. Holmes, Virginia, November 14, 1861, spoke of a local boy whose death had just been announced in the local paper:

> Alas, they could not then foresee that that fair-haired boy was after so short a time destined to lay down his young life on the Potomac, in one of the opening struggles for freedom and law with the accused institution of slavery! Well, it is a beautiful death – the most beautiful that man can die. Young as he was, he had gained name and fame, and his image can never be associated in the memory of the hearts which mourn for him except with ideas of honor, beauty, and purity of manhood.[249]

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[247] John H. Brinton. *Personal Memoirs of John H. Brinton: Civil War Surgeon, 1861-1865*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1914), 141-42.
[248] Randall Bedwell. *War Is All Hell: A Collection of Civil War Quotations*. Nashville: Cumberland House, 1999, 2004, p. 175.
[249] George William Curtis, ed. "The Race of Philip Sidneys Is Not Extinct." *The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1889, II, 40-43.

Not all families encouraged their sons to go to war, but even those who were reluctant usually consented. Luther Prentice Bradley left Chicago in April 1861 to enlist in the 51st Illinois Regiment as a Lt. Colonel, at age 39. He had previously served as a Lieutenant in the Connecticut militia in 1851. His mother was reluctant to see him go to war again. In a letter from Chicago to his mother dated August 31, 1861, he said:

> I knew, my dear mother, that my determination to go into service would be painful for you and that you would hardly give your consent to it. But with this strong influence to hold me back, I could not convince myself that it was not a clear and unsettled duty. Certainly no other motive would lead me to disregard your wishes. I thank you that you do consent to it, tho' reluctantly.[250]

Even though accounts reveal that in some ways combat was just as brutal for Civil War soldiers as it was for soldiers of twentieth-century wars, the soldiers themselves made every effort to put forth a brave face no matter what and to deny even the slightest hint of anything that could be deemed cowardice or weakness. Walt Whitman served as a nurse in Northern hospitals and was proud to see the "sick, dying, agonized, and damned" American soldier, always and certainly, holding "himself cool and unquestioned master above all pains and bloody mutilations." A private soldier in the Army of the Potomac wrote in 1887 that "enlisted soldiers knew when they were fatally wounded, and after the shock of discovery had passed, they

[250] Luther Prentice Bradley. Letter to his Mother, August 31, 1861. Luther Prentice Bradley Correspondence, MHI.

generally braced themselves and died in a manly manner. It was seldom that they flunked in the presence of death."[251]

The experiences of Illinois Union Army soldier Benjamin W. ("Webb") Baker provided an example of the three types of motivation outlined above. Other examples will be scattered throughout the remainder of the chapter. Webb enlisted in August of 1861 in Company E, 25th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He served the three years of his enlistment term and mustered out in August of 1864. During those three years, he fought many skirmishes, several major battles, lost his only brother to the war, and was wounded three times. His letters to his mother, grandfather, and brother reveal initial motivation, sustaining motivation, and combat motivation. He also used the key words of honor, manhood, and duty, and he talked about desertion, and cowardice. From St. Louis, he wrote his Grandfather on August 11, 1861. This letter reveals his initial motivation for enlistment:

> I feel that I have only discharged a duty which as a good citizen I owe to my country…and to liberty…as long as this arm has strength to wield a sword or handle a rifle; as long as these feet can carry me forward & these eyes can see to direct my steps I expect to march forward unless they submit to the Constitution & laws.

Like many soldiers, Webb expressed anxiety about how he would perform under the test of battle. On several occasions, he heard that his first battle was imminent and expressed anxiety and then disappointment when the battle did not materialize.

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[251] John Harmon McElroy, ed. *The Sacrificial Years: A Chronicle of Walt Whitman's Experiences in the Civil War*. (Boston: David R. Godine, 1999), 31. John D. Wright, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Civil War Quotations*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 425.

In a letter to his brother from St. Louis on August 18, 1861, Webb commented, "We were disappointed, for there was no battle." In letters to his mother from Springfield, Mo, dated November 1 and November 3, 1861, he said,

> I feel very brave now & when we get there, if I don't get weak in the knees shall do some good fighting. …we expect to have an engagement in the next five days…perhaps in two. I almost feel anxious to be in a battle & yet I am almost afraid. I feel very brave sometimes & think if I should be in an engagement, I never would leave the field alive unless the stars & stripes floated triumphant. I do not know how it may be. Pray that I may be a true soldier.

Webb connected soldiering with manhood in a letter to his mother from Rolla, Mo, on December 31, 1861, writing:

> There is a great deal of solid comfort in the wild rough life of a soldier. It is true there are a great many hardships to be endured, but those I expected to find, & in them I find pleasure in the tendency they have to develop the unselfishness in one's character. It seems to me that they develop the real characteristics of the highest type of manhood.

On March 10, 1862, in a lengthy letter to his mother from Benton Country, Arkansas, Webb described his first encounter with battle, where he received his first of three wounds. His detailed descriptions of the battle and his wound manifest a matter-of-fact tone. By March 17, Webb commented on battle again in a letter to his cousin. His words reflect sustaining motivation and combat motivation. "I do not desire to go into another battle but necessity causes us to do undesirable things

sometimes. Battles are becoming more frequent now." He also revealed sustaining motivation as well as words about honor in a March 21, 1862 letter to his mother, "My lame back is getting well as fast as could be expected; & I can use my gun well enough now, to give the secesh another turn, though I would rather compromise if it could be done honorably." The battle death of his brother John provided a critical test for Webb's commitment to traditional codes of behavior, but he remained true to his convictions. In an October 11, 1862 letter to his mother in which he informed her of the tragic news about her son's death:

> Oh, Mother; how can I say it! But I must!! John is dead!!! He was killed on the battlefield…John died like a man & a soldier at his post & in the front rank. Would I had died in his stead – my only, my true & noble hearted brother. What a great vicarious sacrifice our home & country are costing.

After the January 1863 issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, Webb commented on desertion in two letters,

> There has been a good deal of deserting since the Proclamation, but I guess it will stop now – I understand that the law is to be executed to the limit on deserters, & that means death – for my part I would as soon die any other way as to be set up against a stump & shot at…I never advised anyone to desert. I would not advise any man to dishonor himself & disgrace his friends.

Webb's comments on deserters were common to both Union and Confederate soldiers. The high incidence of desertion after the Emancipation Proclamation was

possibly a reaction to perceived infraction of the honor code. Men enlisted to fight for various reasons, but freeing the slaves was often cited as outside those reasons. If one partner in an honor contract breaks the contract, actions normally considered a violation of the honor code and therefore dishonorable are no longer a violation or a dishonor. Webb himself stated in a June 30, 1863 letter, "The war is for the restoration of the union."[252] This extended portrait of one soldier's motivation offers an example representative of many soldiers on both sides.

Edward King Wightman provides another excellent illustration. Wightman waited to enlist until August of 1862, when he enlisted for three years. He explained why he enlisted and why he delayed that enlistment in a letter to his mother dated September 1, 1862,

> At the outbreak of the war my first impulse was to join the army, but a thousand obstacles interposed, not the least of which, aside from family ties, were business engagements from which I could not honorably retire…But from the first I have been determined to step forward, not rashly nor with the spirit of adventure, but with a cool head and under a strong sense of duty. No action of my life has been so well considered and so deliberately taken.

Edward Wightman was twenty-seven years old when he enlisted, and he carefully considered every aspect, including selecting the 9th Regiment, New York Volunteers Hawkins Zouaves, "because its reputation for courage, based on actual test, assures

[252] Benjamin W. ("Webb") Baker. *Testament: A Soldier's Story of the Civil War*. Benson Bobrick, editor. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 2003, 194, 198, 202, 206-207, 208, 220, 226-227, 229, 230.

me against being disgraced." His initial motive is clear and, like his delay in enlistment and his choice of regiment, reflects his concern with honor and reputation. "It is not only desirable that our family should have a representative in the army, it would be beyond endurance disgraceful…for young men [to be] living peacefully and selfishly at home, while the land is rent by faction and threatened with ruin by violence."[253]

Like many who had not seen the elephant, Wightman expressed anxiety to see his first battle in a letter to his brother dated November 1, 1862, "I am glad to advance with the army of the Potomac and would give many a good day's rations to be present at the taking of Richmond. If the shining rifle beside me doesn't have a voice in the matter, I shall be awfully disappointed." He had to wait until Fredericksburg in December of 1862 to see that first battle. He described the battle and his role in it in great detail, and he noted his own behavior and that of others,

> During the progress of these events I was often astonished but, I believe, never once frightened. What I most marveled at was how men could walk at all, amid such a storm of missles [sic], unharmed. Yet, great as the danger was and clearly as I saw it, I found myself always philosophizing [sic] and calculating chances, as though I had no further interest in the matter than a mere observer. I learned more of the characters of my companions by watching the play of their features during the short time we were under fire than I should have done during weeks of ordinary intercourse.[254]

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[253] Edward King Wightman. *From Antietam to Fort Fisher: The Civil War Letters of Edward King Wightman, 1862-1865*. Edward G. Longacre, editor. London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1985, 23.

[254] Ibid, 24.

After Burnsides's disaster at Marye's Heights, Union soldiers were demoralized. In a late January, 1863, letter to his mother, he commented on that demoralization and how it triggered desertion, suggesting that the deserters felt morally correct in their desertion. The soldiers had heard that Major General Joseph Hooker had replaced Burnside in command of the army. The soldiers had already lost confidence in their commander; now, that loss of confidence spread to include the President who replaced Burnside with Hooker:

> A general growl has followed the new appointment, and fresh defeats are anticipated. The men feel that their lives are trifled with. Desertions are frequent and dissatisfaction general and without concealment. The failure of the last movement has not tended to improve the status of affairs, and the elevation of Hooker is another step in the wrong direction.[255]

Men felt that the government had breached their agreement by wasting their lives. This voided the honor contract, and soldiers were no longer obligated. These same men of the 9th Regiment saw another government breach of agreement concerning their enlistment. The two-year enlistees were to muster out in August of 1863. They understood that they would muster out as a group, but they were mustered out singly, and some were kept beyond the date their enlistment ended. Wightman was not among the group of two-year enlisted, but he commented that mutiny loomed large as

[255] Ibid, 71.

a consequence of the perceived or real government breach of faith in a letter to his brother in May of 1863. "Part of our regiment, numbering 462…are detained to be mustered out in detail. The men think this treatment on the part of the government authorities outrageous, and nothing but the advice of Col. Hawkins and the flattery of Gen. Getty deter them from mutiny." These comments about desertion contrast to another incident concerning desertion at Petersburg, in a letter to his brother in November, 1863:

> Desertions of conscript[s] and bounty seekers from this part of our lines have become so frequent that an order has been issued from division headquarters offering twenty day furloughs to those who will arrest or shoot deserters. One of them was shot near our camp on Friday by order of the general court martial. The regiment was present at the execution." Desertion was always related to issues of honor; however, sometimes desertion did not mean dishonor. If the government broke an agreement or if a man's family were in peril, desertion was not dishonorable.[256]

Even after the experience of Marye's Heights and Cold Harbor, Wightman's sustaining motivation remained consistent with his original motivation and continued to reflect concern with honor. In a letter dated August 28, 1864, he wrote his brother, "Our work is to destroy and subdue all traitors appearing in arms against the Republic." He talked of honor in a letter to his brother dated October 26, 1864, "the Union can be restored only by force of arms and such a course is necessary in order to vindicate the honor and establish the power of the Republic." Moreover, his personal

[256] Ibid, 90.

motivation remained unchanged and reflected continued presence of the third type of motivation, that of combat motivation, "I am ready to return to the field as a soldier."[257]

Return he did, again and again during his three-year enlistment, leaving for brief times to complete assignments as clerk or adjutant. His last campaign was at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, in January 1865. Wightman died in the front lines of the infantry charge to take the fort. His three-year enlistment would have ended in August of that year. His father, Stillman K. Wightman, traveled to North Carolina to bring his son's body home, where he was buried in Cromwell, Connecticut, in March, 1865. The evidence is persuasive that his motives never changed; his bravery never flagged; he remained dedicated to honor to the moment of his death.[258]

The stories of Webb and Wightman represent only two of thousands of examples of Northern expressions of manhood, duty, and honor, from sailors, infantry privates, commanders, and civilians. These expressions called for men to perform their duty to their country or be disgraced. Their words reflected a dedication to manhood and honor. Their comments described these dedications through initial motivation, combat motivation, and sustained motivation. Senator John Sherman from Ohio wrote his brother, William Tecumseh, in April 1861.

> The Government will rise from this strife greater, stronger, and more prosperous than ever. The men who…do their full duty by it may

[257] Ibid, 106.
[258] Ibid, 130.

> reap…honor and profit in public life, while those who look on merely as spectators in the storm will fail to discharge the highest duty of a citizen, and suffer accordingly in public estimation. . .[259]

Union Colonel David W. Wardrop described his men's performance in the burning of the Norfolk Navy Yard in an April, 1861, letter to General Benjamin Butler.

> In this hazardous expedition the officers and men under my command were steady, firm, and zealous; they were severely tasked in destroying munitions of war, mining, and firing the buildings. We returned and were landed at this fort about eight o'clock on Sunday morning, and during the time they were absent, they had neither food, nor sleep; notwithstanding, they performed their duty *nobly* and *manfully*.[260]

Michigan lawyer Robert McClelland wrote to H. K. Sanger in January of 1861: "It is the duty of every citizen to exert all his energies to prevent the sad catastrophe. This can only be done by combining the Union sentiment of the whole country. We never required more the patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit which inspired our

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[259] John Sherman. Letter from John Sherman to William Tecumseh Sherman, April 12, 1861, in *The Sherman Letters: Correspondence between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891*. Thorndike, Rachel Sherman, ed. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894, pp. 398. S1513-D034 [Biography] [4-12-1861] Sherma:L1513-34. Alexander Street Press, LLC, 2005.

[260] David W. Wardrop. Letter from David W. Wardrop to Benjamin Franklin Butler, April 23, 1861, in *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, During the Period of the Civil War, vol. 1*. Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917, pp. 669. S1641-D031 [Bibliographic Details] [4-23-1861] Wardro:L1641-31. Alexander Street Press, LLC, 2005.

ancestors in the achievement of our liberties."[261] Another civilian, New York resident George Prentiss, wrote to his good friend Joseph Howland, then serving in the Union military, in June of 1861, "Abby has just told my wife that you are ordered South. Is it so? If I were not strong in faith about you, I don't know what I should say. But the path of duty is the path …of honor."[262]

Soldiers and sailors of all ranks supported these beliefs with words and actions. Union infantry soldier William Wheeler told his mother, "I have felt all along that it was my duty to go, and that it would be disgraceful if I did not."[263] Wheeler died in battle in 1864. Massachusetts Major Wilder Dwight also died in battle, but he penned these words in May of 1861:

> I hope for a big, worthy battle, one that means something and decides something. And I hope to have strength, courage, and wisdom to do my duty in it. I never felt happier or more earnest than for the last few days, and I never realized more fully the best significance of life. I have always had a dream and theory about the virtues that are called out by war. I have nothing to say of the *supply* which I can furnish, but I am vividly impressed with the *demand*. The calling needs a whole man.[264]

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[261] Robert McClelland. Letter from Robert McClelland to H.K. Sanger, January 2, 1861 in *Letter on the Crisis*. Detroit, MI: Privately published, 1861, pp. 11. S1334-D001 [Bibliographic Details] [1-2-1861]. Alexander Street Press, LLC, 2005.

[262] George Prentiss. Letter from George Prentiss to Joseph Howland, June 19, 1861 in *Letters of a Family during the War for the Union 1861-1865, vol. 1*. Bacon, Georgeanna Woolsey; Howland, Eliza Woolsey, ed.. Privately published, 1899, pp. 360. S320-D168 [Bibliographic Details] [6-19-1861]

[263] William Wheeler. Letter from William Wheeler to Theodosia Davenport Wheeler, April 27, 1861 in *Letters of William Wheeler of the Class of 1855, Y.C.*. Privately published, 1875, pp. 468. S1913-D034 [Bibliographic Details] [4-27-1861].

[264] Wilder Dwight. Letter from Wilder Dwight, July 16, 1861, in *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight : Lieut.-Col. Second Mass. Inf. Vols*. Boston, MA: Ticknor & Co., 1891, pp. 349. S1879-D014 [Bibliographic Details] [7-16-1861] Dwight:L1879-14.

Dwight later spoke of sustaining motivation necessary to continue after the first flush of patriotic motivation had vanished, "The romance is gone. The *voluntariness* has died out in the volunteer. He finds himself devoted to *regular* service."[265] Writing in 1861, Union sailor Walton Grinnell spoke of the terror of the first battle and the combat motivation and combat physiology that soon replaced it:

> The first five or six shells that came whizzing through our rigging made me tremble all over; my knees knocked together; my mouth was bound; I could hardly speak, hardly breathe; I was frightened. But as soon as we "beat to quarters," and I was ordered to my division, all fear left me. The shells still whizzed, but I neither heard nor cared for them. I was intent upon my duty, and, as my division had all the fighting to do, being the only one bearing upon the enemy, I was too much absorbed in the working of my gun to think of any thing else; and I can assure you I felt as happy and unconcerned as ever in my life.[266]

Some months later, Union commander George Gordon Meade of Massachusetts wrote his wife once again about duty and honor, "I am here from a sense of duty,

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[265] Ibid.

[266] William Wheeler. Letter from William Wheeler to Theodosia Davenport Wheeler, April 27, 1861 in *Letters of William Wheeler of the Class of 1855, Y.C.*. Privately published, 1875, pp. 468. S1913-D034 [Bibliographic Details] [4-27-1861]. Wilder Dwight. Letter from Wilder Dwight, July 16, 1861, in *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight : Lieut.-Col. Second Mass. Inf. Vols*. Boston, MA: Ticknor & Co., 1891, pp. 349. S1879-D014 [Bibliographic Details] [7-16-1861] Dwight:L1879-14. Walton Grinnell. Letter from Walton Grinnell, October 11, 1861, in *Soldiers' Letters, from Camp, Battle-field and Prison*. New York, NY: Bunce & Huntington, 1865, pp. 472. S1441-D017 [Bibliographic Details] [10-11-1861] Grinne:L1441-17.

because I could not with honor be away, and whatever befalls me, those of my blood who survive me can say, I trust, that I did my duty."[267]

Union Captain William Lusk summed up initial motivation, anxiety for his first battle, duty, honor, and death in a letter to his cousin:

> You must feel with me in my happiness! At length I am judged worthy to expose my life for my country's sake. I go to join the 79th Regiment. Think, Cousin Lou, I am going to see real danger, real privation, real work -- not as a mere Carpet-Knight, talking valorously to girls, but going forth in all humility to help to conquer in the name of God and my Country. Pray for me, Cousin Lou! Not for my life -- I never prayed for that in any hour of peril -- but pray that I may never falter, whether my duty shall lead me to honor or to death.[268]

Expressions of the importance of duty, manhood, and honor abound in letters and diaries of northern civilians, soldiers, and medical personnel. These qualities far outweighed fear of death. They certainly left no room for psychological or emotional weakness. Though the reasons that Northerners and Southerners saw emotional weakness and breakdown as unacceptable might at first seem vastly different, they were actually quite similar. North and South shared ideologies of masculinity and

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[267] George Gordon Meade. Letter from George Gordon Meade to Margaretta Sergeant Meade, October 12, 1861, in *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade, Major-General United States Army, vol. 1*. Meade, George. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913, pp. 160. S1619-D007 [Bibliographic Details] [Biography] [10-12-1861] MeadeG:L1619-7.

[268] William Thompson Lusk. Letter from William Thompson Lusk to Louisa Thompson, June 27, 1861, in *War Letters of William Thompson Lusk: Captain, Assistant Adjutant-general, United States Volunteers, 1861-1863, afterward M.D., LL. D*. New York, NY: W.C. Lusk, 1911, pp. 304. S1607-D001 [Bibliographic Details] [Biography] [6-27-1861] LuskWi:L1607-1.

honor. Southern honor remained largely intact, but Northern honor, specifically their masculinity, which was a major ingredient in the honor culture, was under attack from several directions. The pursuit of manhood had been an important part of American history from the beginning. Though meanings of manhood changed over the course of American history, especially beginning in the late nineteenth century, these antebellum threats to Northern manhood and honor resulted in Northern men pursuing ways to remain men as they saw fit. By the mid-nineteenth century, Northerners were anxious to regain what they perceived as lost manhood. They went west; they escaped to fantasy and fiction. Southerners also clung to ideas of manly honor. This honor was threatened but threatened in ways different from the threats to Northerners. Southern honor was threatened in the form of the threat to slavery and a way of life. Northerners and Southerners rushed to war under the pressure of these threats. War would be the salvation of manhood and honor – for both sides. Through four long years of bloody war, soldiers of both sides upheld the pursuit of manhood and honor through war and battle, as evidenced by the surrender ceremony at Appomattox.

Several postwar trends – and even veterans themselves – worked to deny any possible hint of the existence of psychological combat trauma, making it more difficult for future analysis. Northerners and Southerners still clung to the ideals of honor and manhood. The memory of brave soldiers could not undergo any taint of weakness. Why? Did the need to see men as heroes in war, to forget them in peace,

and to regard any postwar difficulties as unmanly weaknesses interfere with an idealized picture of them as men and cause their suffering to be taboo? Or did Civil War soldiers suffer no lasting psychological affects from their battle experiences? Were veterans torn by these same ideal expectations of themselves, perhaps more so in the Civil War era than in any other time? Or did they have nothing to hide? Civil War soldiers might have returned home with a trunk load of psychological baggage. If they were experiencing psychological trauma, even had they wanted to or been willing to talk to family or those who had not experienced the war in the same way, no one wanted to hear their laments. Besides, the behavioral expectations of the era said that it was not manly or honorable to admit of negative psychological consequences of war, and after all, it was a personal problem, not a public problem. In light of all this, perhaps affected veterans decided to be silent and try to forget the war. Or perhaps there was no problem to address. Decades after Appomattox, when people were ready to look again at the war, society decided to popularize the war, to romanticize not only it but the courage of the veterans as well. Once again, veterans were considered manly warriors, an image they enthusiastically accepted and even promoted.

Over time, veterans, reflecting the psychological phenomenon known as "validation," came to espouse that combat had been the most important chapter in their lives.[269] War became desirable and essential to preserve cherished values and

[269] Linderman, 287.

codes. Veterans told their sons gallant, exciting stories about their experiences in battle; their sons wanted a war to fight. By 1895, Theodore Roosevelt was calling for another war for the good of the country and for the good of the boys who had not seen battle. Americans agreed with Roosevelt's call for a war. If veterans were suffering from combat trauma, they kept it safely stored away.

The code of honor and manhood so prevalent in American culture during that era might have prevented its existence at all. Was this code strong enough to see Civil War soldiers through the war and then carry them through the rest of their lives? The answer might be yes. Even into the twentieth century, historians have discovered that "personal honor was the one thing valued more than life itself by the majority of men."[270] Samuel Johnson said, "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier."[271]

How were honor and manhood capable of preventing psychological combat trauma in the Civil War and not in later wars, such as World War I or World War II, when numbers of afflicted soldiers sky-rocketed? What changed in the time between the Civil War and the wars of the twentieth century? The codes of honor and manliness and the behaviors those codes dictated faded away in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The individual, not the community, became the focus of our culture. In a culture with such importance placed on the individual, honor culture

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[270] S. L. A. Marshall. *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle* Command. Introduction by Russell W. Glenn. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, Red River Books, 2000), 149.
[271] James Boswell. *Life of Johnson.* Oxford: Oxford University, 1998.

fractures and breaks down. Psychological weakness gained cultural acceptance never before present in America, further diminishing manhood and honor.

The Civil War provided the ultimate measure of manhood: battle. Whether Yankee soldiers fought more for ideology or for manhood is debated, but they clearly saw the war as a chance to re-enter that lost world of masculinity and prove themselves as men after all. What were the signs of that proof? Clear indicators included bravery in the face of the enemy, courage before battle, and stoicism when wounded or dying. Death was preferable to being considered a coward, deserter, shirker, or malingerer – all signs of the lack of manhood. Real men were not weak and did not break down before, during, or after battle. Upon their return home after the war, this code of conduct still applied. If men suffered lingering physical or psychological wounds, they were to endure them bravely and stoically – and silently. A few decades after the Civil War, people were no longer recoiling from the horrors but were extolling the wondrous benefits for the country and for the men who fought the battles. The men who fought the battles welcomed these attitudes. Confederates embraced these same views, for the same reasons – manhood and honor.[272]

After the Civil War, cultural ideals of manliness and honor underwent changes that placed much less emphasis on fighting and soldiering and courage. Groups worked to reduce male violence and make it punishable by law. Efforts were underway to transform the manly man into the sensitive man. These changes might help to explain

[272] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982.

the rise of shell shock and combat trauma in twentieth-century wars. The existence of cultural values of manhood and honor might explain the absence of psychological battle trauma in the Civil War, by shaming soldiers from breaking down as a result of battle.

Chapter 7:

Honor Calls for War

"What is life without honor?"

Thomas Stonewall Jackson

"No sacrifice is too great, save that of honor."

Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin[273]

Robert E. Lee had no choice in the matter. His state – his home – was seceding from his country. In a letter to a friend, Mrs. Lee revealed, "My husband has wept tears of blood over this terrible war, but as a man of honor and a Virginian, he must follow the destiny of his State." The cardinal principle of honor was family defense. To Lee, and all Southerners, the Northern threat to the South embodied a threat to home and family. Losing his country was agony, but the dictates of honor afforded him only one path. In times of crises such as secession, loyalty to family triumphed over duty to country. For Lee, this duty was not based on a loyalty to or defense of slavery. Virginia was his ancestral home; he would have to forsake his country for his home. Evidence of the importance of honor exists in Lee's own words. "'I wish to live under no other government,' he wrote in the last days before secession, '&

[273] Quoted in William J. Cooper, Jr. *Jefferson Davis, American*. New York; Knopf, 2000, 514.

there is no sacrifice I am not ready to make for the preservation of the Union save that of honor.'"[274]

Four years later, now Confederate General Lee once again had no choice in the matter. On the morning of April 9, 1865, Lee told a subordinate, "There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant. And I would rather die a thousand deaths."[275] Lee simply did not have enough men left in the Southern army to continue the fight against the North and so was forced to arrange surrender. He was not alone in his reluctance to do so. Though physically exhausted and emotionally drained, he remained psychologically strong and would have continued the war if that were possible. Though defeated in a long and bloody war, he still held strong convictions of Southern honor, evidenced in his expression that he would rather die than surrender. The Confederacy was defeated militarily, but those who served the Confederacy were still as concerned with honor as they always had been. These men lived in a culture vastly different from those of American soldiers of later wars.

These men lived in an honor culture with a strict code, which dictated that, even in the face of military defeat, they would adhere to the expected behaviors of the honor code. One of the strongest requirements of the code meant that psychological weakness was not allowed under any circumstance, from the difficult experiences of battle to the even more difficult experience of defeat and surrender. Their behavior during the surrender at Appomattox confirmed their continued commitment to honor

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[274] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Honor and Violence in the Old South*. New York and Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1986, 38, 57, 59.
[275] Freeman, *Lee*, IV, 120-23.

no matter what. Southern honor was a way of life. Without honor, life would cease to have significant meaning for Southerners. Honor was the part of that life they would not allow the North to destroy. Though bruised, honor would see them through the difficult years ahead.

Though honor appeared to falter in the antebellum North, Southern honor had never weakened. The history of the South is the history of its honor. Until perhaps the late nineteenth century, honor was the very fiber of the Southern character. According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown,

> honor is essentially the cluster of ethical rules, by which judgments of behavior are ratified by community consensus. Honor is not confined to any rank of society; it is the moral property of all who belong within the community, one that determines the community's own membership. The ancient ethic was the cement that held regional culture together. At one time other Americans, not Southerners alone, expressed concern for honor.[276]

Wyatt-Brown went further in saying that had honor meant nothing to Southerners, "there would have been no Civil War. Honor existed before, during, and after slavery in the South. The South was not founded to create slavery; slavery was recruited to

[276] Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, xv. See also *Honor and Violence in the Old South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s – 1880s*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Also see W. J. Cash. *The Mind of the South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979.

perpetuate the South. Honor came first."[277] Even non-slaveholders held fast to the culture and code of honor.

Tracing Southern adherence to honor is somewhat less complicated than tracing Northern honor. As explained in chapter 5, Northern honor and Southern honor shared the same roots and, initially, the same characteristics. By the late nineteenth century, Northern honor had fractured somewhat and become more focused on manhood proven through economic, domestic, and civic success, whereas Southern honor had changed very little. Wyatt-Brown asserted that "During the Revolutionary era, love of honor and fear of shame drew the North and South together in common antipathy toward British overlords and helped to cement the nation." Both Northerners and Southerners practiced the honor-sanctioned violence of the duel, a major characteristic of the honor code rubric. Dueling involved a reflexive quality of honor and honor codes, especially in the South but also in evidence in the North in earlier decades. The fact that dueling became less prevalent in the North indicates the shift of honor's emphasis to economic, domestic, and civic virtue. The reflexive aspect insisted on the use of violence that the law frequently condemned. The law made duels with guns illegal, but duels of every form, from pistols to eye-gouging, were still a popular form of maintaining honor. Reflexive honor demanded that a man reject the law in favor of taking care of a slight or an insult on his own. Hence, many duels took place, even though they were illegal. In fact, if a man did not

[277] Ibid., xviii, 16.

participate in a duel when the code indicated he should, he was shamed. Though dueling was reserved for the upper classes, common people had a strong understanding of the honor code and followed it carefully with their own violent practices that served the same function as the duel, practices such as knife-fights, fist-fights, and eye-gouging. Honor was all or none. Failure to abide by all regulations of the code would lead to exclusion from the group and to a loss of self-respect. Since honor was bestowed on the basis of public opinion and community decision, the community held the power over man's biggest fear. According to Wyatt-Brown, "That fear was not death, for dying with honor would bring glory. Rather, the fear was public humiliation….When shame was imposed by others, honor was stripped away."[278] Frank Henderson Stewart quotes Fielding's *Amelia*, "Whosoever offends against the Laws of Honour in the least, is treated as the highest Delinquent."[279] This reality was true for early Americans, both North and South.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Northern honor had become impersonal with emphasis shifted to economic success. Southern honor prided itself on its continued legacy of the Revolutionary rhetoric with emphasis placed on personal honor, reputation, and violence. Though Northerners and Southerners used slightly different language with manhood and honor, and though the two sections expressed honor in

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[278] Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence*, viii.
[279] Quoted in Frank Henderson Stewart. *Honor*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
p. 124, from Fielding's *Amelia*, book 2, chapter 8. Kenneth S. Greenberg. *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Death, Humanitarianism, Slave Rebellions, The Pro-Slavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. See also Stillwell, p. 59.

different ways by the early decades of the nineteenth century, under the looming expectation of war in the mid-nineteenth century, Northerners and Southerners alike most assuredly knew that the war all boiled down to honor, the same kind of honor followed in colonial years and in the first decades of the Republic.[280]

Honor was the core of Southern being. Honor existed before slavery; indeed, the honor code had been, according to Katherine Freeman "a way of life" from colonial times.[281] Whereas Northern honor had come under attack in the form of questioned manhood, Southern honor's main attack came in the form of attacks against the institution of slavery. In the early decades of the Republic, many believed that slavery was a dying institution and would disappear on its own. As the nineteenth century dawned, slavery not only had not disappeared, it was strengthening and becoming more divisive between the North and the South. By the 1830s and 1840s, slavery was the central issue on the national agenda. Attacks against slavery came from evangelicals, abolitionists, women's groups, temperance groups, and especially from Northern politicians. Since slavery was a large part of the Southern honor culture, these attacks involved more than just economics, more than just the potential loss of the 3.1 billion dollars of slavery's worth by 1860. These attacks were direct insults on Southern men, Southern society, and Southern honor. Wyatt-Brown argued that even more than with the American Revolution, in which the role of honor was central, as a result of attacks on slavery and the onset of war in 1861,

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[280] Ibid., 53, 54.
[281] Ibid., xv. Joanne B Freeman. *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2001, xv.

> honour played a greater role than in any other American resort to arms. During the mid-19thC, Southern disunionists felt honour-bound to repulse the Northerners' allegedly baseless antislavery assaults on their society. Whatever the official reasons for secession, the speech acts of honour became a fashionable way to articulate the burning indignation of the Southern temper. The threat to slavery's legitimacy in the Union prompted the sectional crisis, but it was Southern honor that pulled the trigger. [282]

All Southerners - politicians, civilians, commanders, and soldiers - expressed the importance of the defense of honor, before, during, and after the war. These expressions provide compelling evidence that the strength of the honor culture and honor code prevented psychological combat trauma as a result of battle. This chapter examines the extent of Southern commitment to honor, using letters, diaries, and newspapers. A lexical and conceptual approach will once again provide the framework for the study. Southerners used the words honor, duty, courage, dishonor, and cowardice. The three categories of motivation – initial motivation, combat motivation, and sustained motivation – will provide organization for placing the use of honor and dishonor words throughout the era examined. The same theoretical framework for honor will apply for Southerners as it did for Northerners in chapter 6, with perhaps more emphasis on the reflexive aspect of honor, which focuses on

[282] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "Honour, Irony, and Humiliation in the Era of the American CW." *Social Alternatives.* Vol. 25 No. 1, First Quarter, 2006, pp. 22-23. Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor,* 178.

required responses to insult. The insult, as we have seen, results from the increasing attacks on slavery in the antebellum years.

According to Southerners, honor was reputation; honor was all. Southerners politicians often spoke and wrote of it. John C. Calhoun said, "[The nation] is never safe but under the shield of honor." William Yancey told the 1860 Democratic convention in Charleston: "Ours is the property invaded; ours are the institutions which are at stake; ours is the peace that is to be destroyed; ours is the honor at stake." Samuel David Sanders of Georgia said, "I would be disgraced if I staid at home, and unworthy of my revolutionary ancestors." "One's reputation and good character rested solely on his proof of manliness. The first element of manliness was sheer physical courage." Wyatt-Brown argued, "The simple fact is that Southerners were aggressive. Southerners were quick to anger and to fight. To refuse a challenge to fight was a stain and high dishonor. The Southern habit was to regard a fighter – soldier or dueler – as a hero." "At a state convention, Jefferson Davis, the future Confederate President, exclaimed that Mississippi's 'honor was the first consideration before the citizens in the face of Northern perfidy'. ..The state's honor was his honor.'"[283]

Civilians felt just as strongly about honor as politicians, as was made evident in their words and in their expectations of their men – and women. At the time of the Civil War, the honor code was still the generally accepted guide for behavior in

[283] Ibid., 35, 38. Jefferson Davis. "Speech at Fayette July 11, 1851 in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol 4, 1849—1852, ed. Lynda Lasswell Crist (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U P, 1983, 209.

circumstances testing one's manhood. Men who did not enlist quickly enough were in danger of receiving a white feather or an apron from their women, symbols of cowardice. Soldiers' families preferred death for themselves and their loved ones to the label of cowardice. Mothers had an important role in the honor code, as moral arbiters of bravery, but all family members supported the effort. During the war of 1812, Sam Houston's mother wanted him to join in the fight. She gave him a musket and told him, "Never disgrace it; for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than that one of them should turn his back to save his life." Yes, loss of a loved one was horrible and deeply felt, but "death had to be borne bravely, with resignation." William Fletcher was a Confederate soldier whose father opposed the war but who told his son that he was "doing the only honorable thing" in enlisting to defend his country." A kinswoman of Mississippian Mary Chesnut was asked in 1865, "Are you like Aunt Mary? Would you be happier if all the men in the family were killed?" The kinswoman, Miss C, responded, "Yes, if their life disgraced them. There are worse things than death."[284] A Carolina mother had the following to say in a letter to the editor of the *Charleston Mercury*:

> At this period, our sex at the South have grave duties to perform. We would animate our husbands and sons, and strengthen them for the great conflict that is at hand, by every means in our power. Let us, women of Carolina! prove that the same noble spirit which incited the

[284] Quoted in Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 51, 137. John H. Brinton. *Personal Memoirs of John H. Brinton: Civil War Surgeon, 1861-1865*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1914, pp. 141-142. William A. Fletcher. *Rebel Private: Front and Rear: Memoirs of a Confederate Soldier*. New York, New York: Meridian Books, 1995, p. 5. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 39.

> matrons and maidens of '76 is alive and glowing in the spirits of their descendants. I am myself a widowed mother, but I have said to my three sons, that if any one of them should be craven enough to desert their State now, to temporize in her councils, or to be backward if her honor calls them to the field – let him never look upon my face again! In the thrilling words of Volumnia to the wife of Coriolanus, 'Hear me profess sincerely, Had I a dozen sons – each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius – I had rather eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.'[285]

Missourian and southern sympathizer Rhoda Downing clearly illustrated understanding of the honor code and potential consequences of its violation in a letter to her brother dated February 26, 1863:

> I long to give you one word of advice, but fear it might get you into trouble and that I would not do if I could prevent it, "desert." The Hon. John J. [Crittenden of K[entuck]y, say[s] "Fathers, encourage your sons to desert." It is far more honorable to desert than fight for the freedom of slaves. You could not stay here if you did, but you could go to Illinois or Iowa, and get into business.[286]

Rhoda Downing's understanding of honor was in accord with the honor code of her era. The honor code was a hierarchy. Honor to family was first, honor to self and country second. The threat of war from the North initiated a shift from family loyalty

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[285] "A Woman's Word – A Carolina Mother." Letter to the Editor of the *Charleston Mercury*. Reprinted in *The Liberator*, (Boston, MA) Friday, November 30, 1860; Issue 48; col B.

[286] Rhoda Downing to John Downing; Middle Fabius, Missouri, February 26, 1863, Rhoda Downing File, Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Individual Citizens, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109.

to duty to country. This shift did not signal a change in the honor code. Protection of family came first. The threat of war was a threat to family. Soldiers volunteered for honor, using the words duty and courage, pledging their loyalty to the government. As long as the government upheld the agreement, loyalty remained intact. As we saw in chapter 6 in the letters of Northern soldier Edward Wightman, once the government violated the conditions of the honor contract, the agreement was void, and desertion brought no stain of honor. Wightman's letters revealed that the Northern government had violated the agreement of enlistment men in the 9th New York by altering the conditions of the soldiers' release at the end of their enlistment term. Wightman condemned other deserters, but he did not condemn the desertion of the soldiers the government had betrayed. Rhoda understood the hierarchy and nuances of honor in her brother's circumstance. He had not enlisted to fight for abolition to free the slaves. He had enlisted to preserve the Union. When it seemed that the Union's goal had shifted from preservation of the Union to abolition, Rhoda saw his enlistment agreement as violated and urged her brother to desert. She knew, however, that desertion for even acceptable reasons meant possible risk of dishonor and had to be done carefully.

One of the clearest indicators of cowardice was indeed desertion, with mutiny closely related. As discussed previously, some cases of desertion and mutiny did not violate the honor code. Since the prime directive of the honor code was defense of family, men did not hesitate to leave the battlefield and head home if they thought

their families were in distress. Also, if men believed the government had violated or failed to meet the terms of their enlistment or service agreement, certainly they were entitled to desert or mutiny with no dishonor. In most instances, however, desertion and mutiny were both considered serious violations of the honor code. A third aspect that could nullify an honor code was coercion. According to the code, a pledge of loyalty was to be freely and voluntarily given, not coerced. In matters of coercion, such as through the act of conscription or taxation, the honor code did not apply. Clearly, honorable men were expected and pressured to volunteer for military service, and those who did not received community shame. Still, not every man volunteered, and both North and South found themselves with severe manpower shortages as early as 1862.

When the South was forced to resort to conscription in April 1862, reaction was sharp. Volunteers did not think highly of conscripts, and conscripts often behaved in ways that confirmed the low esteem in which they were held. Texas private David Garrett commented that conscription caused "a fuss for a while, but since they shot about twenty-five men for mutiny whipped & shaved the heads of as many more for the same offense everything has got quiet & goes on as usual."[287] Later in the war, both sides experienced serious desertion problems. Conscripts did not hesitate to desert. Bounty men signed up knowing they would desert at the first opportunity. Desertion among volunteers also rose. These men were faced with the problem of

[287] David R. Garrett. *The Civil War Letters of David R. Garrett, Detailing the Adventures of the 6th Texas Cavalry, 1861-1865.* Marshall, Texas: Porto Caddo Press, 1963, 53.

upholding their pledge to their government and obeying the oldest directive of the honor code – protection of the family.

Families, especially in the South in the later years of the war, were indeed experiencing distress and hardship. The conflict between duty to their government and obligation to their families had to be agonizing to honorable men. Like Lee, however, when he faced losing his country to stand with his state, they had no choice in the matter. They deserted and went home to care for and protect their families. Their honor groups – soldiers, families, and communities – understood. North Carolina private Luther Mills commented from the trenches of Petersburg in March 1865, "It is useless to conceal the truth any longer. Most of our people at home have become so demoralized that they write to their husbands, sons and brothers that desertion *now* is not *dishonorable*." After witnessing fourteen consecutive firing squad executions for desertion, Thomas H. Davenport, chaplain in the 3rd Tennessee wrote, "I think they were objects of pity, they were ignorant, poor, and had families dependent upon them. War is a cruel thing, it heeds not the widow's tear, the orphan's moan, or the lover's anguish."[288]

Desertion was not always, then, a violation of the honor code. Military leaders and commanders, however, had to contend with large numbers of desertions, which created a major deficit in armies and made continuing military operations problematic or even impossible. According to James I. Robertson, "Capital punishment occurred

[288] Luther Rice Mills. "Letters of Luther Rice Mills – A Confederate Soldier," *North Carolina Historical Review IV* (1927), 307. Quoted in James I. Robertson, Jr. *Soldiers Blue and Gray*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press. 1998, 136.

more times in the Civil War than in all other American wars combined. Of some five hundred men shot or hanged by order of court-martial in the 1861-1865 period, almost two thirds of them were executed for the crime of desertion."[289] Military leaders and commanders used firing squads and other methods of execution to deter this most heinous sign of cowardice. For the most part, it seems, soldiers supported the practice of punishments for deserters. Civil War soldiers and commanders mentioned many military executions after charges of desertion, even if the accused had previous documentation of mental conditions that interfered with performance of duty. Sometimes, units would volunteer to serve as executioners for deserters from their own unit. Participants' own words suggest this was not a breakdown of small-group cohesion or a psychological breakdown. William Fletcher said he "would prefer death than to be looked upon as a coward." Sam Watkins recounted horror upon horror in graphic detail, as well as the witnessing of executions for cowardice and desertion, yet he went on "as if nothing had happened." Twenty years after the war, he wrote, "The tale is told. The world moves on, the sun shines as brightly as before."[290] Most deserters were labeled as cowards, and cowardice was the most shameful of all behaviors. It violated the codes of honor and manhood and was not tolerated.

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[289] James I. Robertson, Jr. *Soldiers Blue and Gray*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998, 135.
[290] Fletcher, 57. Sam Watkins. *Company Aytch: Or, A Side Show of the Big Show*. M. Thomas Inge, 1999, p. 215.

An example of the serious nature of unacceptable desertion is that of Frank McElhenny. McElhenny volunteered for the Union army in November 1861, possibly to escape the law after murdering a neighbor. He was not a good soldier and ended up in jail after disagreements with some of his officers. He escaped from custody and deserted. Two years later, he appeared in Confederate uniform in Union lines and was recognized as a deserter and immediately arrested. His desertion certainly did break the honor code. He was sentenced to death by firing squad. Thirteen bullets finally killed him. The interesting events are those after his death. He was placed face down in the coffin, the grave was filled and leveled, and no marker was placed. McElhenny's honor group bestowed the highest forms of shame upon him as a result of his behavior.[291]

Civil War medical personnel represented the attitudes of both military personnel and civilians. They, too, supported the honor code. Cited in earlier chapters are events and comments from Civil War nurses. Walt Whitman expressed pride in the stoicism of wounded and dying soldiers. Mary Livermore demanded that a dying soldier behave in the manner appropriate to the honor code. Medical personnel remained vigilant against shirkers and malingerers, derogatorily called hospital rats, making sure those fit for battle returned to duty. Though psychiatric diagnoses and treatments did not exist at the time, debate existed concerning conditions of an emotional or psychological nature. Chapter two discusses nostalgia, the Civil War

[291] Robertson, Jr., 137-138.

term, and shows how it simply meant homesickness. Though historians have accepted nostalgia as a term to mean psychological trauma, evidence strongly suggests that it only meant homesickness. All soldiers were subject to bouts of depression, mental fatigue, and homesickness, but wounded soldiers (and prisoners) were particularly susceptible. Not only were they away from home at a time when their families needed them more than ever, they were not performing their duties as soldiers while in hospital. Moreover, wounded soldiers in Civil War hospitals experienced conditions and care which challenged even the most stalwart. Hospitals were filthy, uncomfortable, with poor food and insufficient medications and treatments to alleviate their suffering or speed their recovery. Depression and homesickness were major problems for medical staff. South Carolina surgeon Francis Peyre Porcher understood the problem clearly and advocated a regimen of encouragement, rest, and proper food. He also advocated furloughs, "The promise of a furlough was found to be superior to the whole pharmacopoeia, and would literally rescue a sick or wounded soldier from the jaws of death."[292]

Soldiers' correspondence and diaries reflect absolute determination to put forth a brave face no matter what and to deny even the slightest hint of anything that could be deemed cowardice or weakness, before and during the war, in comments that reflect their initial motivation, sustaining motivation, and combat motivation. Initial

[292] Francis Peyre Porcher, South Carolina surgeon. Quoted in H. H. Cunningham. *Doctors in Gray: The Confederate Medical Service.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986, 213.

motivation centered on defense of honor and manhood in the face of Northern insult. Wyatt-Brown has commented:

> The man of honor feels that defense of reputation and virility must come before all else or he is open to charges of effeminacy and fear." …dread of public humiliation…driven to a sense of shame…his outraged honor requires immediate vindication, by force of arms if need be…"Reputation is everything, says Senator Hammond. ..Everything with me depends upon the estimation in which I am held," confessed secessionist thinker and novelist Beverley Tucker of William and Mary. Personal reputation for character, valor, and integrity did not end there. Individual self-regard encompassed wider spheres. As a result, the southerner took as personal insult the criticisms leveled at slave society as a whole.[293]

Southerners began the fight certain that they had the proper martial temperament. In Nashville, Tennessee, a newly enlisted soldier wrote home that he expected a very short war because 'the scum of the North cannot face the chivalric spirit of the South.' Reuben Allen Pierson wrote his brother James from Camp Carondelet, Virginia, in a letter dated Feb 2, 1862,

> I am at a loss to account for the actions of those young men who turn a deaf ear to the call of their bleeding country – who remain at home while it is plain to any sane being that duty, honor and every principle of humanity or love of country is beckoning them to assist in defending their homes from the depredations of our northern enemies. What respect can they expect to receive from a society which they vow they will not defend, by their acts?

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[293] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "Honor, Secession, and Civil War." The 2004 James Pinckney Harrison Lectures in History. Lynn Gardiner Tyler Department of History, March 29, 2004. http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/bert.php Retrieved February 1, 2007.

Alabama Confederate Edmund DeWitt Patterson put it this way, "I saw that there was no alternative but war or disgrace and everlasting dishonor for the South, and embraced the first opportunity of becoming a soldier in the confederate army."[294]

Not only was the act of enlisting important to Southerners, combat performance and behavior facing death and dying offered essential tests of their qualities as honorable men. Soldiers wanted their families assured of their proper behavior in all stages of their military experience. Reuben Allen Pierson, mentioned above, was one of four brothers from Louisiana who volunteered early in the war. Letters of two of them – David and Reuben Allen – reflect their extensive experiences throughout their years of service during the war. Their letters provide illustration of ultimate commitment to honor and how they remained committed to that honor through the three stages of motivation. Edmund DeWitt Patterson was born in Ohio on March 20, 1842. He had been living in Alabama for a couple of years when the war broke out and in March of 1861, enlisted in the Ninth Alabama as a Corporal. His wartime journal provided additional examples of dedication to honor in the face of horrific battle, serious wounds, death all around, and imprisonment throughout initial motivation, combat motivation, and sustaining motivation. Finally, a battlefield

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[294] Quoted in James M. McPherson. *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 17. Reuben Allen Pierson. Letter to James F. Pierson from Camp Carondelet, Virginia, dated February 2, 1862, in *Brothers in Gray: The Civil War Letters of the Pierson Family*. Thomas W. Cutrer and T. Michael Parrish, eds. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997, 78. Edmund DeWitt Patterson. Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson. John G. Barrett, editor. Knoxville Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1966, 136.

deathbed note from Confederate Colonel Isaac Erwin Avery reflected soldier concern of facing death bravely.

Reuben Pierson's initial motivation, as described above, clearly endorsed honor as the reason he enlisted, as well as the reason all young Southern men should enlist without hesitation. Reuben's older brother David wrote his father William from Shreveport, Louisiana, on April 22, 1861, shortly after his enlistment.

> I hope you will not be disturbed about my leaving so suddenly. I am not acting under any excitement whatever but have resolved to go after a calm and thoughtful deliberation as to all the duties, responsibilities, and dangers which I am likely to encounter in the enterprise…in the defense of our Common Country and homes which is threatened with invasion and annihilation…I have volunteered because I thought it my duty to do so…if I perish it will be but a sacrifice which duty impels every patriot to make upon the altar of his Country's Glory.

Reuben Allen concurred in two letters, one to David in January of 1862,

> I am…becoming used to all the hardships and privations of a soldier[']s life, and would sooner receive six feet of Confederate soil as my last inheritance of earth than yield one single iota of our rights. They have forced us to fight or yield obedience to their unjust and exaggerated notion of freedom and Liberty;

and one to his father dated June 1, 1863,

> I am reconciled in the discharge of my duty and if I fall (which I fear but little) and my life is sacrificed on the altar of liberty I hope I shall

> die happy, for no one could die in a holier of more noble cause. My greatest aspiration is to have a clear conscience (that I have done my duty) in my dying moments.

The brothers' letters reflected honor through combat motivation and sustaining motivation. They described battle and its aftermath in graphic and horrific detail, yet maintained their commitment to honor. After Vicksburg, Reuben wrote to his father in July of 1863, "Some few may grow faint hearted and fall by the wayside but most of the men of the South will die in preference to being subjugated by the merciless hordes of King Abraham…Many of our best men are being killed off but we must fight it through be the cost what it may." In the same letter, Reuben shared his views concerning those Southerners advocating surrender and reconstruction,

> …it would pain my heart beyond description to think for one moment that all the gallant heroes who have fought, bled and died have…sacrificed their lives upon the altar of Liberty…only to drag down and disgrace their families into eternal servitude. I would welcome death a thousand times rather than live to behold the day of reunion with such a hateful band of rob[b]ers, murders & unhumane creatures as we are now fighting.

Reuben's enthusiasm remained strong as late as January of 1864, reflected in a letter to his father, "I had sooner die than see any of my kindred insulted for one moment by such a band of ruffians as compose the yankee army. Who would not protect an aged parent or a loving sister from the abuses of the rabble? Let such an one die for

he is unworthy [of] the blessings of his Creator. I have no sympathy with skulkers and cowards." He had more to say about skulkers and cowards in a letter to his sister Mary Catherine in March of 1864, "…my hatred to those who are shirking their duty in this war…Never marry any young man who puts in a substitute in the army nor one who has to be dragged into service by law, but I would not say refuse a good and gallant soldier." Reuben's message did not change throughout the war. In a letter to his father in April of 1864, he wrote, "Sooner would I die…than have my adored father and mother, my…sister and…brother insulted by the brutish and inhuman wretches who now march beneath the folds of the once proud but now dishonored…of American freedom."[295]

As recorded in his wartime journal, Edmund DeWitt Patterson also consistently upheld the code of honor throughout battle, injury, and imprisonment. He chose the Southern cause even though he was Northern born. He "saw there was no alternative but war, disgrace and everlasting dishonor for the South." He chose Southern honor over his family, which might seem to violate the honor code. His decision to fight for the South created a rift between himself and his family. Like Lee, sometimes following the cause of honor brought conflict with traditional honor hierarchies. In Edmund's situation, he could not accept the North's threat to Southern honor and chose to fight for the Confederacy even though he was a Northerner. The only mention of his family's reaction over his decision to fight for the South appears in a

[295] Reuben and David Pierson. Brothers in Gray: The Civil War Letters of the Pierson Family. Thomas W. Cutrer and T. Michael Parrish, editors. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997, 13-14, 72, 201, 206-207, 226-227, 232, 233.

journal entry from prison dated July 20, 1864. Patterson had been a prisoner since the end of the Gettysburg battle, first at Fort Delaware, then at Johnson's Island, Lake Erie, near Sandusky, Ohio, close to his childhood home. According to Patterson,

> I am devoted to a cause that I esteem a just and holy one, and here is a kind father who I believe loves me as he loves his own life, - two sisters whose love for me is as pure as an Angel's love, and my brothers too, - yet all regard me as forever disgraced and dishonored. They consider my course a stain on the family name and with their every prayer for my safety is mingled a prayer for the speedy overthrow of the Southern cause.[296]

His family rarely visited him in prison, and according to Patterson, allowed him to starve when they could have easily provided him food during his imprisonment. He mentioned that his family urged him to take the oath for the Union and be paroled. When he adamantly refused, they no longer visited him. Patterson considered taking the oath a coward's way out and treasonous. He condemned all who received parole in exchange for the oath. After a group of thirty fellow prisoners received release from prison as a result of taking the oath of allegiance to the Union, they "went out amid the taunts and jeers of their loyal companions in arms. We are glad to get rid of such men; they are worth nothing to either side and are despised by both Yankee and Southern men."[297]

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[296] Edmund DeWitt Patterson. *Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson*. John G. Barrett, editor. Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1966, 136.

[297] Ibid, 140.

Going against family wishes was a serious breach of the honor code, not to be taken lightly. Few things could trump obligation to the family. Patterson's decision to do so illustrated the strength of his commitment to Southern honor. He consistently expressed that commitment throughout the hardships of battle, injury, imprisonment, and family disapproval. Patterson was perhaps one of the most inexperienced soldiers on either side at the beginning of the war, never having even seen ammunition before he received forty rounds in a routine issue in July of 1861. He missed First Bull Run but walked the gruesome battlefield shortly thereafter. These battlefield scenes gave him an indication of what he might expect. His first battle experience was at Williamsburg on May 5, 1862. He recorded his "*feelings*, rather than thoughts, for they were indefinable."

> It was the first time that I had ever been called upon to face death. I felt that in a few moments some of us standing here, vainly trying to jest and appear careless, would be in eternity…I did not feel at all afraid – the feeling called fear did not enter my breast, but it was a painful nervous anxiety, a longing for action, anything to occupy my attention – nerves relaxed and a dull feeling about the chest that made breathing painful. All the energies of my soul seemed concentrated in the one desire for action.[298]

Though he had seen the aftermath of battle, he did not fear battle when he faced it himself. In fact, he wrote of combat motivation and honor then and at later times. He

[298] Ibid, 137.

recorded his thoughts before entry into battle at Gettysburg, "The time for action had come. The time to try our manhood, the long looked for hour…I prayed God in that hour to assist me to do my whole duty to my country." From beginning to end, his journal reflected both combat motivation and sustained motivation and concern with facing combat and death honorably. He wrote of death on other occasions. He received life-threatening wounds at Gettysburg. On August 30, 1862, he recalled in his journal,

> I thought that before daylight I would be in the presence of Him who made me, and for once in my life I looked death calmly in the face….I had a horror of dying alone…to die here in the darkness of night, without being noticed by friend or for – the thought was terrible. How I longed for day. Just that *some* one might see me die.[299]

Patterson wanted to face death properly according to the honor code requirement of facing death bravely and in line with the accepted death rituals of his era. He was not the only soldier concerned with good death. Confederate Colonel Isaac E. Avery of the 6th North Carolina Regiment had been badly wounded at Gainesville and was back in battle by the time of Gettysburg. On July 2, he led Hoke's Brigade in the afternoon charge on Cemetery Hill. He received his second serious wound of the war, this one a fatal bullet wound to the neck. As he died on the field, he sent a note

[299] Edmund DeWitt Patterson. *Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson*. John G. Barrett, editor. Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1966, 23, 52, 116.

to his father with this message: "Tell my father that I died with my face to the enemy." [300]

As this study has stressed, allegiance to some concept of honor was not exclusive to Southerners or even exclusive to Americans. These principles were older and arguably universal. Frederick the Great advised that "the only thing that can make men march into the muzzles of the cannon which are trained at them is honor." Samuel Johnson said, "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier." Norman Mailer claimed "masculinity is not something given to you, something you're born with, but something you gain…And you gain it by winning small battles with honor." The words of Southern Americans in the nineteenth century indicate that this was perhaps truer for the Civil War soldier than for any other soldier in history.[301]

Lee's decision on that April morning in 1865 and the subsequent surrender a few days later signaled the end of fighting. The humiliation Lee and all Southerners felt as a result of military loss to the North was a blow to Southern honor. Clearly, all involved in the surrender and the ceremony were concerned with minimizing the shame and humiliation of the Confederate army and the South. All involved were concerned with enabling the South to hold on to honor even in the face of defeat.

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[300] Isaac Avery. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*. William S. Powell, editor. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
[301] Frederick the Great. James Boswell. *Life of Johnson.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. Norman Mailer. *Cannibals and Christians*. Dell Books, 1967.

According to William J. Cooper, Jr., "A common phrase between [Southern] veterans and civilians alike was 'We have lost all save honor.'"[302]

David Gilmore wrote, "When men are conditioned to fight, manhood is important; where men are conditioned to flight, the opposite is true." American soldiers in Iraq are still conditioned to fight, and they perform well. Their conditioning, however, differs from the conditioning of Civil War soldiers, especially those of the South, who were conditioned to fight from very early in their lives. The conditioning to fight for twentieth- and twenty-first century Americans occurs upon enlistment. They leave a world in which boys are expected not to fight and enter a world which suddenly trains and expects them to fight and kill. Veterans of the war in Iraq are expected to experience not only physiological trauma but psychological trauma as well. When they return from their tour, whether they are a combat soldier or not, they must undergo several days of mandatory psychological counseling. Veterans from the war in Iraq are claiming to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, even if they were nowhere near combat. The claims are based on exposure to chemicals and inoculations. Twenty-first century America expects all who go to war, not simply those who see combat, to suffer from psychological combat trauma, now commonly called PTSD.[303] Expectations for Civil War Americans were vastly different, perhaps more so for Southerners. Southern men were expected to voluntarily undergo

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[302] Quoted in William J. Cooper, Jr. *Jefferson Davis, American*. New York; Knopf, 2000, 514.
[303] David D. Gilmore. *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, 59. Personal interview, Casey Henry, Iraq War veteran, September 22, 2006.

horrendous battle conditions and remain psychologically and emotionally unscathed. We cannot cite either expectation – those for Americans soldiers in Iraq or those for American soldiers of the Civil War – as the ideal. Neither can be upheld as better or as more correct than the other. Like the two police officers, Lenny and Jeff, no one can prove either man is better for his post-event behavior. Admitting psychological difficulty is expected and appropriate for American soldiers of the Iraq War. Similar admission was not expected or appropriate for Civil War soldiers. The expectations are deeper than simple post-event behavior, however. Expected behaviors were deeply ingrained in the cultures and traditions of each era. Cultural ideals of manliness also underwent changes in the late nineteenth century that placed much less emphasis on fighting and soldiering and courage. Andy's school bus scuffle is a good example of this. These changes might help to explain the rise of shell shock and combat trauma in twentieth-century wars. The existence of Civil War-era cultural values of manhood and honor might explain the absence of psychological battle trauma in the Civil War, by preventing and disallowing soldiers from breaking down as a result of battle.

The Civil War, in which the honor-venerating South confronted the modernizing North, and the North's defeat of the South, had the consequences of shaking honor and the honor code, but only temporarily. Southerners lost the war but found ways to cling to honor. In Northern society there occurred, as has been argued, a manhood crisis in the nineteenth century. The Civil War did not end the crisis; it continued

throughout the end of the century and beyond. Nonetheless, both Northerners and Southerners still held manhood and honor as priority. According to Kristin Hoganson, anxiety over manhood and honor reached a critical point in late nineteenth-century America – for all Americans. The struggle to deal with what at base was a spiritual crisis led directly to the Spanish-American War of 1898 with Spain and Cuba and to the Philippine-American War from 1899 to 1902. Americans were calling for a reassertion of manhood through war and a defense of American honor through war.[304] Though adherence to an honor code was temporarily weakened as a consequence of the Civil War, it quickly re-emerged soon after the war and once again served as a guide for appropriate male roles and patterns of behavior.

[304] Kristin L. Hoganson. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998, 14.

Conclusion:

They Had It. They Had It Not

"The tale is told. The world moves on."

Sam Watkins

"We have lost all save honor."[305]

Did Civil War soldiers suffer from psychological combat trauma? Twentieth and twenty-first-century Americans would probably say of course. Beginning with World War I and extending to today, psychological combat trauma has played a recognized role in war for American soldiers and civilians. Today, it is as much a part of our wars as uniforms and ammunition. Combat is no longer the sole identified cause. Inoculations and exposure to chemicals are causes cited today. Since its official recognition in 1980 as a result of the perceived severity and numbers of Vietnam veterans suffering from debilitating trauma, we have implemented programs that presume all veterans will have some degree of trauma. Today, psychological combat trauma is expected and accepted, with no shame or humiliation attached to it or to those who suffer. This dissertation does not intend to lessen the importance or

[305] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "The Changing Faces of Honor in National Crises: Civil War, Vietnam, Iraq, and the Southern Factor," p. 9. The Johns Hopkins History Seminar, Fall 2005. http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/WyattBrownFacesHonor.pdf Retrieved September 3, 2008. Wyatt-Brown says: "A common phrase between veterans and civilians alike was 'We have lost all save honor.' (Francis I uttered these famous words after Charles V's army defeated the French at Pavia in 1525.)"

necessity of care and treatment for victims of trauma. Their suffering is real; they deserve our respect and gratitude. In our efforts to understand and help those suffering from PTSD, however, we have perhaps gone too far. Psychological combat trauma is no longer limited to human victims. Service dogs succumb to the condition and receive treatment. We live in a culture today that provides psychotherapy for dogs suffering from PTSD.[306] Ben Shephard said we live in a culture of traumatology. John Strausbaugh said in his 2008 book entitled *Sissy Nation: How America Became a Culture of Wimps and Stoopits* that we live a culture of victimology. According to Strausbaugh, today's unmasculine American man has become sissified, soft, and scared as a result of conformity, religious fundamentalism, and victimology. He's so afraid of death and illness he doesn't really live; he medicates and analyzes. Courage now means something like having the courage to get a haircut. Cowards are allowed and welcomed.[307] This work is not claiming that PTSD is the result of lack of courage, but Americans today offer men a much broader range of acceptable behaviors and emotions than did nineteenth-century ones.

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[306] National Geographic Channel. September 1, 2008. Cesar Milano, the dog whisperer, provided extensive psychotherapy for a yellow Labrador Retriever named Gavin, a retired ATF agent and Iraq War Veteran suffering from trauma and depression as a result of his war experiences. Gavin's owners sought Cesar's assistance to help Gavin recover from his trauma and enjoy life once again. His treatments for what Cesar called PTSD included smelling newborn puppies to enable him to return to his puppyhood, trips to firing ranges for desensitization to loud noises, and his own "therapy trailer" with a treadmill, video, and audio treatments to further desensitize him against loud noises. He received rewards for the proper behavior and was diagnosed as on his way to recovery after three months of intensive therapy. His owners prepared to continue his therapy at home to facilitate his continued recovery from his trauma.

[307] John Strausbaugh. *Sissy Nation: How America Became a Culture of Wimps and Stoopits*. Virgin Books, 2008.

The political scene reflects similar changes concerning courage, masculinity, and honor, traditionally manifested in the form of military service. Barack Obama claimed that John McCain's wartime experience did not qualify him for presidential leadership. Wartime experience has historically been a hallmark of American political leadership. James Bowman declared honor in America dead: "any coherent idea of honor was amputated from Western culture three-quarters of a century or so ago." Bertram Wyatt-Brown said honor began its steady decline as early as the Jeffersonian era if not sooner. Donald Kagan agreed that Americans need to take better care of their honor."[308] These modern attitudes toward the importance of experience from service and concerns about individual and national honor reflect significant changes in American attitudes toward expected male behavior.

Is there a correlation between the rise of PTSD and the decline of honor? To accept PTSD, must we forsake honor and manhood? Honor was a central part of our culture from the colonial era. Honor was our guide to behavior on every level. Colonial, Revolutionary, and Civil War Americans held it in the highest esteem. Have we sacrificed honor? If so, what now shall be our guide? Our ideas of honor, courage, and manhood are radically different from those of Civil War Americans. Their beliefs in honor and manhood sustained them and may have prevented psychological combat trauma. Southerners, especially, held fast to honor before, during, and after the war, in the face of the loss of all else. The humiliation of defeat

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[308] James Bowman. *Honor: A History*, 35. Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor*, xvii. Donald Kagan. http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/vl/notes/kagan.html Retrieved February 1, 2007.

in the war was a heavy burden, but honor helped them endure that pain and continue forward. Catherine Anne Devereux Edmondston recorded in her journal on July 28, 1865, "a deep & abiding resentment towards a nation who thus debases our sense of personal honour…& for all this we hate you!"[309]

Northerners, too, still held honor and manhood in high esteem. According to Wyatt-Brown,

> Southern truculence was only chastened momentarily after 1865, and the antebellum martial traditions persisted. Even in the North, as the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic grew thinner, the next generation began to revive the ideals of manly national response, as if to outdo the daring and valor of their veteran fathers. Manliness stood in stark contrast to effeminacy.[310]

Kristin L. Hoganson wrote about antebellum American honor, "The nation could not survive without manhood and honor." Indeed, perhaps one of the legacies of the Civil War was honor. Hoganson argued that honor and manhood provoked the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War of the late nineteenth century.

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[309] Catherine Anne Devereux Edmonston. *Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Anne Devereux Edmonston, 1860-1866.* Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton, editors. (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1979, 716). Quoted in Bertram Wyatt-Brown. "The Changing Faces of Honor in National Crises," 10.

[310] Bertram Wyatt-Brown. The 2004 James Pinckney Harrison Lectures. Monday, April 5, 2004. "Honor and America's Wars: From Spain to Iraq." http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/WyattBrownFacesHonor.pdf Retrieved September 3, 2008.

> Jingoists in 1895 focused on ideas of martial honor, just as they had in an earlier crisis with Chile in the winter of 1891-92. Bellicose constituents wrote their congressmen to demand that they defend the 'NATION'S HONOR.' Likeminded congressmen maintained that 'sometimes a nation in defense of its honor and integrity must go to war.' Jingoes argued that those who wanted to settle the conflict through arbitration had no understanding of honor, that they were not 'true men.' Many agreed with Sen. Wm. M. Stewart's proclamation: 'I want American manhood asserted.'[311]

Though honor underwent changes in the twentieth century and might seem foreign to our everyday thinking, it is, according to Donald Kagan, "still with us, hidden away in a subterranean corner." Wyatt-Brown and Donald Kagan both made clear that paramount in international relations is a nation's reputation of honor. We still need honor today.

Thucydides asserted that honor was one of the three motives for warfare. Civil War Americans and Revolutionary War Americans agreed. Americans went to war against the British and against each other with honor on their lips. This study has argued for the importance of honor for Civil War Americans, especially, and its role as a guide to behavior for Civil War Americans. Wyatt-Brown said that honor existed in America before slavery and that without honor there would have been no Civil War. This idea supports Thucycides's triad of war motives. In addition, the strength of American honor possibly prevented psychological combat trauma in Civil War soldiers of both the North and the South. Civil War-era Americans did not doubt

[311] Kristin L. Hoganson. Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, 20.

or debate the existence or importance of honor. They fully supported the ideology and the behaviors the honor code required of them. Honor was more important than life. Julian Pitt-Rivers was correct in that honor has caused more deaths than the plague - 622,000 in the Civil War. Those men did not wish to die, but they did not wish to live lives of fear or dishonor.

According to Donald Kagan, honor equates to a nation's power and standing in the global community and Americans do not realize the importance of honor in the global community of nations. "Americans must come to an understanding of honor and shame, that the world is not a rational place. Not to do so opens us to enormous risks." Twentieth-century Americans do not seem to agree. In an August 30-31, 2008, *Wall Street Journal* essay, foreign diplomacy historian Robert Kagan said Americans have abandoned power as a motive for international standing and replaced it with the idea of global cooperation and economics. He agreed with Donald Kagan that a country's honor determines its global standing. Without honor and power, a country will play a reduced role in global affairs. More important, however, is the danger that country faces in loss of respect and possible loss of sovereignty in the eyes of other nations.[312]

What has happened to honor in America? Is honor dead in America? Some declare so. Others see it as gravely or even terminally ill. All who comment express concern for America's welfare if we truly abandon honor. Honor's existence is not

[312] Robert Kagan. "Power Play," *The Wall Street Journal*. Saturday/Sunday, August 30-31, 2008, W1.

just being questioned. Some, like Donald Kagan, warn of the dangers of forsaking honor. Others are calling for a return to honor.

Honor alone might have been strong enough to prevent psychological combat trauma in Civil War soldiers, but other contemporary attitudes added strength to the conviction of honor. American attitudes toward war changed during and after World War I and continued to change throughout the twentieth century, until all war became bad and unacceptable. Indeed, all violence became unacceptable. One of the reasons war became unacceptable was because of what war did to men who fought it. War destroyed men's bodies and minds. World War I saw the emergence of shell shock, a condition which has transformed and expanded with each war of the twentieth century and now with wars of the twenty-first century. Probably most familiarly known as PTSD, this condition has spread to affect civilians as well as soldiers, and canines as well as humans. This expansion has led to a culture of traumatology, victimology, and fear. We fear everything: germs or letting kids ride bikes without helmets; we even fear to watch the news. As Strausbaugh argued, we are so afraid that we do not really live. We are so afraid of conflict that we would rather try to negotiate than take a stand. We are even hearing ourselves called a sissy nation. Perhaps we deserve the title, when we will not allow boys like Andy to defend themselves against bullies. Civil War Americans simply did not see violence and war in the same light as Americans do today.

Perhaps what we fear most today is death – death from terrorists, from nuclear weapons, from germs. Our fear of death is so pervasive that we will go to any lengths to postpone it or even avoid it altogether. We are succeeding. We now live longer, but is the cost worth it? We outlive friends and family. We outlive our health. Anything is better than death, even being hooked up to machines and feeding tubes or being frozen like a popsicle. Joanna Bourke, in a very well-done book entitled *Fear: A Cultural History*, argues that throughout history, "fear of death was not universal…During the First World War a Medical Officer observed in his memoir *The Adventure of Death* (1916) that the fear of death 'is not a deep-rooted instinct, or it would not be so readily overcome. It is the least of fears.'"[313] Obsessive fear of death began appearing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tame death was beginning to transform to wild death. Death became sterile and impersonal, with death professionals making decisions and performing functions that family and friends had previously accomplished. The deathbed ritual of tame death disappeared. People died alone. Their bodies became part of an impersonal corpse disposal system. Death became something to fear. Indeed, even Civil War era Americans might have experienced the fear of wild death had they faced death and dying practices of later Americans. Fortunately for them, they could still welcome death in ways that later Americans could not. For them, death was among the least of fears.

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[313] Joanna Bourke. *Fear: A Cultural History*. Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard, An Imprint of Avalon Publishing Group, Inc., 2005, 3-4.

The question of whether Civil War soldiers succumbed to psychological combat trauma remains unanswered. The goal of this work is not to settle that issue. The goal of this work is to offer alternative ideas to the simple acceptance that they did. This work offers ideas which support the possibility that they did not. The two strongest arguments for the condition's absence for Civil War soldiers center on honor and death. Great disparity existed between nineteenth-century attitudes toward death and dying twentieth-century attitudes toward death and dying. Civil War Americans upheld the existence of honor and adhered to an honor code that has since fallen into decay and disuse. Other factors possibly contributed to absence of the malady. Romanticism glorified death in ways non-existent today. Art and literature reflected this glorification. Warrior codes and chivalry, as found in the literature read in antebellum America, have also fallen from favor today. Stoicism was a common practice then but is not now. The extent of influence these factors may have wielded shall wait for future study. Honor and death were the most important factors influencing appropriate and acceptable behaviors in the years leading to and including the Civil War. They were certainly influential enough to motivate men to go to war and women to send their men to war. They were certainly strong enough to sustain armies in the field for four long years. They were even powerful enough to help the South survive devastating defeat and humiliation. They were still influential enough to motivate the country into war again in the later years of the nineteenth century,

with people once again calling for war using the words manhood and honor. Lastly, I argue they were strong enough to prevent psychological combat trauma.

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