

# James McPherson, “Why Men Fought in the Civil War” (1997)

## Abstract

[James McPherson](#), emeritus professor of history at Princeton University, is widely recognized for his writing on the Civil War. His *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1989. In this excerpt from *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* and *What They Fought For, 1861-1865*, McPherson probes the ideologies that motivated Americans to take up arms against each other. He considers areas of concern for Union and Confederate soldiers during the war, including nationalism, liberty, and slavery.

## Introduction

“American soldiers of the 1860s appear to have been about as little concerned with ideological issues as were those of the 1940s,” according to Bell Irvin Wiley, the foremost student of Johnny Reb and Billy Yank.<sup>1</sup> Another scholar who examined the letters, diaries, and memoirs of fifty enlisted men concluded that “the Civil War soldiers studied here were notoriously deficient in ideological orientation.”<sup>2</sup> Research in the letters and diaries of Civil War soldiers will soon lead the attentive historian to a contrary conclusion. Ideological motifs<sup>3</sup> almost leap from many pages of these documents. A large number of those men in blue and gray were intensely aware of the issues at stake and passionately concerned about them. How could it be otherwise? This was, after all, a *civil war*. Its outcome would determine the fate of the nation--of two nations, if the Confederacy won. It would shape the future of American society and of every person in that society. Civil War soldiers lived in the world’s most politicized and democratic country in the mid-nineteenth century. They had come of age in the 1850s when highly charged partisan and ideological debates consumed the American polity. A majority of them had voted in the election of 1860, the most heated and momentous election in American history. When they enlisted, many of them did so for patriotic and ideological reasons--to shoot as they had voted, so to speak. These convictions did not disappear after they signed up.

## On the Altar of My Country

When the war began, the Confederacy was a distinct polity with a fully operational government in control of a territory larger than any European nation save Russia. Although in the minds and hearts of some Southern whites, American nationalism still competed with Confederate nationalism, the latter had roots several decades deep in the antebellum ideology of Southern distinctiveness.<sup>4</sup> Thus it seemed natural for many Confederate soldiers to express a patriotic allegiance to “my country.” “Sink or swim, survive or perish,” wrote a young Kentuckian who had cast his lot with the Confederacy, “I will fight in defense of my country.”<sup>5</sup>

The conflict between love of family and love of country troubled some married Confederate soldiers. A homesick Arkansas sergeant wondered “why can I not be better

satisfied here for surely my duty is to serve my country but I am restless.... [Not] money nor anything else could keep me from home and my little family except love of country and freedom for which I think every man ought to bear almost anything.”<sup>6</sup> Many soldiers reconciled their dual responsibilities to country and family by the conviction that in fighting for the one they were protecting the other. [One] Alabama cavalryman wrote to his fiancée in 1863 that “if we fail I expect that my own home will be wrested from me, and would not be surprised if my own Cellie did not soon have the vandals at her door to rob and insult her.”<sup>7</sup> The urge to defend home and hearth that had impelled so many Southerners to enlist in 1861 took on greater urgency when large-scale invasions became a reality in 1862. [One] Virginian declared to his wife two weeks before he was killed at Malvern Hill that to drive “the insolent invader ... from the soil polluted by their footsteps ... has something of the glorious in it, that appeals to other feelings than those of patriotism and duty.”<sup>8</sup>

The morale advantage of fighting for one’s neighborhood could be a two-edged sword, however. This point first became evident among pro-Southern troops from border states that had fallen under Union control. Their principal desire was to regain their states for the Confederacy, a goal that did not necessarily fit with the overall purposes of Confederate strategy. Soldiers in the 2nd Arkansas resented their assignment to Georgia when much of their own state was under enemy occupation. They vowed to fight to the last “provided they are transferred to Arkansas,” declared a captain in the regiment, “but not under any other circumstances.”<sup>9</sup> Many Confederate soldiers understood, however, that the best way to defend their state was to win the war, even if that meant fighting on a front a thousand miles from home. A sergeant in the 16th Mississippi, also part of the Army of Northern Virginia, likewise expressed his intention “never to lay down my rifle as long as a Yankee remains on *Southern* soil.”<sup>10</sup>

Patriotism and nationalism were also powerful sustaining motivations for Union soldiers. This truth has sometimes been difficult to grasp. Southern motives seem easier to understand. Confederates fought for independence, for a way of life, for their homes, for their very survival as a nation. But what did Northerners fight for? It is perhaps true that Northern nationalism was more “abstract and intangible” than its Southern counterpart. But it was nonetheless just as real and as deeply felt. Most of them believed that they would no longer have a country worthy of the name. “If we lose in this war, the country is lost and if we win it is saved,” wrote a New York captain in 1863.<sup>11</sup>

How representative were these assertions of patriotic motivations for fighting? Of the 429 Confederate soldiers and sailors whose letters or diaries form the basis for this book, 283, or 66 percent, affirmed such motivations at one time or another after enlisting. For the 647 Union fighting men, the proportion was virtually the same: 441, or 68 percent. The samples of both Confederate and Union soldiers are biased toward the groups most likely to be moved by patriotic and ideological motives: officers, slaveholders, professional men, the middle class, and 1861-62 volunteers rather than post-1862 conscripts, substitutes, and bounty men. Using army rank as a surrogate for class, patriotic motivations appear to have been shared more evenly across class lines in the Union army than among Confederate troops. In the Confederate army the highest-status groups—members of planter families and of slaveholding professional families—

voiced patriotic sentiments at almost twice the rate of nonslaveholding soldiers. In both the Confederate and Union samples, the draftees, substitutes, and men who enlisted after conscription went into effect are underrepresented. To the extent that they *are* represented, the percentages [of draftees, substitutes, and men who enlisted after conscription] expressing patriotic convictions were much smaller than among the volunteers of 1861-62.<sup>12</sup> If the sample is biased toward those who expressed patriotic convictions, it is also biased toward those who did most of the fighting. While 7 percent of all Civil War soldiers were killed or mortally wounded in action, 21 percent of the soldiers in the samples lost their lives in this way.

## **The Cause of Liberty**

The patriotism of Civil War soldiers existed in a specific historical context. Americans of the Civil War generation revered their Revolutionary forebears.<sup>13</sup> The profound irony of the Civil War was that, like [President Jefferson] Davis and [President Abraham] Lincoln, Confederate and Union soldiers interpreted the heritage of 1776 in opposite ways. Confederates professed to fight for liberty and independence from a tyrannical government; Unionists said they fought to preserve the nation conceived in liberty from dismemberment and destruction.

The opposites of independence and liberty were “subjugation” and “slavery.” These two words continued to express the fate worse than death that awaited Confederate soldiers if they lost the war. “If we was to lose,” a Mississippi private wrote his wife in 1862, “we would be slaves to the Yanks and our children would have a yoke of bondage thrown around there neck.”<sup>14</sup> These soldiers were using the word “slavery” in the same way that Americans in 1776 had used it to describe their subordination to Britain. Confederate soldiers from slaveholding families expressed no feelings of embarrassment or inconsistency in fighting for their own liberty while holding other people in slavery. Indeed, white supremacy and the right of property in slaves were at the core of the ideology for which Confederate soldiers fought. “We are fighting for our liberty,” wrote a young Kentucky Confederate, “against tyrants of the North ... who are determined to destroy slavery.”<sup>15</sup> Before the war many Southern whites had avoided using the words “slaves” and “slavery,” preferring instead “servants” and “Southern institutions.” Some Confederate soldiers kept up this custom even in private letters, referring to “our own social institutions,” “the integrity of all our institutions,” “the institutions of the whole South” as the cause for which they fought.<sup>16</sup>

These [Confederate] soldiers [who wrote of slavery], of course, belonged to slaveholding families. They tended to emphasize the right of property in slaves as the basis of the liberty for which they fought. This motive, not surprisingly, was much less in evidence among nonslaveholding soldiers. But some of them emphasized a form of property they did own, one that was central to the liberty for which they fought. That property was their white skins, which put them on a plane of civil equality with slaveholders and far above those who did not possess that property. Herrenvolk democracy—the equality of all who belonged to the master race—was a powerful motivator for many Confederate soldiers. Even though he was tired of the war, wrote a Louisiana artilleryman in 1862, “I

never want to see the day when a negro is put on an equality with a white person. There is too many free niggers ... now to suit me, let alone having four millions.”<sup>17</sup>

It would be wrong, however, to assume that Confederate soldiers were constantly preoccupied with this matter. In fact, only 20 percent of the sample of 429 Southern soldiers explicitly voiced proslavery convictions in their letters or diaries. As one might expect, a much higher percentage of soldiers from slaveholding families than from nonslaveholding families expressed such a purpose: 33 percent, compared with 12 percent. Ironically, the proportion of Union soldiers who wrote about the slavery question was greater. There is a ready explanation for this apparent paradox. Emancipation was a salient issue for Union soldiers because it was controversial. Slavery was less salient for most Confederate soldiers because it was not controversial. They took slavery for granted as one of the Southern “rights” and institutions for which they fought, and did not feel compelled to discuss it. Although only 20 percent of the soldiers avowed explicit proslavery purposes in their letters and diaries, *none at all* dissented from that view.<sup>18</sup>

Confederates who professed to fight for the same goals as their forebears of 1776 would have been surprised by the intense conviction of Northern soldiers that *they* were upholding the legacy of the Revolution. A schoolteacher with several children of his own, who had enlisted in the 20th Connecticut on his thirty-sixth birthday, celebrated his thirty-seventh by writing that he had never regretted his decision to fight for “those institutions which were achieved for us by our glorious revolution ... in order that they may be perpetuated to those who may come after.”<sup>19</sup> What were those institutions? An officer in the 54th Ohio defined them as “the guaranty of the rights of property, liberty of action, freedom of thought, religion [and] ... that kind of government that shall assure life liberty & the pursuit of happiness.” But a Confederate soldier would have said that he fought for the same things. His Union adversary might have replied, like Lincoln, that secession was “the essence of anarchy,” a challenge to constitutional law and order without which liberty becomes license and leads in turn to despotism. The Founding Fathers fought a revolution and adopted a Constitution to achieve *ordered* liberty under the rule of law. Southern states had seceded in response to Lincoln’s election by a constitutional majority in a fair vote held under rules accepted by all parties. To permit them to get away with it, said Lincoln, would be to “fly to anarchy or to despotism.”<sup>20</sup> Many Union soldiers echoed Lincoln’s words. We are “fighting for the maintenance of law and order,” they wrote, “to assert the strength and dignity of the government” against the threat of “dissolution, anarchy, and ruin.”<sup>21</sup>

Northern soldiers also picked up Lincoln’s theme that the United States represented the last best hope for the survival of republican government in a world bestrode by kings, emperors, and despots of many stripes. If secession fragmented America into the dis-United States, European aristocrats and reactionaries would smile in smug satisfaction at the confirmation of their belief that this harebrained experiment in government of, by, and for the people would indeed perish from the earth. In 1863 on the second anniversary of his enlistment, a thirty-three-year-old private in the 2nd Ohio Cavalry wrote that he had not expected the war to last so long, but no matter how much longer it took it must be prosecuted “for the great principles of liberty and self government at

stake, for should we fail, the onward march of Liberty in the Old World will be retarded at least a century, and Monarchs, Kings and Aristocrats will be more powerful against their subjects than ever.”<sup>22</sup>

Two-thirds of both Confederate and Union soldiers in the samples expressed generalized patriotic motives for fighting [as discussed in the previous section]. Likewise an almost identical proportion—42 percent Confederate and 40 percent Union—discoursed in more depth on ideological issues such as liberty, constitutional rights, constitutional law, self-government, resistance to tyranny, republicanism, democracy. The greater disparity between officers and men [which serves as a surrogate for class] in the Confederate than in the Union army that characterized simple expressions of patriotism [as discussed in the previous section] also prevailed with respect to more sophisticated ideological comments. Some 53 percent of Confederate officers and 30 percent of Southern enlisted men discussed ideological themes; the comparable figures for Union soldiers were 49 and 36 percent.

### **Slavery Must be Cleaned Out**

Few Union soldiers professed to fight for racial equality. For that matter, not many claimed even to fight *primarily* for the abolition of slavery. Rare indeed were two soldiers, one from Wisconsin and the other from Maine, whose letters home contained such sentiments as: “I have no heart in this war if the slaves cannot go free.” Our cause is “nobler even than the Revolution for they fought for their own freedom, while we fight for that of another race.... If the doom of slavery is not sealed by the war I shall curse the day I entered the Army or lifted a finger in the preservation of the Union.”<sup>23</sup> But three in ten Union soldiers [in the sample] ... took that position during the first eighteen months of the war, and many more were eventually converted to it. While restoration of the Union was the main goal for which they fought, they became convinced that this goal was unattainable without striking against slavery. By the summer of 1862, antislavery pragmatism and principle fused into a growing commitment to emancipation as both a means and goal of Union victory.

But a good many Union soldiers strongly opposed the idea of freeing the slaves. A backlash of anti-emancipation sentiment began to surface in their letters. This sentiment brewed up from a mixture of racism, conservatism, and partisan politics. “No one who has ever seen the nigger in all his glory on the southern plantations ... will ever vote for emancipation,” wrote a private in the 19th Indiana, part of the famous Iron Brigade. “If emancipation is to be the policy of this war ... I do not care how quick the country goes to pot.”<sup>24</sup> A large minority of Union soldiers felt this way in 1862. After all, some two-fifths of them came from Democratic backgrounds and another tenth from the border states. The Emancipation Proclamation [which freed slaves in Confederate territory] intensified a morale crisis in Union armies during the winter of 1862-63. Desertion rates rose sharply. Many soldiers blamed the Proclamation. A private in the 66th Indiana of the Army of the Tennessee wrote to his father in February 1863 that he and his messmates “will not fight to free the niger.... There is a Regiment her that say they will never fite untill the proclamation is with drawn.... nine in Comp. G tride to desert.”<sup>25</sup>

How widespread were such attitudes? How dangerous were they to the morale and cohesion of Union armies? The answers are difficult to quantify. For several months during the winter of 1862-63, those who expressed hostility to emancipation seemed to outnumber those who supported it. And morale certainly declined, though defeatism and lack of faith in Union leaders probably had more to do with this than the Emancipation Proclamation. In any case the decline of morale proved short-lived, for Union armies did not fall apart and soon won some of their most notable victories of the war. Of the Union soldiers in the sample who expressed a clear opinion about emancipation as a war aim at any time through the spring of 1863, more than twice as many favored it than opposed it: 36 percent to 16 percent. The evidence seems to indicate that pro-emancipation convictions did predominate among the leaders and the fighting soldiers of the Union army. And that prevalence increased after the low point of early 1863 as a good many anti-emancipation soldiers changed their minds. Two factors played a part in their conversion. The first was an ominous rise of Copperheadism on the home front during the first half of 1863. This attack on the Union war effort produced an anti-copperhead backlash among Northern soldiers, including many Democrats, that converted some of them to emancipation. The second factor that converted many soldiers to emancipation was a growing conviction that it really did hurt the enemy and help their own side. A soldier in the 86th Indiana reported in March 1863 that comrades who had two months earlier damned the “abolition war” now favored emancipation on pragmatic grounds. “We use all other kinds of rebel property,” he pointed out, “and they see no reason why we should not use negroes. Every negro we get strengthens us and weakens the rebels.”<sup>26</sup>

One of those events whose inexorable logic converted Union soldiers was the recruitment of black regiments. At first many white soldiers opposed this policy—generally the same soldiers who opposed emancipation, and for similar reasons. “Would you love to see the Negro placed on equality with me?” a private in the 17th Indiana asked his father, who had suggested the idea of enlisting black soldiers. “If you make a soldier of the negro you can not dispute but he is as good as me or any other Indiana soldier. I hope you will see your wrong and reform.”<sup>27</sup> But this soon became a minority position as it dawned on white soldiers that blacks in uniform might stop bullets otherwise meant for them. And the organization of enough black regiments might bring the war to a quick and victorious end. A private in the 9th Illinois declared that “I would not lift my finger to free them if I had my say, but if we can't whip the rebels without taking the niggers I say take them and make them fit for us any way to bring this war to a close.”<sup>28</sup> At Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner black soldiers in 1863 proved their willingness and ability to fight. That began a process of converting many skeptics into true believers. After the battle of Nashville on December 15-16, 1864, a private in the 89th Illinois, a railroad section hand before the war, wrote to his mother: “I have often heard men say that they would not fight beside a negro soldier but on the 16th the whites and blacks charged together and they fell just as well as we did.... When you hear any one say that negro soldiers won't fight just tell them that they lie for me.... I have seen a great many fighting for our country. Then why should they not be free.”<sup>29</sup>

Black soldiers themselves perceived a great personal stake in the war. They fought for their own freedom, and beyond that for the freedom of all four million slaves. Free and

slave alike, they fought to prove their manhood in a society that prized courage as the hallmark of manhood. Regrettably, most wartime evidence for the thinking of African-American soldiers comes from letters of Northern blacks written for publication, mainly in black newspapers. Very few personal letters or diaries have survived, and even fewer written by freed slaves--most of whom, of course, could not read and write. There is no reason to believe, however, that the genuine feelings of black soldiers were different from the published letters of their most articulate spokesmen. A sergeant in the 107th U.S. Colored Infantry wrote from Louisville in September 1864 that he was fighting "to break the chain and exclaim 'Freedom for all!'"<sup>30</sup> By 1864 freedom alone was not enough for many black soldiers. In August of that year a thirty-eight-year-old barber from Philadelphia who fought through all the battles of the 54th Massachusetts proclaimed that "if we fight to maintain a Republican Government, we want Republican privileges.... All we ask is the proper enjoyment of the rights of citizenship," which a corporal in the 55th Massachusetts defined as "the same rights that the white man has."<sup>31</sup>

By the war's last year, the example of black soldiers fighting for Union as well as liberty had helped convince most white soldiers that they should fight for black liberty as well as Union. There were some holdouts, to be sure. A private in the 20th Indiana explained his refusal to reenlist for a second three-year term on the grounds that "this war has turned out very Different from what I thought it would.... It is a War ... to Free the Nigars ... and I do not propose to fight any more in such A cause."<sup>32</sup> But these were distinctly minority views among Union soldiers by 1864. When Lincoln ran for reelection on a platform pledging a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery, he received almost 80 percent of the soldier vote--a pretty fair indication of army sentiment on slavery by that time.

## Conclusion

By the 1890s, the road to reunion between men who wore the blue and gray had paved over the issues of slavery and equal rights for freed slaves. Middle-aged veterans in the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans held joint encampments at which they reminisced about the glorious deeds of their youth. Many of them reached a tacit consensus, which some voiced openly: Confederate soldiers had not fought for slavery; Union soldiers had not fought for its abolition. It had been a tragic war of brothers whose issues were best forgotten in the interest of family reconciliation. In the popular romanticization of the Civil War, the issue of slavery became almost as invisible as black Union veterans at a reunion encampment. Somehow the Civil War became a heroic contest, a sort of grand, if deadly, football game without ideological cause or purpose.

## Source

James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9-46; James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 68.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (Indianapolis, 1952), 39-40. See also Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb* (Indianapolis, 1943), 309.

<sup>2</sup> Pete Maslowski, "A Study of Morale in Civil War Soldiers," *Military Affairs* 34 (1970): 123.

<sup>3</sup> Ideology is defined here both in the dictionary sense of "the doctrines, opinions, or way of thinking of an individual, class, etc.; specif., the body of ideas on which a particular political, economic, or social system is based" and in historian Eric Foner's usage as "the system of beliefs, values, fears, prejudices, reflexes, and commitments ... of a social group." *Webster's New World Dictionary*, Third College Edition (New York, 1988), 670; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York, 1970), 4.

<sup>4</sup> See in particular Avery Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861* (Baton Rouge, 1953), and John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation ... 1830-1860* (New York, 1979).

<sup>5</sup> William B. Coleman to parents, Jan. 19, 1862, Coleman Letters, Civil War Collection, Tennessee State Library, Nashville; William Preston Johnston to wife, Aug. 24, 1862, in "A War Letter from William Johnston," ed. Arthur Marvin Shaw, *Journal of Mississippi History* 4 (1942): 44; H. Christopher Kendrick to father and sister, June 2, 1863, Kendrick Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

<sup>6</sup> William C. Porter, diary entries of Feb. 8, 1863, Aug. 2, 1862, in "War Diary of W. C. Porter," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* II (1952): 309, 299.

<sup>7</sup> John W. Cotton to Mariah Cotton, Aug. 3, 1862, in *Yours Till Death: Civil War Letters of John W. Cotton* (University, Ala., 1951), 14; George K. Miller to Celestina McCann, Sept. 15, 1863, Miller Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Andrew J. White to Margaret White, Jan. 11, 1863, White Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University.

<sup>8</sup> John Collins to Mary Collins, April 28, 1862, Collins Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; George Loyall Gordon to Mary Gordon, June 17, 1862, Gordon Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Charles Minor Blackford to Susan Leigh Blackford, Dec. (no day) 1862, quoted in William C. Wickham, in *Letters from Lee's Army*, ed. Susan Lee Blackford (New York, 1947), 144.

<sup>9</sup> T. C. Du Pree to wife, Jan. 31, 1864, in *The War-Time Letters of Captain T. C. Du Pree, C.S.A. 1864-1865* (Fayetteville, Ark., 1953), unpagged; Joseph Branch O'Bryan to sister, July 9, 1863, O'Bryan Papers, Tennessee State Library, Nashville.

<sup>10</sup> Edward M. Burrus to mother, June 14, 1862, Burrus Family Papers, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University; Harry Lewis to mother, Aug. 9, 1862, Harry Lewis Papers, Southern Historical Collection University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Emphasis added.

<sup>11</sup> Paul A. Oliver to Sam Oliver, Jan. 2, 1863, Oliver Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University; Richard S. Thompson to sister & brother, Jan. 14, 1863, in *While My Country Is in Danger: The Life and Letters of Lieutenant Colonel Richard S. Thompson*, ed. Gerry Harder Poriss and Ralph G. Poriss (Hamilton, N.Y., 1994), 40-41.

<sup>12</sup> These figures for both Confederate and Union soldiers are based on enlisted men only; the number of post-conscription men in the sample who became officers is too small for meaningful comparisons.

<sup>13</sup> Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953-1955), VII: 23 ; Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers, and Speeches*, 10 vols. (Jackson, Miss., 1923), V: 202.

<sup>14</sup> W. H. Williams to Susan Williams, May 19, 1862, Civil War Collection, Tennessee State Library, Nashville; James H. Stanley to Mary Stanley, Feb. 28, 1862, Stanley Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Pleas B. Clark to Henry H. Wells, Aug. 7, 1863, Henry Wells Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

<sup>15</sup> Edgeworth Bird to Sallie Bird, Aug. 8, 28, 1863, in *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird*, ed. John Rozier (Athens, Ga., 1988), 132, 135; Richard Lewis to mother, Feb. 9, April 14, 1864, in *Camp Life of a Confederate Boy ... Letters Written by Lieut. Richard Lewis* (Charleston, S.C., 1883), 82, 92.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Henry Watkins to Mary Watkins, Dec. 20, 1861, Watkins Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; Edward O. Guerrant to father, Feb. 15, 1865, Guerrant Papers, Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville; John Thomas Jones to Edmund Walter Jones, Jan. 20, 1861, Edmund Jones Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

<sup>17</sup> John G. Keyton to Mary Hilbert, Nov. 30, 1861, Keyton Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University; Samuel Walsh to Louisa Proffitt, April 11, 1864, Proffitt Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Chauncey Cooke to parents, May 10, 1864, in "A Badger Boy in Blue: The Letters of Chauncey H. Cooke," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 5 (1921): 67.

<sup>18</sup> By the end of 1864, however, when Confederate officials began to discuss the possibility of arming slaves to fight for the South, some soldiers expressed a willingness to accept the emancipation of those who fought. See pp. 171-72.

<sup>19</sup> Jasper N. Searles to family, Nov. 27, 1861, Searles Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; Horatio D. Chapman, diary entry of Sept. 19, 1863, in *Civil War Diary – Diary of a Forty-Niner* (Hartford, 1929), 35; Joseph Fardell to parents, July 11, 1863, Fardell Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Kilby Smith to Elizabeth Smith, Aug. 25, 1862, Thomas Kilby Smith to Eliza Smith, Oct. 7, 1863, Smith Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln*, IV: 268.

<sup>21</sup> Dan G. Porter to Maria Lewis, July 24, 1862, in "The Civil War Letters of Captain Andrew Lewis and His Daughter," ed. Michael Barton, *WPMH* 40 (1977): 389; Delos Van Deusen to Henrietta Van Deusen, Dec. 23, 1862, Van Deusen Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; John Beatty, diary entry of July 3, 1862, in *Memoirs of a Volunteer, 1861-1865* (1879; rpt., New York, 1946), 115.

<sup>22</sup> William H. H. Ibbetson, Diary; undated entry sometime in the winter of 1863-64, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield; Robert T. McMahan, Diary, entry of Sept. 3, 1863, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

<sup>23</sup> Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (Indianapolis, 1952), 40; Chauncey Cooke to Doe Cooke, Jan. 6, 1863, in "A Badger Boy in Blue; The Letters of Chauncey H. Cooke," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 4 (1920); 212; Walter Poor to George Fox, May 15, 1861, March I, 1862, in "A Yankee Soldier in a New York Regiment," ed. James J. Heslin, *New York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 50 (1966); 115, 126-27.

<sup>24</sup> Willam T. Pippey to Benjamin Pippey, July 31, 1862, Pippey Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University; Charles S. Wainwright, Diary, entries of Jan. 15 and May 29, 1862, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>25</sup> John Vliet to Mr. Bodge, Feb, 2, 1863, in Thomas W. Sweeny Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; Simeon Royse to father, Feb. 14, 1863, Royse Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University; John G. McDermott-to Isabella McDermott, McDermott Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>26</sup> B. W. H. Pasron to A. A. Shafer, March 24, 1863, *Civil War Times Illustrated Collection*, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

<sup>27</sup> Aaron J. Benton to father, March 2, 1863, Benton Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Symmes Stillwell to mother, Feb. 21, 1863, Stillwell Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University.

<sup>28</sup> B. W. H. Pasron to A. A. Shafer, March 24, 1863, *Civil War Times Illustrated Collection*, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Hiram Weatherby to George Huson, Jan. 22, 1863, Nelson Huson Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas W. Stephens, Diary, entry of June 15, 1864, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia; William J. Tomlinson to Emily Tomlinson, Dec. 26, 1864, March 28, 1865, Tomlinson Papers, in private possession.

<sup>30</sup> Charles W. Singer to *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 18, 1864, published in *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 8, 1864, reprinted in Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York, 1993), 214; Edgar Dinsmore to Carrie Drayton, May 29, 1865, Dinsmore Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University.

<sup>31</sup> James Henry Hall to *Christian Recorder*, Aug. 3, 1864, in *Christian Recorder*, Aug. 27, 1864, reprinted in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 205; Corporal John H. B. Payne, in a letter to the *Christian Recorder*, May 24, 1864, reprinted in Noah Andre Trudeau, ed., *Voices of the 55th: Letters from the 55th Massachusetts Volunteers* (Dayton, Ohio, 1996), 146; Diary of William B. Gould, quoted by his great-grandson William B. Gould IV, chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, in a speech to the Officers' Club of the U.S. Navy on Feb. 11, 1995, and published in a press release by the NLRB.

<sup>32</sup> William C. H. Reeder to parents, Dec. 23, 1863, Reeder Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Benjamin Jones to Lemuel Jones, March 9, 1864, William Jones to Lemuel Jones, Feb. 12, 1864, Misc. Civil War Letters, Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville; Thomas Donahue to Almira Mitchell, July 31, 1864, Winchell Papers, Gilder Lehrman Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.