School of Arts and Sciences  
History and Military Studies  

The thesis for the master’s degree submitted by  

Amanda Liskey  

under the title  

*The Effect of the American Civil War on its Children*  

has been read by the undersigned. It is hereby recommended for acceptance by the faculty with credit to the amount of 3 semester hours  

First Reader: Robert Young, PhD  

Date: 14 October 2014  

Second Reader: Debra Sheffer  

Date: 20 October 2014  

Recommended for approval on behalf of the program  

Richard K. Hines, PhD  

Date: 19 December 2014  

Recommendation accepted on behalf of the program director  

Date: 19 December 2014  

Approved by academic dean
THE EFFECTS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ON ITS CHILDREN

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Military University

by

Amanda Catherine Liskey

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Military History

November 2014

American Military University

Charles Town, WV
The author hereby grants the American Public University System the right to display these contents for educational purposes.

The author assumes total responsibility for meeting the requirements set by United States copyright law for the inclusion of any materials that are not the author’s creation or in the public domain.

© Copyright 2014 by Amanda Catherine Liskey
DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to all children who have made, and will continue to make, their way through life in times of war. Survivors and victims deserve to have their stories told and must not be forgotten.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my family and friends who have supported and encouraged me as I returned to the classroom to earn my masters. A special thank you goes to my mother who first shared the love of history, particularly of the American Civil War, with me and has been learning by my side ever since. Also I would like to thank the staff at American Military University who have made this endeavor a success. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Robert Young who guided me through the thesis process step by step.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

THE EFFECTS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ON ITS CHILDREN

by

Amanda Catherine Liskey

American Public University System, November 2014

Charles Town, West Virginia

Professor Robert Young, Thesis Professor

Children’s history has long been overlooked, but this has recently started to change. The American Civil War changed the lives of children in countless ways. Through an in-depth study of how young people lived before, during and after the War it is possible to learn how the War changed the lives of the children involved as well as those of later generations. This study of children (black and white, male and female, northern and southern) was completed through the use of diaries, memoirs and other historical studies. This paper demonstrates how some of the effects on children were to be expected such as: the death of parents; loss of property; disruption of family life; and living in a constant state of fear. Other effects were unexpected such as: changes in economic and social status, changes in the way education was seen, and the acceptability of women not to marry.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effects of the American Civil War on its Children

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“No pleasure, no enjoyment—nothing but rigid economy and hard work—nothing but the stern realities of life….are made familiar to us at an age when gladness should surround us.”1

“The war was continually rising in front of me to bar me from something I wanted, whether food, clothes, or playthings.”2

When thinking about the American Civil War, most people focus on the white soldiers; only briefly do they consider the slaves who toiled and the families left to fare for themselves back at home. The army with its soldiers seen in striking uniforms marching in military precision, led by patriotic music, and defended by political and emotional fervor takes its place in the forefront of discussion and study. The above quotations were not those of suffering soldiers, but those of Confederate children. This paper will examine the ways in which the War changed the lives of young Americans through an in-depth study of how young people lived before, during and after the War through the use of diaries, memoirs and other historical studies.3

The Civil War altered the meaning of childhood in diverse ways. In Topsy-Turvy: How the Civil War Turned the World Upside Down for Southern Children, Anya Jabour chose to define children as those individuals under enlistment age (18) at the beginning of the War as well as those who were a little older, but who had not taken on adult responsibilities (such as

---


2 Shenandoah Valley resident Robert Martin remembered this. ibid, 185.

3 As written in my thesis proposal
marriage). This study will use this working definition with one small alteration: it will also include young men who were of enlistment age, but opted to continue their education instead of (or prior to) enlisting. The children of study will not be only male and female, but black and white, as well as northern and southern.

Traditionally, accounts of white men have dominated American history. This practice is slowly changing. Many Civil War survivors (white and black, northern and southern, male and female, young and old) published memoirs and diaries to ensure their experiences would survive the annals of time. Following are only a few examples of the numerous available first person survivor accounts. Following Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, Elizabeth Keckley published *Behind the Scenes, or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*. In it she recounted her memories as a slave child, told how she purchased her own freedom, and presented her interpretation of national events through her role as Mary Todd Lincoln’s confidant and dressmaker. Keckley hated the institution of slavery, but because of her experiences with both decent and despicable masters, she was able to be open-minded when referring to slave owners in general. Unlike Elizabeth Keckley, Frederick Douglass used his

---


6 In her preface she stated:

“If I have portrayed the dark side of slavery, I have also painted the bright side. The good that I have said of human servitude should be thrown into the scales with the evil that I have said of it. I have kind, true-hearted friends in the South as well as in the North, and I would not wound those Southern Friends by sweeping condemnation, simply because I was once a slave. They were not so much responsible for the curse under which I was born, as the God of nature and the fathers who framed the Constitution for the United States.”

*Ibid*, xi-xii.
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: an American Slave as documentary proof to further the cause of emancipation. His negative presentation of slavery was based on his childhood experiences as a slave.⁷

Ex-slaves were not the only people to publish such childhood accounts. John S. Wise, son of Virginia’s Governor Wise, recorded in his End of an Era what it was like to grow up privileged in antebellum Virginia, including his experiences as a Virginia Military Institute (V.M.I.) cadet both at school and at war.⁸ Lastly, Agnes Lee’s Growing Up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee (edited/forward by Mary Custis Lee deButts) presented Antebellum America from the viewpoint of a young lady with a military and often absentee father. She spent some of her youth at West Point Military Academy among soon-to-be Civil War soldiers.⁹

In addition to the plethora of diaries and memoirs, there was publication of official records from both sides. The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies is an excellent source for both military and civilian experiences. The letters, orders and reports included provide details of military life as well as military/civilian interactions such as: the number of refugee children who joined army baggage trains; the lack of basic necessities to provide for the welfare of contraband children; and the creation of schools.¹⁰

---


The Virginia Military Institute cadets participated in the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864.

John S. Wise’s uncle became Union General George Meade during the Civil War.


After this initial deluge of published accounts there came a period of academic studies which largely focused on the white male experience. The new desire of Americans for minority, as well as white male, historical accounts has recently widened the scope of study. Early during this transition, African Americans and women demanded their stories be told—for this reason, now the children are also remembered.

Not surprisingly, children have often been overlooked in America’s history. Even today, young survivors of tragedies are often overlooked in news reports because adults tend to focus on the monetary and labor costs required to return life to normal instead of the emotional and psychological costs of those who survived. As a result of the aforementioned adult concerns, children’s issues may be quickly, though unintentionally, placed in a position of less concern. Some current Civil War historians are endeavoring to correct this oversight. James Marten’s *The Children’s Civil War* is a study regarding how the War affected the lives of children from both sides. Marten filled in gaps of information in period literature with research findings regarding children who survived later wars. He argued: the core of human nature is likely to remain the same regardless of the era.¹¹ James Marten’s multiple works based on children in history seem to have been a catalyst for many other historians. Anya Jabour frequently referenced Marten’s works in her book which focused on southern white and black children, titled *Topsy-Turvy: How the Civil War Turned the World Upside Down for Southern Children.*¹² Wilma King, author of

---


[http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/waro.html](http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/waro.html)
Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America, focused her work almost entirely on the life of slave children.\footnote{Wilma King. Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.}

Children of all ages, races, and social ranks were affected by the American Civil War, no matter their place of residence or their family’s political association. John S. Mosby said it well when he wrote: “In all great wars, women and children are the chief sufferers.”\footnote{Charles Wells Russell, ed. Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1917. \url{http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6601920M/The_memoirs_of_Colonel_John_S._Mosby}. p. 29.} This study will show the effects on male and female, black and white, as well as northern and southern children through the use of first person accounts, diaries and published memoirs as well as other historical studies. Through a close observation of childhood before, during and after the War, it is possible to learn how the War itself changed the way children were expected to behave, learn, and grow.
CHAPTER II: ANTEBELLUM CHILDREN

When the term Antebellum is used in this paper, it refers to the period of American history after the American Revolution until the start of the Civil War (1860). Through a thorough examination of antebellum children, a baseline can be developed from which it is possible to compare and contrast children of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods to determine the War’s effects. Although multiple factors may have played a part in these changes, the fact that the War was an all-encompassing life event made it largely most responsible for these changes. With an understanding of what was normal before, one can see for oneself how things evolved over time and circumstance.

A Child’s Status in the Community

Childhood in the Antebellum period was largely different from what came before. The lives of colonial children were dominated by controlling elders who expected everyone to work for the family’s survival. In the early 1800s this demanding lifestyle changed with the new focus of childrearing—one of love rather than labor. “Child-centered families,” with their new focus on love, became the norm across the country. As a result, northern family dynamics changed from those of traditional corporal punishment to those of “relationships of disciplinary intimacy” [in which] both parties are governed by internal constraints of affection rather than by

---

15 Reconstruction ended in 1877. King, 154.
17 Ibid, 21.
18 Ibid, 22.
an externally imposed set of rules and punishment.”\textsuperscript{19} In other words, guilt and disappointment could be used as effectively as the rod to correct a child.

Although this form of childrearing was rising in popularity, many parents remained traditional.\textsuperscript{20} In the white Southern patriarchal family structure it remained common for the father to be “‘the head of household,’ with ultimate authority over all other family members.”\textsuperscript{21} George Fitzhugh, a pro-slavery advocate, elaborated on this position: “‘the father has property in his wife’s services and may legally control, in some measure, her personal liberty…. The father has property in the services and persons of his children till they are twenty-one years of age. They are his property and his slaves.’ ‘What is the difference between the authority of a parent and of a master?’ he asked. ‘Neither pay wages, and each is entitled to the services of those subject to him.’”\textsuperscript{22} Aligning one’s thinking to this mentality, it should not be surprising that slaves were also considered “family,” who required the protection and care of their white master.\textsuperscript{23}

Even though fathers may have declared themselves complete masters of their domain, mothers at this time rose in importance thanks to the “cult of domesticity.”\textsuperscript{24} The women’s role as primary childcare provider and morality police grew in this era, but their control was not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Marten, ed. \textit{Children and Youth During the Civil War Era}, 33-34.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Jabour, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Marten, ed. \textit{Children and Youth During the Civil War Era}, 22.
\item Northern courts on the other hand “reversed codes that upheld fathers’ property rights in their children and claimed that ‘the custody of minors is given to their parents for their maintenance, protection, and education.’” The courts also made it possible to remove children from bad family situations. Ibid, 19-20.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Jabour, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 21.
\end{itemize}
absolute. “Men of the Southern planter and northern middle classes had long taught their boys about career, racial and sexual relationships, and public responsibilities, beginning at age six or seven in the South or just before puberty in the North. Even in urban areas, by mid-century, as mothers became identified as the primary caregivers for young children and mentors for teenaged daughters, fathers retained their duties as their son’s instructors.”25 In the early 1800s mothers, the new head of childrearing became responsible for protecting their families from the evil outside world.26 The home became the woman’s domain. Although mothers gained appreciation and status, they still received blame for any deformities or addictions found in their children. It was believed that anything strenuous, shocking or indulgent before the child was born which happened to the mother was the cause of anything out of the ordinary with the child. Secondly, too much excitement while nursing a baby was also likely to kill the child according to society.27

Some fathers, such as Robert E. Lee, were surprisingly modern in their childrearing practices. According to Lee his wife was “too lax, too inconsistent, and too yielding” with the children, but he was not uncaring or overly strict himself.28 According to Anne Carter Zimmer, “their [the Lees] young children had to earn stories, for example, by tickling his hands and feet; if the tickling stopped the story stopped.”29 Don’t confuse his playful side with an overly indulgent father. According to Rob Lee, “my mother I could sometimes circumvent, and at times


29 Ibid, 28.
took liberties with her orders, construing them to suit myself; but exact obedience to every
mandate of my father was part of my life and being.”

This requirement of immediate and complete obedience to his orders clearly fits the lifestyle of a career army man.

**Slave Status**

Many amateur historians may consider slaves to be individuals of solely African heritage and in turn that all people of that heritage were slaves. Both of these ideas are incorrect. First of all, many slaves had one black and one white parent. “By 1860 there were 405,751 mulattoes in the United States. They constituted 12.55 percent of the African American population.” In this case, who determined the free or slave status of the child? Why did such parentage exist in an age when those of the African race were considered interior?

A child of mixed parentage took on the status of the mother according to a 1662 Virginia law. Most mixed race children had a slave mother and either slaveowner or overseer father. Under this law, a master who fathered a child with a slave would become one slave “richer” with no additional monetary cost. “As one Virginia slaveowner explained…”

---


31 By 1860 the U.S. slave population was 3,952,760 with 56% of these under twenty-years-old.

32 Ibid, 110.


34 Ibid, 15-16.

35 Frederick Douglass was told by other slaves, but could not confirm, that his first master was also his father.

36 Frederick Douglass wrote,
must be particularly attended to, for rearing them is not only a duty, but also the most profitable part of a plantation business.”

White owner “fathers” could choose to keep, free or sell their child. When a child was kept, the master’s wife would sometimes punish the child because she was unable to punish the sinner. Frederick Douglass explained how the sale of a child might have been an act of mercy by the owner/father when he wrote,

“The master is frequently compelled to sell this class of his slaves, out of deference to the feelings of his white wife;…for a man to sell his own children to human flesh-mongers, it is often the dictate of humanity for him to do so; for, unless he does this, he must not only whip them himself, but must stand by and see one white son tie up his brother…and ply the gory lash…and if he list one word of disapproval, it is set down to his parental partiality, and only makes a bad matter worse, both for himself and the slave.”

The child might also be sold for a less altruistic purpose—if the child’s appearance might give the father’s identity away and thus publicly injure the father’s honor.

With so many Antebellum prejudices based on one’s parentage and skin color, why was there interracial sex? Obviously, if there was no sex, there would be no mixed children.

According to historian Bertrand Wyatt Brown,

“In the American South, as in England and France, sleeping with a woman was an informal rite of virilization. The obvious way was to pursue a black partner. If the initial effort were clumsy or brutal no one would object, in view of the woman’s race and status. Moreover, black girls were infinitely more accessible and experienced than the white daughters of vigilant, wealthy families.”

Ibid, 27.

36 Jabour, 109.

37 Ibid, 16.

38 Ibid, 16.

39 Douglass, 27.

40 Jabour, 16.
Bertram Wyatt-Brown continued his explanation of the mindset behind the use of black women in the training and self-gratification of men by referencing Chancellor Harper’s essay. In this essay it

“implied that a class of enslaved black women performed a useful service: their availability made possible the sexual license of men without jeopardizing the purity of white women. Prostitutes performed that convenient service in free societies; fallen women, it was thought, kept the rest of the world in good moral order. Slave companions did the same in the Old South.”

In response to this mindset, slave mothers taught their daughters how to resist rape, which for slave girls could start during adolescence. In an attempt to protect their young daughters for as long as possible, some slave parents refused to allow them to be courted—parents hoped that if the girl was made to appear innocent she would attract less unwanted male attention. It was to

41 Quoted in King, 110.

In typical double standard form if a white girl was attacked there would be an immediate reaction and vengeance would follow. The double standard continued because if a black man showed interest in a white woman the penalty was castration. As usual, the people that make the rules come away with the lesser punishment, or even no punishment, for the same “crime.”
Ibid, 37 & 34.

42 Ibid, 97.

“Victorian girls matured around the age of fifteen. This prompted illicit affairs with girls as young as eight, even though the legal age of consent was ten or twelve. A young girl had built-in birth control and almost guaranteed to be disease free.”

Young girls were involved in prostitution and could expect to make between two and three dollars a day applying this trade.
Ibid, 18.

43 Jabour, 16 & 36.

It may be noticed that the focus here has been on girls being raped. That is not to say that boys were not attacked by white females, but due to the laws they would be considered free because of their mother’s status.

44 King, 61.

Slave girls who were courting were known to use makeup and adornments made from nature in order to attract
the girl’s advantage not to be noticed because “the more comely a slave girl the greater were possibilities of abuse and sale as fancy girls for illicit purposes.”  

Elizabeth Keckley told of her sexual torture which led to motherhood in her work, *Behind the Scenes*. According to her, “I was regarded as fair-looking for one of my race, and for four years a white man—I spare the world his name—had base designs upon me…and I—I—became a mother.”  

Slave girls were also threatened by the males of their own race. Slave men could also provide unwanted attention as is evidenced by an 1859 Mississippi court ruling which stated that “there was no legislation covering the ‘attempted or actual commission of a rape by a slave on a female slave.’”

Many slave children had parents of purely African heritage. The African parental situation could take one of several forms: one slave and one free; two slaves from the same plantation; or slaves with different masters. Again, the status of the child was that of the mother. Similarly, if the parents were owned by different owners, the child belonged to the mother’s owner.

---

47 King, 109.
49 Jabour, 16.
Slave children most commonly lived with their mother. Some slave children were lucky enough to live with both parents, but this appears to be a rarity. Even though slaves may have considered themselves married, their relationship was not enough to keep them together should the master decide otherwise. As Henry “Box” Brown explained:

“The law recognized no right in slaves to marry at all. The relation of husband and wife, parent and child, only exists by the toleration of their master, who may insult the slave’s wife, or violate her person at any moment, and there is no law to punish him for what he has done.”

In an attempt to form a more “stable” family situation, slaves often developed “fictive kin” in which unrelated elders would become “uncles” and “aunts” to the younger population. These family members would become very important in providing a semblance of stability in a child’s life as well as in the rearing of and survival of that child in slavery.

The division of slave families was a constant threat, if not the stark reality. Slaves, like pieces of furniture, could be sold on a whim by the master and had no legal rights or say in the matter. Children, up to age ten, were often sold with their mothers, but some were separated from their parents at earlier ages. Frederick Douglass, who was separated from his mother as

---

“By 1860 there were 240,921 free persons of African descent under twenty years of age in the United States.” King, 123.

49 Ibid, 4.

50 Jabour, 20 & 36.


52 Jabour, 21.

53 “The vulnerability of slave families to separation…contrasted dramatically with both the affectionately indulgent, child-centered parenting that was increasingly common in planter families and the sternly disciplinary, authoritarian child-rearing that prevailed among plain folk (and possibly free black) families.” Ibid, 40-41.

54 King, 102.

“Several of the southern states, including Alabama, prohibited separate sales of children before they reached
an infant, speculated that slaveowners intended to stop the natural parent and child bonding before it could start. Henry Box Brown was taught about the possibility of separation at an early age by his mother who pointed out the trees losing their leaves in the fall and said “my son, as yonder leaves are stripped from off the trees of the forest, so are the children of slaves swept away from them by the hands of cruel tyrants.” The breaking of family ties was the main complaint among abolitionist regarding slavery. Some white masters were the exceptions to the rule and actively tried to reunite families instead of destroying them. Nathan Bass (from Georgia) wrote “As far as practicable…families of negroes should be kept together…With a family of children around them, they feel more attached to home and do not form the habit of running about the neighborhood at night, when the should be asleep.”

As noted in “A Child’s Status in the Community,” a slaveowner considered himself supreme ruler of all who resided in his realm. Slaveowners often proved their dominance over black subordinates by challenging the parental rights of slaves. Owners in order to

---


According to him it was common in the area of Maryland where he lived to split mothers and children early. Ibid, 26.

56 Brown, 16.

57 Marten ed. Children and Youth During the Civil War Era, ix.

58 King, 107.


60 Jabour, 39.

61 Ibid, 37.

“A slaveholder never appears to me so completely an agent of hell, as when I think of and look upon my dear children.”—Frederick Douglass

Quoted in Marten, ed. Children and Youth During the Civil War Era, 13.
demonstrate their superiority would “punish adult slaves in the presence of slave children.” The children, however, did not always accept the owner’s omnipotence and attempted to draw the attention and abuse from their parents when they were able.  

“Antebellum legislatures in several of the southern states enacted laws against excessive punishment of slaves, yet impunity existed. Slaveholders were rarely, if ever, successfully prosecuted for brutalizing slaves.” This lack of accountability for actions taken against their slaves must have added to the master’s belief in their own superiority and omnipotence. With this mindset they may have actually believed that the only harm they were doing was to their own wallet.  

In the North, free and runaway slaves, were under constant threat of being captured by slave catchers and being sold south into slavery. It did not matter what their official status was to the slave catchers as long as they made money.  

“Sometimes slave hunters particularly preyed on children. They were easier to take than adults; some were young enough that they trusted people…they had not yet learned to run and hide when a stranger approached them. And they grew and changed. Add a few years of life below the border, and they would not resemble the boy or the girl who had once been free.”  

Children quickly adapt to the situations into which they are placed which was certainly what the buyers had in mind. Adults, on the other hand, would long remember their freedom and forever strive to regain it.

---

62 Jabour, 38.  
King, 97.  
63 Ibid, 93-94.  

Although exact numbers of captured blacks in the antebellum Pennsylvania is unknown it is known that “in Philadelphia alone, sixty black children were seized in a single year.”  
Ibid, 52.
“Our ignorance was the greatest hold the South had on us.”—Education and Slaves

“For most slave children…lessons of survival and resistance were more important than formal education. Slave children learned to work, and work well, from an early age.”

Time tested lessons in survival were often taught by real and “fictive” kin. One training method involved the use of stories such as “animal trickster tales, an integral part of African oral tradition, teach lessons of survival and self-confidence.” These stories taught children that by using their heads and maybe a little trickery, they could best their owners and improve themselves. Ex-slave Henry Bibb recalled: “The only weapon of self defense that I could use successfully was that of deception….Got one mind for the boss to see; got another for what I know is me.”

Prince Woodfin wrote to his wife in 1853 to “Rais you children up rite….Learn them to be Smart and deadent and allow them to Sauce no person.” Children were taught to learn to appear courteous, obedient, and hardworking while still resisting the institution of slavery.

---

65 Quote from John Fields who was an ex-slave turned doctor. Jabour, 33.
66 Ibid, 36.
67 Jabour, 36.
68 King, 72.
69 Ibid, 72.
70 Ibid, 71.
71 “‘Smart’…refer[s] to…industrious behavior” Ibid, 68.
72 If they appeared to do what they were supposed to they would avoid punishment for themselves and others. Ibid, 68.
In order to keep their children safe, slave parents stressed the need for secrecy and demanded their prompt obedience.  

Although most slaves received only a survival-based education, some slaves were also academically educated. Nat Turner’s revolt in 1831 was believed to have been sparked by his secular and religious education. In turn it made slave literacy even more controversial. One example of a law prohibiting teaching slaves to read states:

“If any person shall here after teach any slave to read or write...such person, if a free white person, Upon conviction thereof, shall for each and every offence against this Act, be fined not exceeding one hundred dollars, and imprisoned not more than six months; or if a free person of color, shall be whipped, not exceeding fifty lashes, and fined, not exceeding fifty dollars.”

Although educating slaves in many places was illegal, determined students were often able to find ways to learn. Sometimes slaves, such as Susie King, were able to attend secret schools. Susie remembered: “We went every day about nine o’clock, with our books wrapped in paper to prevent the police or white persons from seeing them. We went in, one at a time...[Mrs.

---

By resisting slavery they could build up self-confidence and self-respect which is what the slaveowners were trying to squelch.  
Jabour, 37.

King, 68-69.

Ibid, 78.

Another consequence of the rebellion was to make it mandatory to have white people present at slave church meetings in certain slave states.  
Ibid, 50.

South Carolina law (1834)  

According to Wilma King, “only four states consistently enacted prohibitions from the 1830s until slavery ended.”  
King, 78.

Jabour, 35.
Woodhouse] had twenty-five or thirty children whom she taught assisted by her daughter.” 78 Other children were taught by their “owners, white playmates, or free blacks.” 79 Frederick Douglass, for example, was educated briefly by his mistress until his master discovered and forbade it because: “A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do….if you teach that nigger….how to read, there would be no keeping him.  It would forever unfit him to be a slave….It would make him discontented and unhappy.” 80 This did not stop Frederick from finding children to teach him through the use of a little bribery or trickery. 81

This fear of ruining slaves by teaching them was not universal. In Agnes Lee’s journal “she twice mentions teaching the Custis slave children, showing that the laws prohibiting such teaching were ignored by her father [R. E. Lee], a man not want to disobey authority.” 82 Some individuals (such as Thomas J. Jackson and Jessie Rupert) taught slaves to read so they could read the Bible for themselves. 83 Some slaves with specialized jobs in cities and on ships required education in order to do their jobs. 84 For example, Frederick Douglass learned that ship carpenters (slaves) would mark the pieces that had been completed with an “S”, “L”, “F” or “A”

78 Werner, 41.

Susie King later became a teacher for slaves of all ages at the St. Simon’s Island Camp.
Hoose, 117.

79 Jabour, 35.

80 Douglass, 51-52.

81 He would bribe hungry white kids with bread and trick others into thinking that he already knew what he wanted to know.
Ibid, 56 & 60.

82 deButts, xx. (introduction by Robert Edward Lee deButts, Jr.)


“New York’s gradual abolition law of 1810 required that slaves learn to read the Bible.”
King, 80.

84 Ibid, 76.
to denote where it item belonged: “S” meant starboard; “L” meant larboard; “F” meant forward and “A” meant aft.\textsuperscript{85}

However an academic education was obtained, it was cherished.\textsuperscript{86} Literate slave children were an asset to area slaves because they could learn and share information the owner intended to keep secret.\textsuperscript{87} Information such as who would be sold, when the sale would occur, and the actions of abolitionists could give slaves the necessary time to make a preemptive strike.

\textbf{Education for the White Children}\textsuperscript{88}

“As small slaveholder’s daughter Evelyn Ward sagely commented, ‘Children, you can learn a great deal if you will only keep still and listen.’”\textsuperscript{89} Listening to adults talking was an easy way for even the youngest children (of both races) to learn the day’s news.\textsuperscript{90} For example, in \textit{Topsy-Turvy}, Anna Jabour speculated that slave children working among their owner’s family may have been a major source of up to date information for the slave community regarding the war.\textsuperscript{91}

Educational opportunities for whites varied depending on the student’s economic status and gender. The first stage of learning for boys and girls alike tended to be parent-led

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{85} Douglass, 60.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{86} As of 1860 only about five percent of slaves were literate. King, 79.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{87} Jabour, 36.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{88} Well-to-do free blacks in the South attempted to educate their children like the white children. Their goal was to make their children self-sufficient. Ibid, 34.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, 48.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, 48.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 73.
\end{flushright}
homeschool (often with their mothers as teachers).92 Once the child had learned the basics, a tutor or governess might be employed.93 Hiring a teacher would likely have been an option among the more economically sound parents. The next level of academies, seminaries and colleges is where gender differentiation presented itself.94 The students in those higher institutions received a “classical education,” but the purposes of that education differed with the gender of the student.95 Girls were classically educated so they could later teach their own children and were taught the fine arts to win a husband.96 Ensuring a good career was the focus of a young man’s education because it was necessary for a successful family man to be a good provider.97

---

92 Ibid, 34.
93 Ibid, 34.
94 Ibid, 34.
95 Ibid, 34.
96 Ibid, 34.
97 Ibid, 34.

Only about 2% of children attended college as early as 1800. Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 49.

Advanced schooling was not cheap. Annie and Agnes Lee (Robert E. Lee’s daughters) attended Virginia Female Institute in Staunton, Virginia. Charges per year were $200.00 for room, board and tuition plus all of the extras which included: musical training ranged from $50.00-$80.00 depending on the instrument chosen; foreign language training was $20.00 per language (five possible); drawing/painting was $20.00; daily sacred music practice was $5.00; voice lessons were $50.00; and the rental of the church pew was $2.50. According to these prices a girl who received only the best would have a yearly charge of around $457.50. This was definitely not cheap—and he sent two daughters there.

deButts, 74.

According to a footnote, the Virginia Female Institute was about the same as a two year college education. deButts, 103.

95 Jabour, 34.
96 Ibid, 34.

Robert E. Lee wrote to his daughter Agnes from San Antonio, Texas on March 11, 1857. He advised his daughter in the importance of making the most of her education. He wrote: “The time is near at hand, when you will leave school for good, & enter upon a new course of life. I hope you will find yourself prepared for it, & ready to meet all its necessities. I...hope you will be desirous of continuing your studies & perfecting yourself in all usefulness.” deButts, 129.

97 Jabour, 34.
“The notion that children came into this world with innate wickedness was fading, but in the adult mind, kids still needed to be firmly steered [in the right direction]…Parents increasingly shared chief responsibility for this task with schools.”  

One example of the teacher’s influence involved teaching girls how to win the attentions of a man. There were limits to the behavior acceptable when attracting a husband. Southern teachers stressed to their female students how they could either preserve or forever lose their reputation based on their behavior with men.  

“Croquetry, a type of flirtation that appeared to cross the boundaries of respectability,” was strongly discouraged.  

West Point, an important educational institution for the professional military, trained leading Confederate and Federal officers including Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, Robert E. Lee, James Ewell Brown Stuart, and Ulysses S. Grant. Robert E. Lee, on staff for a short time prior to the War, brought his family there to reside with him. The initial year at West Point was not pleasant for the first time students—known as plebes. Agnes Lee described the plebes’ experience in her diary: “Poor fellows, they are teased, tormented & tricked almost out of their lives. They are not expected to enter into any of the enjoyments of the other classes, their comrades look down upon them with much scorn & pity!”  

Agnes, young herself, learned how to be a young woman in the military-centered world of West Point. On January 22, 1854 she wrote in her journal: “In one year I have learnt & experienced a great deal [at West Point]. I feel differently too; young as I am I must sit up & talk & walk was a young lady and be constantly


99 Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 128.

100 Ibid, 128.

101 May 28, 1854 deButts, 35.
greeted with ladies to do this & that & think so all as if I was twenty…” She also wrote in her diary that it was difficult to be a child there because “so many strangers particularly gentlemen & cadets have such a way of treating children as grown persons.” At this institution children were expected to be young adults regardless of their age.

West Point was in the north—so what about the South? The equivalent military school in the South was the Virginia Military Institute (V. M. I.) in Lexington, VA. Like West Point the new students were subjected to a very difficult initial year. Bucking, for instance, was the “practice in which the old cadets would seize the new cadets, twist their arms ‘in such a way as to bend the body over the table and strike them a blow with a bayonet scabbard on the part of the person thus exposed for each letter in the victim’s name.’” An approved of alternative to bucking was described by Beverly Stanard in a letter to his sister written on March 13, 1864. A group of cadets convinced a new boy that he had left his assigned post for which (in a cadet-led trial) he was found guilty and sentenced to a firing squad. Only after much suffering did they inform the unfortunate victim that it had all been a prank.

Beginning in the 1850s there was a push for the formation of more institutions of higher learning in the South to enable her to educate her own. With the chasm widening between the northern and southern states it should not be surprising that the South would want to reduce the suspected Northern interference with their children.


103 July 16, 1854
   Ibid, 40.


105 Ibid, 43-44.

106 Marten, ed. Children and Youth During the Civil War Era, 49-50.
Work, Work, Work

“Slave children began to work as soon as they learned to walk” according to Anya Jabour. A slave child who was approximately the same age and gender as the master’s child could be chosen by the master’s family to become their child’s constant companion/servant. Both children were indoctrinated into their roles in society, as servant and master, at a young age because of this arrangement. What may be thought of as minor rules today were of large consequence then. For example, slave children were often required to use a title when referring to their charge, but they in turn were referred to by their name or nickname. At first, “The negro child and the white child knew not the great chasm between their lives, only that they had dainties and we had crusts.” This lack of comprehension could not have lasted long, however, as socialization continued.

Children learned much from observing the world around them. This style of learning was observed early on by none other than Thomas Jefferson.

“Thomas Jefferson argued that white children imitated the ‘whole commerce between master and slave’ from observing their parents interact with bond servants. Afterwards, the white children put on the same airs with smaller slaves. The propensity toward ‘despotism’ began at early ages when bonded children were obliged to obey the ‘young masters and mistresses.’” Most, but not all, white southern parents were supportive of this type of arrangement. One opponent, Fanny Kemble, made a valid observation when she noted: “Think of learning to rule

---

107 Jabour, 110.
108 Ibid, 110.
110 Annie Burton (slave) born in 1858.
Ibid, 14
111 King, 53.
despotically your fellow creatures before the first lesson of self-government has been well spelled over!”

On the job training was provided by adult slaves as slave children grew into adult work. Some slaves worked in close proximity to the owner’s family while others labored in the fields. House slaves were always on duty, unlike the field slaves whose duty usually lasted from sunrise to sunset. As children grew into adulthood, gender began to determine their assigned duties: boys were often employed outdoors while girls assisted their mothers. Boys who learned special trades such as carpentry had a chance at better jobs. Boys were more likely than girls to receive skilled training because there were few well-paying positions for women in which special skills were necessary. Field work was done by both male and female slaves on large plantations.

“Ordinarily, slaveowners and overseers made little or no distinction based upon gender in many facets of field labor….Adolescent girls and premenopausal women were likely to miss days from work because of menstrual discomforts. Menstruating women, according to folklore, were to avoid chills and dampness. Owners and overseers made allowances for them.”

---

112 Jabour, 25.
113 Ibid, 111.
114 King, 29.
115 Jabour, 111.
116 King, 126.
117 Ibid, 126.
118 Jabour, 11-112.
119 King, 32.
According to Anya Jabour, at about ten-years-old field slaves began full duty. At this time in a slave boy’s life he graduated from the rough linen shifts that had been their clothing until then. All slave children, girls and boys, were dressed in the same type of shifts which were at least knee-length when given to them. Considering how quickly children grow, it should not be surprising that some of these shifts grew to be uncomfortably short for both the wearer and the onlooker before they were provided pants. When a slave boy was able to work a plow he became a man.

Unlike slave children, white children may, or may not, work depending on the family situation. An extra worker could mean the survival of a poor family, but would be unnecessary and maybe undesired in a rich one. An easy way to determine, from unscripted photos, if a child worked or not is by the way they are dressed. Girls who wore fancy and restrictive clothing were likely wealthy enough to avoid work. Working class girls, however, wore looser clothing which enabled them to perform labor.

**Let’s Play**

Children (regardless of gender, status and race) played together until slave children were assigned full-time labor. Frederick Douglass reflected upon this interracial play when he wrote:

---

120 Jabour, 30.
121 Ibid, 30.
122 King, 26.
123 Jabour, 32.
124 Ibid, 32.
125 Ibid, 90.
“When a boy in the street of Baltimore, we were never objected to by our white playmates on account of our color. When the hat was tossed up in for a chance of partners in the play, we were selected as readily as any other boy, and were esteemed as highly as any. No one ever objected to our complexion.” 

Although everyone was allowed to play, not everyone was allowed equal roles because one’s role in the game often reflected his status in society. Games were often based on events children witnessed in the world around them and became a form of socialization/adult training for them. For example, both black and white children played funeral. Ironically, black children also played slave auction and Hide the Switch in which someone would get hit with a switch. When boys played alone, or with other boys, the games were often played outdoors and were competitive in nature. There is a wonderful little story recorded in *True Tales of the South at War* in which

> “a little Negro boy, Sharper, and Frank…were playing in the lot when little George came up with the sheep. Sharper began to banter him about his size and …wound up…telling him he ‘warn’t worth a hundred dollars!’ ‘How

About ten to twelve-years-old.

King, 44.

At the end of the Civil War First Lady Varinia Davis took in Jim Limber a free black orphan, from the Richmond streets. Jim and the Davis boys became great friends and did everything together. He even “dressed up in little Joe’s [Davis] clothes and [was] happy as a lord.” Jim was captured by the Yankees with the Davis family and was sent to live with Union General Rufus Saxton (a friend of the Davises). He never returned to his adoptive family.


126 King, 53.

127 Jabour, 90-91.

128 Ibid, 86.

129 King, 49.

Jabour, 95.

130 Ibid, 92-93.
much are you worth?’ said Frank. ‘Me? I’m worth 500 dollars!’ Frank, not wishing to be outdone, said ‘How much am I worth?’ ‘Lord, Marse Frank,’ said Sharper in a tone of disdain, ‘you’s white. You ain’t worth nothing!’”

(The competition is even better since it goes into a completely unexpected direction in this case.)

Girls given the same situation would typically choose domestic games which focused on relationships.132

The type of toys a child owned was a quick visual display of their social status.133 Homemade toys were common among children of all races, social and economic levels.134 Store bought toys, however, were rare and expensive because only a few American companies produced them.135 The imagination of the ordinary child, white or black, changed homemade dolls and stick weapons into china dolls and beautiful swords. “The most common play articles that former slaves recounted to WPA interviews were balls and marbles.”136 Toys were not necessary for all games—imagination could take their place. Children invented games based on the items they had available and what they witnessed.137 By pretending to be white, slave children learned how to resist the slave roles imposed upon them in real life.138

---


132 Jabour, 92-93.

133 Ibid, 94.

134 Ibid, 89.

135 Chudacoff, 54.

136 Ibid, 54.

137 Jabour, 88-89, 96.

138 Ibid, 96.
slave children kept such subversive games to themselves, however, out of fear of punishment from above.\textsuperscript{139}

Previously it was mentioned that many Antebellum children had the freedom to be children rather than just family providers. Interestingly, the idea of bedrooms and other locations for children to use for privacy began to become popular in the early 1800s.\textsuperscript{140} The ability to have one’s own space must have been proof of social standing because it would seem unlikely for poor families to choose to have excess taxable space.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, 100.

\textsuperscript{140} Chudacoff, 49.
CHAPTER III: CIVIL WAR CHILDREN

Boys at War

Even though there were rules regarding enlistment ages, there were an estimated 250,000-420,000 underage soldiers serving on both sides. Union army records suggest there were at least 10,000 soldiers in its ranks alone from thirteen to seventeen years old. Prior to the first shots being fired “the Confederate government…adopted the ‘Rules and Articles of War [USA]…with a few modifications. According to those rules, ‘Any free white male person above the age of eighteen and under thirty-five years…may be enlisted; although those under twenty-one needed written consent from a parent or guardian.’” As the war raged on, and replacements became scarce, the minimum age for enlistment in the Confederate army dropped to seventeen.

With rules which specifically spelled out enlistment ages, why did underage boys choose to attempt enlistment? According to historian Edmund Drago, “In the South underage boys, living in a slave society circumscribed by a code of chivalry and honor, knew instinctively that military service in this war was an opportunity to manhood, freedom and glory they could not reject.” For many white and black males, joining the military was considered a “coming-of-

---

141 “Young people aged five to fourteen comprised about 25 percent of the total population just before the war.” Chudacoff, 69-70.
142 Werner, 2.
143 Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 104.
144 Ibid, 67.
145 Jabour, 79.
146 Quoted in Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 70.
age ritual.”147 Although black men were not allowed to fight in the armies until later in the War, some decided to take part in whatever ways they could. Some slave boys willingly followed their masters into the military as personal servants and took on additional roles such as stretcher bearers, cooks, and foragers. “For black youth [serving in the military meant]… adulthood, masculinity, and freedom.”148 Some boys of middle and lower class southern families fought in their fathers stead to allow their fathers to continue providing for their families.149 Yet other boys enlisted against their parents’ wishes.150 One such boy, Private Elisha Stockwell, later wrote:

“as we lay there [Shiloh] and the shells were flying over us, my thought went back to my home…I thought what a foolish boy I was to run away to get into such a mess as I was in. I would’ve been glad to see my father coming after me.”151

“How did some young enlistees succeed? Some enlistees were successful because they could lie convincingly regarding their age.152 Others succeeded because the enlisting officers were more concerned about having bodies to fill their ranks than about the ages of said bodies.153

147 Jabour, 77.
149 Jabour, 84.
149 King, 133.
150 Ibid, 80.
152 Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 104.
153 Ibid, 104.
In the case of Robert Lincoln (Abraham Lincoln’s oldest son) the biggest hurdle was his mother. Robert had to fight his parents for the permission required for him to join the Union Army. According to Elizabeth Keckley,

“He was very anxious to quit school and enter the army, but the move was sternly opposed by his mother… ‘We have lost one son, and his loss is as much as I [Mary] can bear’… ‘But many a poor mother has given up all her sons,’ mildly suggested Mr. Lincoln, ‘and our son is not more dear to us than the sons of other people are to their mothers.’”¹⁵⁴

Eventually, Robert did get his wish, but Abraham Lincoln arranged for him to get safer assignments within the military in order to appease both mother and son.¹⁵⁵ Unlike Robert, young W. D. Tranham (thirteen-years-old) was able to easily persuade his parents to let him join the army. He recounted in a speech to other Civil War veterans on August 1, 1896 that “having given her consent, my mother suggested that I take the place of Mr. William Cochrane, saying he was a poor man with a large family who would suffer in his absence.”¹⁵⁶ Both he and his father liked the idea, but only after some coaxing did Mr. Cochrane agree to the arrangement.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Keckley, 121-122.


¹⁵⁵ Epstein, 462.

Robert was twenty-one when he was made aide-de-camp (captain) to U. S. Grant on February 11, 1865. Ibid, 461-462.

¹⁵⁶ Poe, 4.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 4.

Tranham claimed to be “the first ‘substitute’ of the war.” Ibid, 4.
Some boys who wanted to enlist were not permitted. As noted above, some parents fought their child’s desire to enlist. Beverly Standard’s widowed mother, one such parent, chose to have him attend the Virginia Military Institute (V. M. I.) rather than enlist.  

158 In a letter to his sister, Beverly Stanard griped: “Do you not candidly think I ought to be in the Army[?] I am over 18. I think I have been very obedient in remaining here as long as I have, and have only done so because I hated…to go contrary to the wish of a fond and devoted Mother.”  

159 Despite his mother’s efforts to keep her son safe, Beverly Stanard was sent to the Battle of New Market with the V. M. I. cadets and died from wounds sustained there. His “leg was mangled and broken by grape shot” while the fighting in the Orchard of the Bushong Farm. 160 “Edmund Berkley, a cadet private in D company, wrote later, ‘…I found Stannard [sic], …and I tried to make a turnaquet [sic] of an old towel and stop the bleeding, and he died a few minutes afterward while I was with him.” 161 John S. Wise noted in his work that many cadets in the Spring of 1864 chose to leave school to join in the fight against Grant. Those cadets who were not given their parent’s approval to leave became creative. “Good boys became bad boys for the

---

158 His father died before 1860. Beverly entered V. M. I. on January 20m 1863. Barrett, xi-xii.

159 The letter was written from V.M.I. on April 8, 1864. Stanard was one of the V.M.I. cadets killed as a result of the Battle of New Market on May 15 of that same year. He was nineteen at the time of the battle. Ibid, 50.

Another cadet who also chaffed to get into the frey, but who was stuck at V. M. I. was John S. Wise. In his End of an Era he remembered: “Many a night, sauntering back and forth on the sentry beat in front of barracks…my heart longed for the camp and I wondered if my time would ever come. I was now over seventeen, and it did seem to me that I was old enough.” Wise, 286.

160 Barrett, xix-xx.

161 Ibid, xx.
express purpose of getting ‘shipped’” according to Wise.\textsuperscript{162} Other civilian options available to youngsters included serving on slave patrols or in militias.\textsuperscript{163}

For boys who desired to serve their country, but were willing to take non-combat roles, many may have found the roles of drummer boy or bugler an attractive option. “Drummers and buglers were classified as noncombatants, so boys were allowed to join….At least twenty-five drummers…were ten years old or younger.”\textsuperscript{164} In addition to communicating orders through music, these boys were assigned duties around camp which did not require the use of weapons. For example, they assisted surgeons during and after the battle in a variety of ways including the retrieval of wounded and dead soldiers.\textsuperscript{165} The famous Johnny Clem, one such drummer boy, joined the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Michigan at the age of nine and impressed the soldiers so much that they paid him thirteen dollars a month out of their own pockets and provided him with his own uniform and sawed-off shotgun.\textsuperscript{166}

The fact that there were boys in service led to issues both foreseen and unforeseen. Of course, war means death and just because a boy was a noncombatant (such as a drummer or bugler) did not mean that he was safe. In order to be able to deliver orders to the men on the field, these boys also had to be on the field. Boys who survived the battle would still be subjected to its aftermath. John A. Cockerill a sixteen-year-old regimental musician at Shiloh related:

“I passed the corpse of a beautiful boy in gray who lay with his blond curls scattered about his face and his hand folded peacefully across his breast.

\textsuperscript{162} Wise, 285-286.
\textsuperscript{163} Jabour, 78.
\textsuperscript{164} Hoose, 110.
\textsuperscript{165} Werner, 10.
\textsuperscript{166} Hoose, 110.
He was clad in a bright and neat uniform, well garnished with gold, which seemed to tell the story of a loving mother and sisters who had sent their household pet to the field of war. His neat little hat lying beside him bore the number of a Georgia regiment. . . . He was about my age. . . . At the sight of the poor boy's corpse, I burst into a regular boo-hoo and started on.”

The capture of a survivor by the enemy was another possible scenario. For child-soldier prisoners of war there were no set rules regarding how to handle them. It was up to the commanders as to whether the prisoners would be treated as regular prisoners of war or whether they would be returned to their parents instead. Yet another possibility for boys on the battlefield was being wounded, but not dying. Louisa May Alcott recounted in her Hospital Sketches the heart-breaking story of one such boy.

“The child [Billy] lay in one of the camps thereabout, and this good friend [Kit], though sorely hurt himself, would not leave him to the exposure and neglect of such a time and place; but wrapping him in his own blanket carried him in his arms to the transport, tended him during the passage to the transport, and only yielded up his charge when Death met him at the door of the hospital which promised care and comfort for the boy.”

She elaborated still further on how heart-broken the boy was at his friend’s death.

Occasionally, girls also managed to get into a battle as an active participant. One such girl was fourteen-year-old Emma Sansom who became famous for directing General Nathaniel Bedford Forrest to a much needed ford near Gadsden, Georgia. Union forces, under General Abel D. Streight, were in a race against Forrest’s men to a Confederate Supply Depot in Rome, GA. Streight’s men succeeded in burning a bridge crossing between themselves and the Confederates. Emma learned of this development and informed Forrest about the existence of a

---

167 Werner, 25.


170 Ibid, 47.
ford nearby to which she offered direct him. She rode behind Forrest’s saddle through a rain of bullets which punctured her skirt, but not her. She, undaunted, waved her sunbonnet at the enemy as they shot at her. The supply depot was saved because of the quick actions of this fourteen-year-old girl.  

“\textit{If we are educated, they can’t make slaves of us again}” –Educating the Blacks

During the Civil War it remained difficult for blacks to receive an education, but a few more opportunities appeared in the way of new texts and schools. Most black students used the same texts as their white counterparts, but a few new publications were being written geared toward these new students. The American Tract Society published their \textit{Educational Series} (1864-1865) in the style of pre-war textbooks with an added focus on the blacks’ own heroes and heroines such as Abraham Lincoln. Although the Tract Society’s texts were specifically published for blacks, they presented their audience as inferior to whites. The journal, \textit{The Freedman}, written for blacks with a northern slant, was described by Marten as “relentlessly moralistic and oozing paternalism.” Just because blacks now were gaining a little bit of ground in their struggle against slavery, it did not mean that the white view of their inferior status had changed.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[171] Poe, 66-67.
\item[173] Ibid, 61-62.
\item[174] Ibid, 62.
\item[175] Ibid, 65.
\item[176] Ibid, 33.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
**Education for White Youth**

Education during the Civil War for white children was much like it had been in antebellum America. “Most education, both public and private, was geared toward preparing an elite few for college.”\(^{177}\) The curriculum focus for most was on classical studies with Latin, German and French being the top foreign languages.\(^{178}\) As the War wore on and the need for workers rocketed, boys were encouraged to finish school quickly and fill the holes in the job market.\(^{179}\) “The hope of our country for educated men is from boys who are now of your age,” wrote Anna Burwell to her twelve-year-old son Edmund. ‘If this horrid war does not cease all the men who are young & you young ones that are coming on must be qualified to take their places.’\(^{180}\)

Education in the South transitioned towards a Confederate-based ideal from just prior to the War’s beginning until its conclusion in 1865. Southerners indoctrinated the youth both at school and at home with the superiority of the Confederate cause.\(^{181}\) One way they did this was by discarding textbooks published before the Confederacy’s creation and replacing them with Confederate published texts.\(^{182}\) The goals of these texts were both to indoctrinate the children into the Confederate cause as well as to teach them the “right” causes of the war.\(^{183}\)

---


\(^{178}\) Ibid, 61.


“Most New England states…required only fourteen weeks of school a year for young workers.” Damon, 20.


\(^{181}\) “In the South…proper political education of children became a home front war aim.” Ibid, 13.

\(^{182}\) Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 39.

*Geographical Reader for the Dixie Children* by Marinda Branson Moore justified the Southern view of life through the explanation of “Earth Zones” and the “Races of Men.” According to her the Torrid Zone was inhabited by “dark complected, indolent and warlike…very ignorant” people while those of the Temperate Zone were “white…generally industrious and intelligent.” To further justify the enslavement of the black race she described Africans as “slothful and vicious…ignorant of Christianity” who were better off as slaves in America. Another textbook written for the Confederate cause was *Johnson’s Elementary Arithmetic* in which word problems prominently featured the War. Below are three such problems:

“A Confederate soldier captured 8 Yankees each day for 9 successive days; how many did he capture in all?”

“If one Confederate soldier kill [sic] 90 Yankees, how many Yankees can 10 Confederates kill?”

---

184 The Earth Zones were the Torrid, Frigid, and Temperate. Jabour, 195-197.
185 Ibid, 196.
186 Ibid, 196.
187 She also argued that “Africans were foreordained for servitude by God’s curse on Ham, the son of Noah.” Ibid, 197.
188 The bible verses which refer to this curse are as follows: “And Noah awoke from his wine [he had been drunk], and knew what his younger son [Ham] had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” Genesis 9 verses 24-25. *King James Version with Apocrypha (Bible)*. Accessed October 1, 2014. [www.BibleStudyTools.com/kjva/genesis/9.html](http://www.BibleStudyTools.com/kjva/genesis/9.html). Genesis 9 verses 24-25.
189 “THIS BIBLICAL STORY has been the single greatest justification for Black slavery for more than a thousand years. It is a strange justification indeed, for there is no reference in it to Blacks at all. And yet just about everyone, especially in the antebellum American South, understood that in this story God meant to curse black Africans with eternal slavery, the so-called Curse of Ham.” Goldenburg, David M. “The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Introduction).” Princeton Press, 2003. [www.press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7641.html](http://www.press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7641.html).
188 Ibid, 57.
“If one Confederate soldier can whip 7 Yankees [Northerners], how many soldiers can
whip 49 Yankees? 189

Even if the textbooks were Southern, could the teachers be trusted? In some states it was
required that teachers be Southern born to resolve this issue. 190

War fervor was encouraged among the girls as well as the boys at school. As one can
imagine, the War was of interest to the girls, too. Teachers used war-based assignments to
capture the interest and to better educate their students regardless of gender. What better way to
get students to learn things than to use subjects in which they are interested. For this reason
many assignments for girls were also war-based. 191 In Beverly Stanard’s (a V.M.I. cadet) essay
entitled War, one can see his fist-pounding as he recited:

“Of all the punishment which Divine Providence sees fit to inflict upon a
sinful nation, none are so terrible, none so severe as that of war, which is
now being so frightfully carried on throughout this once peaceful and
prosperous republic….Let us bear it like men, and remember that terrible
as it is there are evils far worse.” 192

It should not be surprising that the young who were taught to love the Confederacy with such
ardor would choose to fight for, or in some other way support, the Cause. Brigadier-General
Thomas T. Munford put it very succinctly when he wrote in Special Orders Number 6: “Let
us teach our children eternal hostility to our foes.” 193 It appears that Mrs. John Phillips of
New Orleans was in agreement when she taught her children to spit on Union officers—the
enemy caught her in the act and she and her husband apologized although they continued to

189 Damon, 21.
Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 57.

190 Jabour, 52.

191 Ibid, 82-83.

192 Barrett, 38.

193 United States War Department, 1395.
show their opposition. 194 In her *War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl*, Eliza Frances Andrews goes a step further in voicing her opinion of the Union Troops. “Mr. Alexander tells me about a friend of his in Savannah who has taught her children never to use the word ‘Yankee’ without putting some opprobrious epithet before it…I feel sometimes as if I would just like to come out with a good round ‘Damn!’” 195

**Play at War**

As the War raged around them, children began playing war at home. As Margaret Junkin Preston wrote, “the thought of war is never out of our minds. If it could be our children would bring it back by their plays!” 196 Children continued the pre-war practice of making up games based on what was going on around them—only now it was war. Girls and boys, both black and white, would play soldiers in mock battles. When there were mixed genders or races involved in a war game together, their assigned roles followed the natural pecking order of society—white boys always got the best parts. 197 In addition to playing soldier, girls would also play domestic games in which they took on the role of the mother protecting her home and family. 198

It was mentioned earlier that in Antebellum America store-bought toys were expensive and rare. Beginning in the 1860s, companies began realizing that they had an untapped market

194 Ibid, 105.


197 Jabour, 106.

198 Ibid, 105.
in children and that they could exploit it through the sale of war items geared toward children.\footnote{Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 15-19.}

Such things as plays, panoramas, battle maps and paper soldiers appeared on store shelves and in advertisements.\footnote{Ibid, 15-19.} Adults even found some ingenious ways to use children’s toys to participate in the war effort such as using dolls with hollow heads to smuggle items into militarily controlled areas.\footnote{Jabour, 101.}

Playing games was not just for fun although the children may have been unaware of its other uses at the time. It has been found that:

\begin{quote}
\textit{“imitating whatever they see or hear their parents do or say—is a basic step in the socialization of children. Play is a safe way to assimilate information, practice social skills, and take moral and emotional risks. It allows youngsters to achieve maturity, if only temporarily; to wreak vengeance, if only symbolically; and to master anxiety over stressful experiences, if only in simulation. In their play worlds, children can feel freedom as well as control, reliving pleasant experiences and reducing painful incidents to meaningful and bearable lessons and memories. In some cases, particularly in ‘dramatic play,’ happy endings can be invented, emotional release achieved and frustrations and disappointments tempered.”}\footnote{Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 159.}
\end{quote}

In other words, play allows children to try out being an adult, take some control over their lives, and let them get their feelings out without fear of reprisal. By playing soldier little boys might have felt closer to their fathers who were at war. Playing nurse might have enabled a little girl to feel as if she tending a wounded friend or family member. A black child playing soldier might have felt free to physically let his or her emotions out using weapons such as sticks; something that while in their daily lives they had to hide for fear of punishment by their owners.
Work for Survival

Once the War began and men left to serve, more of the work of survival at home had to be done by women and children. For years, lower class children had helped keep food on the table and a shelter over their family’s heads. Now even the planter-class children began to do likewise. Children also helped families protect what few goods of value they managed to keep during the War. For example, twelve-year-old Celine Frémaux “and her brothers and sisters wore a strap with a ‘ticking bag’ under their clothes. In moments of danger the family’s silver spoons and forks and jewelry were thus distributed, since the Union soldiers were not apt to search little children.”\(^{203}\)

A child’s social and economic status quickly determined if a child must work and if so what type of labor was possible. Planter-class girls might have assumed new duties such as basic household chores (not including laundry), cloth and clothing production, and childcare.\(^{204}\) Girls and boys of farming families would be expected to perform any chores required to keep the family farm running.\(^{205}\) Often the oldest boys remaining at home were made the man of the house when their fathers were absent.\(^{206}\) Duties assigned by fathers to their white sons often included the selling of goods at the market and slave management at home.\(^{207}\) T. E. Davis (sixteen-years-old) was given the task of running the farm when his brother left for the war. He

\(^{203}\) Werner, 29.

\(^{204}\) Jabour, 118 & 120.

Laundry was considered a black woman’s job, not a white woman’s. It was a hot, dirty and labor-intensive job, and if there were no “appropriate” laundresses available, sons would be impressed to do it instead. Ibid, 120.

\(^{205}\) Ibid, 121.

\(^{206}\) Ibid, 106.

Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 173.

\(^{207}\) Jabour, 116-117.
wrote to his brother, “I have in a measure taken your place at home, and you know I never cared
anything about the farm before, and your advice and experience would be very beneficial and
acceptable to me.”208 Very young children, by today’s standards, were also expected to
contribute. George Donaghey from Arkansas related that “by the time I was seven or eight years
old I had to work almost like a man, helping mother to keep life in myself and my younger
sisters and brothers.”209 Little girls also learned the lessons of war survival very early. Annie P.
Marmion an eight-year-old in Harpers Ferry remembered “‘the great objects in life were to
produce something to ear and to keep yourself out of light by day and your lamps…hidden by
night’ so as not to draw the fire of Union pickets.”210

Not all jobs that girls and boys took on were in the home. Government jobs were an
attractive option for girls because they would have an income without doing hard labor.211 A less
attractive and more dangerous option for a child was factory work where they produced war
material for their side.212 For example, the Confederate Laboratory on Brown’s Island
(Richmond) exploded in the winter of 1863 killing and wounding many children.213 “During the
Civil War, 75,000 or more children labored in factories, mines, and mills.”214

208 In 1862 T. E. ran away to the army and was killed in battle in 1864.
Poe, 60.
211 Ibid, 172.
212 Ibid, 172.
213 Ibid, 172.
214 Damon, 20.

“In one representative textile mill in Pennsylvania 22 percent of the workers who typically forked fourteen-hour
days were sixteen and under.”
Donald, David Herbert, Jean Harvey Baker, and Michael F. Holt. The Civil War and Reconstruction. New York:
Slave children now often labored harder than they had before. With the number of runaways increasing, the workload did likewise for those who remained. More work and less available food led to less healthy workers.  

Children also became active participants in the survival of their respective armies. By providing for their sides they were also able to provide for their loved ones and visa versa. Children were active in fundraising efforts, Sanitary Fairs, as well as food and supply collection. The young of all ages and genders also assisted in the collection of lint which was used by the doctors to treat the wounded. Clara Lenroot wrote, “Very important we children felt as we scraped away at the linen, making fluffy piles of soft line ‘for the soldiers’” In addition to the actions listed above, as needs became greater new jobs were thrust upon those sill left at home. For example,

“When medicines could no longer be sucked into the South through the rigorous blockade, the Confederate Government called upon the women and children; who went out into the woods and swamps and gathered horehound, bone-set, wild cherry bark, dog-wood, and anything that could help to supply the want.”

Family

During the Civil War Era a new child-focused “’modern’ childhood” developed among the middle class. Parents, in this new ideal, were expected to “nurture,” protect and love their

---

215 Jabour, 122.
216 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 178-182.
217 Ibid., 177.
218 Ibid., 177.
children.\textsuperscript{220} A good environment, they believed, was necessary for a well-adjusted child.\textsuperscript{221} Ironically, in a time of great upheaval and danger, parents were encouraged to preserve their child’s innocence and childhood.\textsuperscript{222} This ideal was probably easier to accomplish in the North than in the South where the War forced children to grow up much quicker than preferred. Another issue which arose to complicate this matter further was that not all parents were able to deal with the stress of the war themselves and therefore were not able to provide the children with the stability needed. For example, in response to word that Hanover, PA was being burned and that the Confederate troops were heading in their direction, the men of Gettysburg broke into the guns they had for protection.

“A Mrs. Scott, who had a baby in her arms, begged the men not to take the guns—her husband had said not to open the cache. But in their panic, people ignored her, and took the weapons. Mrs. Scott lost her grip. She became, said a later report, ‘violently insane and started to throw her child in an open well.’ A man saved the child, but no one could ever save the mother, because she ‘never regained her right mind.’”\textsuperscript{223}

War became the center of everyone’s world, desired or not. It was sometimes the “elephant in the room” that no one talked about, but yet remained. For children, this elephant was often much scarier than need be simply because their parents did not talk to them about it—probably, ironically, to avoid scaring them.\textsuperscript{224} Other parents strongly encouraged their children to follow the events closely.\textsuperscript{225} Some parents even made teachable moments out of the war.\textsuperscript{226}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[220] Marten, ed. \textit{Children and Youth During the Civil War Era}, 4-5.
\item[221] Ibid, 4-5.
\item[222] Ibid, 4-5.
\item[223] Creighton, 45. “As a classic study of British children during World War II pointed out, the children who stood the best chance of sustaining their emotional health in the face of fear and uncertainty were those whose parents, especially mothers, could manage their own anxiety.” Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 112.
\item[224] Jabour, 55-56.
\end{footnotes}
Fathers, and other male relatives, away at war tried to keep their families informed about their condition. Marten found that letters from fathers to their families tended to focus on: the family’s welfare; justifying his absence as being necessary for family honor; and instructing his children in how they should act.\(^{227}\) Fathers realized that they may not survive the War and for that reason attempted to teach a lifetime’s worth of lessons in the little time they might have left.\(^{228}\) According to Marten’s findings, the letter writers typically determined the type of information relayed based on the child’s interests and intellectual capacity rather than gender.\(^{229}\) In other words, fathers would give detailed events of battles, etc. to both sons and daughters based on the individual’s emotional maturity instead of solely on gender. This is interesting because at that time many things were determined based on gender or race alone without taking into account the abilities of the person.

In the case of black soldier, Spotswood Rice communications back home were used to assure his enslaved children of his intentions to return for them and to demand his paternal rights from Miss Kaitty Diggs. He wrote to Miss Kaitty:

“I want you to understand that mary [sic] is my Child [sic] and she is a God given rite [sic] of my own and you may hold on to hear [sic] as long as you can but I want you to remember [sic] this one thing that the longor [sic] you keep my Child [sic] from me the longor [sic] you will have to burn in hell and the qwicer [sic] youll [sic] get their [sic].”\(^{230}\)

\(^{225}\) Ibid, 70.

\(^{226}\) Ibid, 70.


\(^{228}\) Ibid., 87.

\(^{229}\) Ibid, 83-84.

This promise must have been encouraging to the children, yet scary. Such threats against
slaveowners could backfire, both on him, if he failed and was caught, and on the girls themselves
if the owners chose to retaliate.

The Politics of Dating

As children became teenagers, finding of a mate rose to great importance. By the time of
the Civil War, “modern’ childhood” stressed love-based marriages for family creation rather
than parent chosen with money. 231 The important concerns for Southern parents were that their
child’s love interest came from a respectable family of the same social class. 232 The War led to
some very interesting dynamics when it came to dating. In the South, girls and acceptable boys
were often separated by the War and they were forced to court through correspondence. 233 For
other girls, the influx of solders from far away was intriguing and gave them more options than
they ordinarily would have possessed. 234 Dating a soldier, however, brought with it its own
complications—he could die. 235 Because families were often divided, the one new perk a couple
might have been less parental interference. 236 Fathers, such as John McLaughlin, were able to
give advice to their children through letters, but had little say beyond that. John McLaughlin
wrote to his daughter Betty Ann: “I supposed you are going to get married before I return…. make your own choice, it is for you to live by and not me. Be careful how you make it as you

231 Marten, ed. Children and Youth During the Civil War Era, 4-5 & 127.
232 Ibid, 127.
233 Ibid, 129.
234 Ibid, 129.
235 Ibid, 131.
236 Ibid, 130.
are making a pretty serious one and a mighty long one, for a lifetime.” This appears to be good advice, even today.

Young women used their new-found power over men to promote the war effort as well as to weed out the undesirable. Many Confederate girls showed their communities how patriotic they were by refusing the attention of boys who refused to serve the Confederate cause. Confederate soldier-boys were considered worthy of consideration by southern girls, but Union troops (of any rank) were to be rejected. Girls in the south who did show interest in enemy soldiers were at risk of being shunned by the other girls. In Gettysburg, PA girls who chose to show interest in the arriving Confederate soldiers do not appear to have had the same problem as long as the said soldiers were of the appropriate station. According to Margaret S. Creighton in The Colors of Courage “these young white women tended to stay true to social class. Girls of some education and property were most entranced by enemy men, particularly officers, who seemed tutored and well-bred—who had ‘manners.”

My Home is Now a Battlefield!

Many Southern children were able to make this claim by War’s end, although few Northerners could. One example from Virginia was the Bushong Farm which became central to much of the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1864. The Bushong family (which included

---


238 Marten, ed. Children and Youth During the Civil War Era, 132.

239 Ibid, 133-134.

240 Creighton, 105.

241 This battle included the V. M. I. cadet corps who was used to fill the hole blown in the Confederate lines. On the way there the cadets were teased mercilessly regarding their youth. John S. Wise remembered that “the band of a regiment of grimy veterans…[struck] up ‘Rock-a-by, Baby’ when the cadets
two children, their parents, their aunt and their grandparents) sheltered in their cellar while they waited for the battle to end. After the battle concluded, the family’s home became a hospital, as were many of the other structures in town. Today it is possible to tour this farm and attempt to imagine what it must have been like in the cellar looking out the windows as soldiers marched by in ranks. The noise must have been deafening and the ground must have shaken constantly. Add to this the fear of not knowing what the outcome would be and the unspoken concern about the survival of the family, the home and their livelihood. Then when it was finally safe to come out the house, to become overrun by the wounded and their caretakers. The smells and sights of a military hospital must have lingered long after the soldiers left.

The Bushongs were not the only people in New Market, Virginia, on the day of the battle. In town, Jessie Rupert (a Unionist who would become known after this battle as “The Angel of the Shenandoah”) had a young baby to protect which she did by cutting a hole in the floor of her home and digging out a corresponding area out of the earth below into which it was large enough to place her son Charles and his cradle, if necessary.

In some cases the incoming armies were able to encourage the civilian population to leave before a battle began. One famous case of this was Special Field Order Number 67 issued September 8, 1864 in which Sherman “expelled 867 children and 705 adults from the city” of

---

242 Field of Lost Shoes; A Living in Virginia Special. DVD. WVPT Public Television Presents, n.d. Virginia Museum of the Civil War, New Market, Virginia

Atlanta before his army arrived to take over.\(^{244}\) Sherman’s response to John B. Hood’s criticism of his actions was as follows: “God will judge us in due time…and he will pronounce whether it will be more humane to fight with a town full of women and the families of a brave people at our back, or to remove them in time to places of safety.”\(^{245}\) Needless to say Sherman’s tactics and invasion were not popular in the South. Sherman wrote to his daughter Minnie from “occupied Memphis” in 1862 that “Hundreds of children like yourself are daily taught to curse my name, and each night thousands kneel in prayer & beseech the almighty to cosign me to perdition.”\(^{246}\) This must have been a very scary thought for her—even the children were a threat to his safety.

Children throughout the South, like their parents, must have been on constant guard for anything out of the ordinary. Jabour noted that children were excellent lookouts because they feared what the presence of soldiers could mean to their family.\(^{247}\) Charles McCurdy, who was ten years old at the Battle of Gettysburg, later remembered that “to be in fashion…I kept my, most cherished possessions in a little box, ready for shipment, feeling quite important at the thought of danger. But I suspect that even the most hardened looter would not have found anything there to interest him.”\(^{248}\) As one can see, the children may not have understood everything, but they took what measures they deemed necessary based on what adults were doing around them.

\(^{244}\) Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 114.

\(^{245}\) Letter to John B. Hood regarding the city of Atlanta.

\(^{246}\) Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 113.

\(^{247}\) Jabour, 130.

\(^{248}\) Werner, 60.
It is a sad, but true, fact that children can adapt to even the worst situations without understanding the situation. *Reluctant Witnesses* related a scene which occurred during the Confederate evacuation of Fredericksburg which provides one such snapshot in time.

“Buck Denmen, a sharpshooter from the Army of Northern Virginia…[was] taking sight for a last shot when a fair-haired three-year-old girl toddled out of an alley, accompanied by a Newfoundland dog, and gave chase to a big shell that was rolling along the pavement. The little girl clapped her hands in delight, and the dog snapped and barked furiously at the shell.”

No doubt there were many other scenes like this one which played out. For this child, the life of war was likely the only one that she ever knew and, therefore, she was unafraid. Desensitization to the violence of war occurred in older children as well. Charlie McCurdy noted “I had never before seen a dead man, and yet I do not recall that I was shocked, so quickly does war brutalize. The wounded I had seen, the fierce excitement that ranged around me, had blunted even my young sensibilities.”

It should be noted that the desensitization must have been relatively quick for Charlie since he was in the North and was likely only close to the battle front for the three days of the battle and during the aftermath. He was not like many southern children who were constantly surrounded by the battlegrounds and the threat of imminent action. The concept of what was occurring was beyond his comprehension. In his own words: “The battle was too big for a little boy. Had I realized that the noise and tumult, the confusion and excitement… meant that 140,000…men were trying to kill each other…my emotions might have been more in keeping with the great tragedy.”

---

249 Buck snapped up the girl and took her to safety. She was returned to her mother after the battle. Werner, 33-34.

250 Charlie was ten-years-old at the Battle of Gettysburg. Werner, 65.

Sometimes children were casualties, even when they were not on the battlefield. Illness was brought to the children through interaction with nearby soldiers or though such things as contaminated water caused by unsanitary practices.\textsuperscript{252} Willy Sherman (General Tecumseh Sherman’s nine-year-old son) was one such victim. In August 1863 Willy and his family were allowed to visit his father following the Siege at Vicksburg. They stayed until late September when the General was shipped out. Willy caught dysentery and malaria while in camo and died as a result.\textsuperscript{253} Other children were inadvertently maimed or killed by the war memorabilia that their soldier friends and family sent home as gifts.\textsuperscript{254} General Sherman was one of the fathers that sent his sons presents. In one letter he wrote, “I sent Willy a box of cannon balls and bullets which he must share with Tim. I would like to see Willy’s eyes when he sees the dread missiles.”\textsuperscript{255} Children who chose to replace their stick swords for the real thing quickly learned the difference.

Another reality for these children was the wounded soldiers who remained in the area of the battle until they were able to be moved. This meant many makeshift hospitals appeared in a very short time. Sadie Bushman (a nine-year-old) was sent with her little brother to their Grandparent’s farm prior to the battle reaching the town of Gettysburg. After many harrowing

\textsuperscript{252} Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 110.

\textsuperscript{253} Blesser, 149-150.

\textsuperscript{254} Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 111.


In yet another letter Sherman tells how he does not want his sons to follow in his footsteps. “Tell Willy I have another sword which he can add to his present armory. When I come home again I will gratify his ambition on that score, though truly I do not choose for him or Tommy the military profession. Howe, 201.
adventures the children finally made it to their destination—which was now a hospital. Upon arrival Sadie remembered:

“the surgeon…) turned to me and asked if I could hold a cup of water to the poor man’s mouth while his leg was being taken off”… ‘Terribly frightened,’ she complied…. ‘I had to see the whole operation’…But she did not faint, or vomit, or run away. I had ‘more fear’ of the surgeon than of the mangled man.”256

Even after her father took her home she returned to her post at the hospital where “she was so small she could not reach up to the sick men…And so she climbed onto the beds to care for her patients.”257 What a dedicated little nurse she must have been.

After a battle was a time of exploration, souvenir hunting and money-making for thrill seekers.258 The places where the children had grown up now took on a new luster. There were now camps of soldiers from far away locations, battlefields with all the bloody carnage a young boy could only imagine before, and a fresh supply of goods ready for the taking by those brave enough to be scavengers of the dead. Children from the local area who managed to retrieve much needed articles were often able to sell them to the soldiers for much needed funds.259 Even lead in bullets could be sold for thirteen cents per pound because of its high demand.260 “The best source [of lead] was unexploded shells [therefore]…” We would unscrew the cap-end and if

---

256 Creighton, 118-119.

257 Ibid, 119.


259 Ibid, 102-103.

260 At time of Battle of Gettysburg. Werner, 74.

Daniels, 4.
we were careful, fill the shell with water before we undertook to extract the bullets.’’ 261

Albertus McCreary further described the danger involved in lead collection when he wrote:

“a schoolmate of mine…had been hunting bullets on Cemetery Hill [Gettysburg]. He found a shell, and, the contents not coming out fast enough for him, he struck it upon a rock on which he was sitting, and made a spark which exploded the shell. We carried him home, and the surgeons did what they could for him, but he never regained consciousness and died in about an hour.” 262

Not all of the items scavenged off of the battlefield were sold. Some boys chose to add the military items gathered to their war memorabilia collections and to their toys for battle. Looking back on their actions Albertus McCreary is amazed at the number of boys who survived their childhoods.

“I often wonder why more boys were not injured. Almost every boy had a can of powder hidden in the house or barn, with rifles or carbines to shoot it off in. We would go to Brick-yard Lane, a favorite resort of the boys, load the rifles good and strong, leaving the ramrod in, and then shoot into the air. We never knew where the ramrods went. Another trick was to go to the woods, place five or six large Wentworth shells among dry leaves and sticks, set fire to the pile, and run off to a safe distance and wait for the explosion. It made a racket that put Fourth of July in the shade.” 263

It is amazing that any of these boys came out unharmed. They say boys will be boys, but where were the parents?

Danger did not disappear with the battle’s end or even with the evacuation of the soldiers. Contaminated water, ruined fields and homes, weaponry, wounded/dead soldiers, civilians, and animals remained. Each in its own way altered life. One example of how contaminated water effected people is as follows: “After the battle [Gettysburg], she [a young woman] began to be

261 Direct quote was from Albertus McCreary. Daniels, 4.

262 Albertus McCreary was fifteen-years-old at Gettysburg. Werner, 75.

sick from some well water. When officials fished in the well, they pulled up a wrist and a thumb…She knew of another well, too—‘half-filled with dead soldiers.’\textsuperscript{264} No wonder sickness was a major issue after a battle. Just imagine living in a place that was littered with the dead and wounded, where one cannot safely drink the water, where there is little food available, and where the air was not breathable. “The horrid stench alone at Gettysburg lasted for weeks and caused those living there to carry around good smelling oils to mask it.”\textsuperscript{265} It would seem that after a time that one’s nose would lose its ability to smell certain odors.

**How Much More Suffering Can/Must I Endure?**

The themes which continually appear throughout Civil War documents, primary or secondary, are loss and suffering. Few people, if any, would have been immune—if a person was not personally touched by these they likely knew someone who was. Death, starvation, trauma, and loss were everywhere. Children can be amazingly resilient when bad things happen, but they can also be horribly scarred for life.\textsuperscript{266} According to Marten,

“ample evidence shows what may be called stress-resistant behavior: developing a high tolerance for discomfort and becoming reliable, caring, and competent in the face of increased demands. Many Civil War children met the challenges of

\textsuperscript{264} Creighton, 150.

\textsuperscript{265} “The stench…worried people, for they believed bad air caused disease.”
Daniels, 3.

McCreary, 251.

\textsuperscript{266} “Children normally are—and were—socialized to respect human life and believe in peace. During war, however, they are constantly pushed to dehumanize their enemies and rationalize their destruction. Studies of twentieth-century children in warzones have revealed that these conditions can break down discipline; increase antisocial and aggressive behavior and spark emotional outbursts; product health problems such as sleep disorders, headaches, bed-wetting, and decreased appetite; and create a whole range of that therapists now call post-traumatic stress disorders. Children over age eight or so often deny that danger actually exists or insist that it happens to other people, not to them. Very small children who lose a parent may…revert…to less mature development stages. Older children may engage in self-destructive behavior.”
war by taking on greater responsibilities and contributing to their families’ survival.”

The war made survival a hand-to-mouth existence for many. Food was at a premium at home and in the field. This often caused passing armies through an area to use up the locals’ supplies as well as their own. In areas where armies frequently traveled, the risk of being left to starve in one’s own home was a constant possibility. Letters to soldiers such as the one from Mary to her husband Edward begging him to come home were not that unusual. In the letter she wrote, “Last night I was aroused by little Eddie’s crying. I called and said, ‘What is the matter, Eddie?’ And he said, ‘O mamma, I am so hungry.’ And Lucy…she never complains but she is growing thinner and thinner…before God, Edward, unless you come home, we must die.” In the South, starvation and the lack of other basic necessities hit many slaves with more force than ever before. When supplies and food were of short supply for the master’s family, the loss was sometimes made up from those things that were normally given to the slaves. As a result slaves often had to work harder with less food, bringing on the risk of additional health problems or even death.

Being forced to grow up so quickly was resented by many, especially southern girls, who did not get to enjoy their teenage years in the way previous children had. Emma LeConte of South Carolina lamented, “Those [worries] which should come later are made familiar to us at an


268 George Donaghey of Arkansas remembered “starvation is one of the sharpest memories of my childhood.” Ibid, 101.

269 Poe, 65.

This letter did bring their father running only to be charged with desertion. He was found guilty, but because he had returned on his own after helping his family he was given leniency. He continued to serve until his death in battle for the Confederacy.

Ibid, 65.


271 Ibid, 207.
age when only gladness should surround us. We have only the saddest anticipations and the dread of hardships and cares when bright dreams of the future ought to shine on us.”

Teenagers should have been courting, going to parties, and learning how to be young ladies and gentlemen. When survival took precedence, however, these other pleasures fell by the wayside.

As previously noted, home was not always safe. When battles and armies were nearby, special attention had to be paid to what was going on at all times. Being a child was not enough to guarantee one’s safety. Some Northern soldiers were reported to have attacked Southern children, and in some cases raped them. (This is not to say that it did not happen the other way around, but Northern soldiers would have had more access to Southern children than Southern soldiers to the Northern child.) “The vast majority of reported wartime rapes took place in the victim’s home, often in the presence of family members.”

Not all attacks ended in rape. Some attacks were not sexual in nature such as in the case of Mrs. D-‘s eight and ten-year-old sons. Union troops

“knowing the mother too well to attempt to extort anything from her, ordered the little boys to tell them in what direction Colonel Stuart had gone. The boys told them that they could tell nothing. Threats followed; finally handcuffs and irons for the ankles were brought. Still those little heroes stood, the one as pale as ashes, the other with his teeth clenched over his under lip, until the blood was ready to gush out, but not one word could be extorted, until with a feeling of hopelessness in their efforts, they went off, calling them cursed little rebels, etc. The mother saw all this, and stood it unflinchingly—poor thing!”

272 Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era*, 110.

United States War Department, 274-275.

274 Jabour, 134.


“Documented Civil War sexual crimes occurred against white and black women and girls of all social classes.” (Quoted in) Jabour, 133.

275 Poe, 153.
In addition to physical threats of harm, children could have their belongings taken from them—including their homes. In one home it was reported that every piece of bedding, even the quilt that a baby was laying upon, had been taken by Union soldiers during Sherman’s March to the Sea. Another reported incident involving Sherman’s troops on this same march related how even dead children were not safe from the scavengers.

“We found that the Vandals [Yankees] had gone to the graveyard and, seeing a new made grave, had dug down into it and taken up the little coffin containing a dead [black] baby, no doubt supposing treasure had been buried there. When they discovered their mistake, they left it above ground, as the poor mother expressed it, ‘for the hog to root.’”

Such stories of atrocities were spread far and wide by the offended side in order to win support for their respective cause. Word of mouth can be a powerful tool in the fighting of a war. Propaganda can win recruits by making the enemies appear worse than one’s own side. Also word of mouth can be used to pass along much needed and looked for news about the events in one’s own community. According to Sarah Morgan Dawson:

“some one [sic] from town [Baton Rouge] told him [Charlie] that the Federals were breaking in the houses, destroying the furniture, and tearing the clothes of the women and children in shreds, like maniacs. O my home! I wonder if they have entered ours? What a jolly time they would have over all the letters I left in my desk.”

The fact that soldiers were known to steal and even publish girls’ diaries led many to destroy these personal items before they could be taken. Even seven-year-old Lulu McLean’s doll

---


279 Marten, ed. *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era,* 118.
which had been left in the room where Robert E. Lee’s surrender took place was taken as a memento by Union Captain Moore. Schools were not even immune. According to Lucy Rebecca Buck “the Yankees went to the Academy and broke the school children’s desks and tore up their books—and yet they’re the pioneers of civilization and enlightenment and religion. A meek act for such reformers.”

Children could also be confused greatly when the enemy soldiers turned out to be kind and caring gentlemen instead of the horrible monsters that they had been portrayed as being. A girl named Alice was one of the children who benefited from even a brief interaction with a kind enemy soldier. A Yankee Colonel had been treating Alice well which emboldened her to ask that her grandfather’s barn be spared during the Burning of the Shenandoah Valley. He called his men together and “drew his revolver out if its holster and told them that he would ‘shoot in the head’ any man who dared set fire to the Bateman barn.” The barn survived thanks to the quick thinking of a girl and the kindness of a gentleman. Some of these soldiers looked for children to temporarily take the place of their own children back home. After all the death and carnage these men witnessed, an innocent child who had not yet learned to hate and fight must have been refreshing. Some of these men did succeed in making friends with the children they came in contact with, but it was not always easy. Many times the parents and other adults

---

280 Lulu was the daughter of Mr. McLean who owned the house where the terms of surrender between Robert e. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant were signed. Her doll was kept in the Moore family for over one hundred years—it has since been returned to its original home. It is known as the “silent witness” Joe Williams and Ryan Henry. “Lula McLean’s Rag Doll.” National Parks Service. Appomattox Court House, September 10, 2014. http://www.nps.gov/apco/kids-rag-doll.htm.


282 Jabour, 140.


284 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 142.
surrounding them had taught the young not to trust the enemy soldiers by telling horror stories about them—true or not, it did not matter, as long as the lesson was learned. 285

Many individuals of all ages, races and genders chose to leave their homes behind when armies came near. For example, a Virginia soldier who witnessed the civilians leaving Fredericksburg, Virginia before the battle noted: “I never saw a more pitiful procession than they make trudging through the deep snow…little children tugging along with their doll babies…Where they were going we could not tell, and I doubt if they could.” 286 Often these refuges continued to be transients for the remainder of the War. One little boy asked his mother after many moves “Mama…when will we get a house w-e can h-a-v-e?” 287 Even in the Gettysburg area there was a mass exodus of black people (heading north) just prior to the battle because of the word that Confederate soldiers were capturing black people to be sent South to slavery. “One [black] woman held her two children from the Cumberland Valley all the way to Philadelphia, alternating who had to walk and who got lifted.” 288

“By November 1863 an estimated 50,000 slaves had fled to refugee camps.” 289 Conditions in camps varied, but many were disease infested, crowded and undersupplied. 290 Everyone old enough to work (at least ten or twelve) was expected by the Union authorities to

---

285 Jabour, 129.

286 Werner, 33.

287 “The ‘Have’ was long drawn out; he had not forgotten our home under the big trees near Memphis and could not understand why we roved about so much.” Elizabeth Avery Meriwether. Recollections of 92 Years (1824-1916). McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc., 1994. p. 91.

288 Creighton, 131.

289 Many, if not the majority, of these refugees were children. Jabour, 166.

290 Mortality rates could be around 50 percent in some camps. Ibid, 167.
pay for their keep and protection with labor. General Orders No. 2. March 12, 1862 set down in writing the promised wages and rations that were to be presented to contrabands as follows:

“The contrabands at this post will hereafter be placed in the employ of the Government upon the following terms... boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen will receive $4 per month, one ration, and soldier’s allowance of clothing.... All children under the age of twelve will receive one ration and remain with their parents.”

Escaped slaves often attached themselves to Union armies because they believed that this action would be their best opportunity to safely make their way to freedom. Safety was not guaranteed as many learned in refugee/contraband camps. Rape was one issue that occurred in some places. For example,

“In the summer of 1864, Jenny Green, a young ‘colored’ girl who had escaped slavery and sought refuge with the Union Army in Richmond, Va., was brutally raped by Lt. Andrew J. Smith, 11th Pennsylvania Cavalry... she was able to bring charges against him, and even testify in a military court... Smith was discharged from the Army and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor.”

Capture and worse by Confederates was also a real threat. Confederate guerillas often took advantage of the chance to capture the black refugees in order to sell them into, or back into, slavery. These refugees might have been ignored by some Union troops based on the belief held by many that they were simply extra baggage which both used up the army’s supplies and

291 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 132.

292 United States War Department, 369.

293 Edwin M. Stanton to Brigadier-General Saxton: “By recent act of Congress all men and boys received into the service of the United States who may have been the slaves of rebel masters are, with their wives, mothers and children declared to be forever free. Ibid, 378.


295 Each captured refugee could earn the guerillas one hundred dollars each. Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 131.
slowed it down. Once the refugee men joined the war effort, the wives and children they left behind were sometimes treated worse than before because they no longer had protection from their “protectors.”

Those people back home, however, had to wait for news and pray/hope that it was good. Most people knew someone directly, or of someone indirectly, who was away at war and had an interest in their accomplishments and their safety. Children longed for news from any source, including the death-rolls. “This reading the death-roll and scanning bulletins to see how many men whom you have known and cared for, whose people are your people and whose fate is dear to you, have been killed is not an experience that one ever forgets.” One can only imagine how stressful this waiting day-after-day for four years could be on anyone. During this time period the man of the house was often the sole protector and provider for his family; therefore, his loss was felt all the more keenly. Congress did attempt to aid the children of the dead soldiers by instituting a monthly two dollar pension, but most assistance the children received was through more local level government agencies.

---

296 Letter from Brigadier-General G. M. Dodge to Col. R. Rowett refers to “negro women and children [as]…only a burden upon us.”
United States War Department, 391.

297 King, 137.

298 Under orders of Brigadier-General G. M. Dodge: “It being impossible to feed the large number of negro women and children coming to our lines, and it being part of the policy of the Government to protect them, it is hereby ordered that the commanders of posts and provost-marshal return them upon their plantation with written instructions to the proprietors to feed and protect them.” [“Protectors” that leave them to the wolves it appears in this case.]
United States War Department, 198.

299 Henry Cabot Lodge (Northerner)
Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 235.
of a parent as the loss of a loved one, a provider, a nurturer, and protector, there are far more effects that such a loss can have on a child.

“Researchers have shown…physical and psychological symptoms often stem from the deaths of male parents in modern wars. Boys are often less likely to display masculine traits, while girls tend to exaggerate their femininity. Both genders tend to become more submissive and to delay gratification in their personal lives. Paternal bereavement often sparks emotional disturbances such as introversion, dependence on others, or even psychotic or suicidal behavior.”

Children’s losses were not limited to their fathers—some lost brothers, uncles, cousins, sisters, aunts and, yes, even mothers. Loss mounting upon loss had to affect children. They had to wonder what or who they would lose next.

---

300 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 207.
CHAPTER IV: RECONSTRUCTION CHILDREN

The War is over—now, what to do with the freed slaves?

After the Civil War slavery was technically dead in America, but realistically, the apprenticeship of some black children appears to be a continuation of slavery. On paper the apprenticeship laws appear to have the children’s best interest in mind, but in reality the ruling powers ignored questionable actions undertaken in the name of humanitarian apprenticeship. The idea was that this program would allow white individuals to take in black orphans almost like foster families. These white individuals pledged to provide the necessary food, housing and education for the children who in turn were expected to do chores and the like.  

The laws across the South often required that the children be provided “a rudimentary education, a financial settlement upon completion of the indenture, and the skills necessary to practice a trade.” The children were to be cared for until they became adults—for many geographic locations that meant eighteen years old for girls and twenty-one years old for boys.

While this all looks good on paper, many of the white “saviors” of the “heathen” children, in reality, were only looking out for themselves. First, taking advantage of unsubstantiated ages made it easy to declare a child younger than they were in order to get a few more years of labor out of them. Another small hurdle to cross for the white person was

---


302 Ibid, 198.

303 Jabour, 183.


Frederick Douglass declared “I do not remember a slave who could tell his birthday.” Hoose, 95. Douglass, 25.
“proving” the child an orphan. In cases of a separated family, the white person simply had to make the child an apprentice before the parents returned to claim them.\textsuperscript{305} The fact that slave children were born to unwed parents was also used to the whites advantage—this enabled whites to declare them orphans.\textsuperscript{306} Maryland’s Apprenticeship Law even allowed for freed children to be removed from single mothers, who it was decided could not care for the children properly, and sent to orphanages or made apprentices.\textsuperscript{307}

Considering the advantages the whites had in this arrangement, it should not be surprising that as many as 2,500 black children were made apprentices within one month of the war’s completion.\textsuperscript{308} What might be surprising, however, is how many blacks fought this arrangement. There were cases of relatives, friends and family who completed the legal requirements to become the child’s guardian when no parents were available to keep them out of apprenticeships.\textsuperscript{309}

\begin{itemize}
\item During Reconstruction many freed persons tried to learn how old they were and picked what names they wanted to go by (first and last) rather than what was forced upon them. 
King, 150.
\item Many ex-slaves attempted to reunite with family through the Freedmen’s Bureau and by taking out newspaper advertisements. 
\item After the War black men and women were allowed to legally marry and many took advantage of this new right.
Jabour, 188.
\item The mothers were not consulted in this matter. If they did complain too loudly they could be beaten or sent to prison.
\end{itemize}
Many of the unlucky souls who were apprenticed declared that they were living slave-like lives—and often under the same masters.\textsuperscript{310} The masters were still getting their labor, still had all the power, and still had the lawmakers on their side. Where did that leave the freed people? Families were still being separated at the whims of the white ruling class.\textsuperscript{311} Apprentices, like the slaves before, could be hired out by their legal caretakers.\textsuperscript{312} This practice also hurt the freed family who depended on all of its members to work just to survive—it took away the children who were able to work and left those who were not.\textsuperscript{313} This meant more mouths to feed with fewer workers to provide the necessary labor.

Based on what was stated above, it must appear that the freed population had no better life than what they had known before—this is not necessarily true. The 13\textsuperscript{th} Amendment had passed ending slavery across the United States and in turn gave the parents the rights to raise their children in the best ways they saw fit.\textsuperscript{314} With this new found freedom ex-slaves could now negotiate the terms of employment for themselves and their families based on their best interests rather than their employer’s.\textsuperscript{315}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{310} King, 152.
\textsuperscript{311} Jabour, 183.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid, 184.
\textsuperscript{313} King, 151.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid, 152.
\textsuperscript{315} King, 141.
\textsuperscript{316} Ibid, 154-155.
\end{flushright}
Will Daddy Come Back to Us?

For some children this question was quickly answered with an abrupt “no” based on a name written on a death list or a letter of condolence from a well-meaning friend. For others, the answer was not so easy, or quick. Until the end of the Civil War it was not considered the government/military’s duty to notify families nor provide any assistance following the deaths of loved ones in service. With the massive numbers of dead, ineffective record keeping, enormous numbers of unidentified dead and the lack of official responsibility for family notification, the possibility of receiving an answer regarding someone’s survival was questionable at best. A new movement began at the end of the War to assist families in learning the fate of their loved ones. This movement forced a change in the expectations of those with family in service as well as in military policy—even now the government and military are still responsible for family notifications and assistance.

With so many children made orphans by the War the question became—how do we take care of them? In the 1860s alone “as many orphanages opened…as in the two previous decades” combined. The situation became so dire for some children that orphanages even opened their doors to refugee children and single-parent children out of necessity.

Some war orphans were used to remind their side of the sacrifices made by soldiers, women, and children. One famous case of a Lost Cause orphan was Julia Jackson, daughter

---

317 Ibid
318 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 221.
319 Ibid, 211.
320 Ibid, 14 & 211.
of Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.\textsuperscript{321} Julia was an infant when her father died. Her mother pushed her to promote the Lost Cause beginning at age twelve when she began making public appearances (she only attended, but did not speak).\textsuperscript{322} She continued her role as the Lost Cause orphan until her death at twenty-six; after which her daughter then took her place.\textsuperscript{323}

Not all Lost Cause children were orphans. Winnie Davis, Jefferson Davis’s daughter, also took on the role of promoter. She became known as the “Daughter of the Confederacy” because her father was the sole president of the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{324} She became her father’s travel companion after his release from prison and accompanied him to many Lost Cause events.\textsuperscript{325}

Even if fathers walked through the door following their time in service, it did not mean that they were fully back. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a modern term for a disorder as old as fighting and war itself. Certainly, some of the Civil War soldiers returning home must have suffered in varying degrees from some form of it.\textsuperscript{326}

> “Psychologists define traumatic experiences as sudden, unpredictable, and overwhelming, arousing intense feelings of terror and vulnerability. Trauma victims often suffer from lingering traumatic memories, painful feelings, and visual images of trauma.”\textsuperscript{327}

Children had been dealing with the trauma of the War from the beginning. Now, likely, they expected everything to return to the way it had been before. As fathers, and other loved ones, returned home it must have been a huge strain on the children to see how the War had changed.

\textsuperscript{321} The Lost Cause was the South’s justification for the loss of the War based on the Union’s greater resources.

\textsuperscript{322} Marten. \textit{The Children’s Civil War}, 218.

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid, 219.

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid, 218.

\textsuperscript{325} Ibid, 218.

\textsuperscript{326} Jabour, 200.

\textsuperscript{327} Ibid, 10.
them. A depressed and alcohol-dependent man may have replaced the once kind and loving father.\textsuperscript{328} Who was this man? What happened to Daddy?

**The New Normal**

Many children also had to learn how to live with the new normal. Parents that had been slaveowners often saw their economic status fall sharply--children would have to learn to live with less.\textsuperscript{329} According to Anya Jabour, the loss of money and things were main topics of discussion among these white children following the War.\textsuperscript{330} This must have been a huge shock for children who had never been in want for anything. Children of lower classes must have had an easier time adjusting to doing without since this had been their way of life before the War.

Another new normal for all levels of society was the return of previously strong and healthy men in the form of frail and wounded veterans.\textsuperscript{331} The loss of an arm, leg, finger, or any other wound could have profound effects both mentally and physically. For farmers, a loss of a body part could mean the inability to continue providing for their families which in turn might require assistance either from their family or from the outside.

Following the War, the expectation of a young woman to marry became unrealistic for many. “By the end of the war one-fourth of all white men between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine was dead and even in 1870 when Mildred [Robert E. Lee’s] …youngest, was twenty-four, Virginia had 15,000 more white women than men.”\textsuperscript{332} With this extreme difference

\textsuperscript{328} Jabour, 200.

\textsuperscript{329} Ibid, 198.

\textsuperscript{330} Ibid, 198.

\textsuperscript{331} Marten. *The Children’s Civil War*, 204.

\textsuperscript{332} Zimmer, 51.
in available white women and men, it should not be surprising that many of these women remained single. In an amazingly modern outlook on marriage, Mrs. Robert E. Lee noted, “I am not in the least anxious to part with them [her daughters]...yet I think it quite time if they intend to change their condition [that they marry].” Interestingly, none of their daughters ever married.

For black children, whether free or slave before emancipation, there was a continued fear of the white man. The new normal for ex-slaves, however, was the lack of a white owner to protect them from whites who might do them harm. During slavery, owners had an interest in protecting the slaves within their employ simply because to fail to do so meant financial loss. Now, with the slaves being free, there was no incentive for the whites to protect the blacks. For many black women with young children the end of slavery meant rejection when it came to finding work to support their families. Past slaveowners were no longer obliged to take responsibility for the children who could not work and as a result many of these women and children became unemployed and homeless. The lack of protection provided to the black also allowed hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan to take hold in the South. Many blacks were forced to hide overnight in woods in order to escape night attacks by such groups.

---

“In the North, 6 percent of White males aged 13-43 had died in the war; in the South, 18 percent were dead.” Blight, 64.

333 Zimmer, 50.
334 Ibid, 50.
335 Before and during the War “Owners did not arbitrarily punish whites for violations upon their slaves. They took strangers to court and fired employees.”
King, 93-94.
336 Jabour, 182.
337 Ibid, 182.
338 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 198.
Education

“'Whereas, Knowledge is power, and an educated and intelligent people can neither be held in, nor reduced to slavery...we will insist upon the establishment of good schools for the thorough education of our children’
—Colored People’s Convention in South Carolina 1865.339”

As one can see from the quote above, education continued to remain of great importance to the black population. They had learned through the experience of slavery how important a good education was in order to retain their hard-earned freedom. Most schools were racially divided in their makeup although some mixed-race schools were proposed or even attempted late in the War and into Reconstruction. But such mixed schools were quickly abandoned due to the physical and verbal threats which resulted.340 Teachers and schools who dared to educate black students following the War became “special targets of terrorism” as hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan made a special effort to thwart any such attempt in the South.341

Both lower level black and white children’s education consisted of “sporadically attended local day schools, where both boys and girls learned basic literacy and mathematics.”342 This basic education which had been acceptable for white lower class children before emancipation

339 Jabour, 192.

340 Ibid, 192-197.

341 Marten. The Children’s Civil War, 198.

“Freedmen’s Bureau schools operated until 1870.”
Ibid, 197.

342 Jabour, 35.

“The campaign for wide-spread public education that had begun in the 1830s intensifies after the Civil War with the passage of compulsory attendance laws in numerous states and localities. As a result, by the late nineteenth century, city children attended school for nine months a year into their teen years, though in rural areas, where children’s labor was still necessary...the school year was often much briefer—around six months—and kids stayed in school only until they were ten or eleven.”
Chudacoff, 70.
became suddenly insufficient and unacceptable during Reconstruction.\textsuperscript{343} Since basic education was what the blacks were receiving and because whites of all levels were considered superior to all blacks, equal education for the two races, for many, was appalling.\textsuperscript{344}

For children of former slaveowners, education became an important way to become a successful businessman. The antebellum and Civil War practice of simply passing down the slaveowning status no longer applied.\textsuperscript{345} A good education continued as proof of high social standing.\textsuperscript{346}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{343} Jabour, 35.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid, 35.
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid, 34.
\textsuperscript{346} Ibid, 34.
\end{flushright}

“By 1880 [after Reconstruction]…still less than 2 percent of Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one attended college.” --It had been 2 percent as far back as 1800.

Marten, ed. \textit{Children and Youth During the Civil War Era}, 49.

School standards (educational and physical) based on the age of the child were not set until the 1880s which was after reconstruction.

Chudacoff, 70.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The American Civil War greatly changed the lifestyles and expectations of the children who lived through it, and ultimately their children as well. Using the backdrop of Antebellum childhood as a basis from which to compare and contrast the childhoods of those who experienced the Civil War and those who were born later, one is able to learn how the War itself changed children’s lives. Some of these changes are easily spotted and even expected. Other of these changes, however, were subtle and somewhat of a surprise.

Obvious changes to the childhood of those who endured the American Civil War come quickly to mind when anyone ponders the possible effects. These children, whether actually on the battlefield or not, were subjected to life in a warzone-like atmosphere. Though the effects of war on children may have depended on where they lived, there was a common thread of fear, loss, and instability. For example, for Northern children this often meant: faraway battles fought by friends and relatives; fear that the War would come to their section of the country; the need to do without so that the solders could have; and sometimes a rare battle nearby. Likewise, for Southern children the War often meant: constant fear for one’s own safety; fear for one’s family and friends; battles near one’s home if not part of it; having to make due with very little and even less when the armies arrived; wounded and dead soldiers often nearby; and the new “threat” of what the blacks would do if they were able to break free. Though the fears may have been different for different children, fear was the constant companion for many children on both sides.

Less obvious changes to the casual historian have become more apparent in the previous pages. Prior to the War, there were a number of children who did not need to work to live because their families were economically well off. During and after the War this changed as more families had to fight to survive on meager supplies. Education also changed in that before the War many of the blacks in the South were not allowed to go to school, but by Reconstruction
there were schools available for them all across the country. Before the War, teenage girls were assumed to marry and have children, but with so many young men injured or dead as a result of the War this was not only no longer possible, but also no longer a viable expectation for the young lady.

Children, no matter how much their parents may have wanted, could not have been protected from the effects of war. War does not only effect that which is in its direct path, but has tentacles which puts a squeeze on supplies, money, family, material, and even the good will that one people might have toward another. As each of these things is influenced by the “squeeze,” they go on to affect something else. At first the children may have been able to be protected, but as the adults were suffering from the realities of war, the children began to follow suit. Children are little sponges that absorb everything—they notice little differences that we adults think that we have hidden from them. These sponges soak up what is going on around them and then incorporate it into their daily lives. For those children who had known nothing but war in their short lifetime, war was their life. With peace there was a need to adapt to the changed world around them, but the War was not entirely forgotten and continued to live inside their memory (even if only on a small scale). Even today in the South the American Civil War is still very alive and pertinent to some new generations because of the way that the memories have been passed down from generation to generation. Hatred and bitterness is not forgotten easily or quickly. These child survivors were the first post war generation and in many ways have determined how the War has been remembered.
LIST OF REFERENCES


*Field of Lost Shoes; A Living in Virginia Special*. DVD. WVPT Public Television Presents, n.d.


