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"FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY": A HISTORY OF UNION ARMY VETERANS IN RECONSTRUCTION-ERA CALIFORNIA, 1865-1900

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ABSTRACT

"FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY": A HISTORY OF UNION ARMY VETERANS IN RECONSTRUCTION-ERA CALIFORNIA, 1865-1900

Donald Thomas Hickey

Following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the U.S. War Department discharged an unprecedented 1.6 million personnel. While scholarship on soldiers' lives is vast and varied, the historiography on soldiers' lives as veterans is much less developed. Over the past thirty years, a subfield of scholarship on Civil War veterans has emerged. This dissertation, the first modern history of Union veterans in California, contributes to that scholarship by investigating how the state's Union veterans marshaled their service to form fraternal organizations, memorialize the dead, lobby for pensions, and play prominent roles in popular and political culture. This dissertation contributes to the ongoing Western turn in Civil War-era scholarship by investigating the powerful, if protean, ideology of unionism in Reconstruction-era California. Although California has until recently been treated as marginal to the central problems of Reconstruction, uncovering how the state's Union veterans adapted unionism to fashion communities and reshaped state politics enriches our understanding of the national struggles of the Civil War's legacies. This research revealed that Union veterans in California employed unionism as the basis of their fellowship to promote nationalism, attack (and defend) Chinese immigration, justify imperialism, memorialize the war in public spaces, and provide medical and financial support to veterans and their dependents.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom, Rose, and my sisters, Kerry, Kimberly, and Kelly. Thank you for helping me achieve my dreams. I never walked alone.

I want to acknowledge and thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Catherine Jones, and my committee members, Dr. Grace Peña Delgado and Dr. Aims McGuinness, for their extraordinary support of this dissertation. I am fortunate and grateful to have learned the historian's craft from such excellent mentors. I would also like to thank the History Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz, for supporting this research.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my master's thesis advisor, Dr. Ben Cawthra, and the Department of History at California State University, Fullerton, where I first asked what Union Army veterans thought about the American Civil War.

INTRODUCTION

In 1886, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest fraternal organization of Union army veterans in the post-Civil War era, selected San Francisco to host its twentieth annual reunion event, "The National Encampment." An estimated 320,000 Union veterans from across the country converged in the Bay Area for a weekend of memorial and social events.[1] In honor of this momentous occasion, the San Francisco *Daily Morning Call* printed a special "Grand Army Edition," which listed the notable achievements of Union forces during the war and included brief biographies of prominent delegates and officers representing the GAR. This esteemed group included former President Rutherford B. Hayes, General William Tecumseh Sherman, Clara E. Barton (distinguished Union army nurse, founder of the American Red Cross, and guest of the GAR), and GAR Junior Vice Departmental Commander William H. Jones.[2] Born enslaved in Brunswick, Virginia, Jones served in the Thirty-second Regiment of United States Colored Troops (USCT) before becoming a leading member of the GAR in Delaware.[3] One local newspaper approvingly reported San Francisco's "magnificent hospitality" tendered to the

[1] "The Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies: National Encampments Biography," The Library of Congress, Main Reading Room, https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/national/natlist.html.
[2] "GAR," The Library of Congress, Main Reading Room, https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/national/natlist.html.
[3] The Grand Army of the Republic, *Records of Members of the Grand Army of the Republic with a Complete Account of the Twentieth National Encampment: A History of the Growth, Usefulness, and Important Events of the Grand Army of the Republic, from its Origin to the Present Time*, ed. by William H. Ward (San Francisco: H.S. Crocker, 1886), 8.

delegates as "reflective of the magnitude of unionism in the state."[4] General William Sherman's keynote address, "Linking the Chain of National History," appealed to the gathered Union veterans "to demonstrate our love for the whole country and to manifest our interest in everything which can strengthen the Union."[5] The following dissertation investigates how California became this vital center of unionism in the postwar era.

The following study intervenes in two primary strands of Civil War-era scholarship: Civil War veterans and Reconstruction in the American West. In the first studies on Civil War veterans, an earlier generation of historians suggested that veterans retreated from the war and underwent a public retreat or "hibernation period" between 1865 and the 1880s. In the 1880s, this narrative contends, veterans "awakened" amidst a cultural revival of nostalgia for the Civil War and the antebellum South.[6] Recent scholarship has challenged this account. Mark Wahlgren Summers' *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction* (2009) argued that, among other reasons, a fear of renewed civil war after 1865 prompted Union veterans to organize efforts to keep the war's memory alive in the

[4] *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 2 Sept. 1886, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042460/1886-09-02/ed-1/seq-1/>.
[5] "General Sherman's Address to the Grand Army of the Republic, San Francisco 1886," *Records of members of the Grand Army of the Republic* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker & Co., 1886), 112.
[6] Gerald Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the Civil War* (1987), Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (1992), and David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001), all made the case that veterans remained disinclined to "dwell" on the war prior to the 1880s. Brian Matthew Jordan and Evan C. Rothera's edited collection, *The War Went On: Reconsidering the Lives of Civil War Veterans* (2020) directly refutes the "hibernation thesis." The volume's entries demonstrate that rather than "shrinking into self-imposed reverie, veterans inserted themselves (often forcefully) into heated political debates of the day. Jordan and Rothera, *The War Went On: Reconsidering the Lives of Civil War Veterans* (Louisiana State University Press, 2020), 2.

public consciousness and to be on guard against new threats to the union.[7] Affirming Summers' contention about the early dynamism of Union veterans, this dissertation argues that Union veterans in California organized as early as the summer of 1865 and remained active through the nineteenth century. California, I argue, offers an underexplored site for examining postwar politics, race relations, labor organization, empire, and unionism through the lens of the state's Union veterans. I reveal how Union veterans in California drew on their wartime service for diverse political objectives.

The primary ideology under examination in this dissertation is *unionism*. Unionism was an ideology that was more than political rhetoric employed by northern wartime elites and politicians during the Civil War. In antebellum political discourse, it had long existed alongside its inverted form, *disunion*. As Elizabeth Varon has demonstrated, disunion, a potent term, was invoked by Americans from the time of the Constitutional Convention to the election of Lincoln to conjure up a myriad of common fears: factionalism, tyranny, regionalism, economic decline, class conflict, racial disorder, gender strife, anarchy, and God's wrath over America's alleged moral failings.[8] Union and unionism, by contrast, connoted all the inspiring political, racial, linguistic, cultural, and historical bonds that held American citizens together under a shared rule of law. For nineteenth-century Americans, "union" became the primary

[7] Mark Wahlgren Summers, *A Dangerous Stir: Fear, Paranoia, and the Making of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1–2.
[8] Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 2, 5.

object of patriotic devotion as the basis of American civic religion.[9] Whereas Varon's analysis covered the subject of (dis)union until the eve of the American Civil War, this dissertation measures the changes in unionism over time in postwar California through the end of the nineteenth century.

David Blight's investigation on sectional reconciliation in the post-Civil War era informs my analysis of Union veterans in California. Reconciliation between the formerly opposing white North and South occurred unevenly but steadily in the nineteenth century, with important implications for the narratives of slavery and emancipation in the broader public memory of the war. In *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001), Blight argued that three "organizing visions" competed as rivals to promote specific Civil War narratives across the postwar era. The first was the "reconciliationist vision." Reconciliationists insisted that the war's carnage and loss, terrible as it was, would only keep the nation divided if sectional enmities continued to shape postwar discourse. They argued that only a fully reconciled and reunited nation could take its place among the world's most powerful countries. Contemporaries understood "brotherly conciliation" between the war's white combatants as central to reconciliation.

The second organizing vision of postwar memory was the white supremacist "Lost Cause," which argued that the South's independence goals were noble and justified and that the Confederacy was only defeated because the Union Army had superior resources. Stymied by the destruction of chattel slavery, Lost Cause

[9] Varon, *Disunion*, 5.

supporters called for the subjugation of Black Americans in the South after the war. The third organizing narrative of the Civil War was the "emancipationist vision," which combined African American memories of slavery and the quest for freedom with the Reconstruction efforts of Radical Republicans and the social activism of white liberals.[10] Blight showed that by the end of the nineteenth century, the reconciliationist and Lost Cause visions amalgamated to become the dominant cultural paradigm of the Civil War in the postwar era. Reconciliationists stripped the war of slavery and Black Union veterans and redressed the war narrative as a contest between equally valourous white combatants of the North and South. In this dissertation, I show that without Union Army veterans' voting support, the federal project Reconstruction might not have happened at all. At the same time, white Union veterans in California, like many of their white counterparts, eventually also accepted a reconciliationist reading of Civil War memory in the late nineteenth century. This dissertation traces how Union Army veterans in California employed the malleable idealogy of unionism to support white supremacy while formally acknowledging the importance of emancipation and Black Union Army veterans to Union victory.

The historiography of Civil War veterans began with Mary Dearing's pioneering *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the GAR* (1952). *Veterans in Politics* was the first comprehensive account of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest organized Union veterans' fraternal organization. Dearing argued that the

[10] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.

GAR was primarily a partisan "pressure group" that collaborated with the Republican Party to maximize monetary awards for its members. Dearing contended that GAR leaders deployed this leverage to influence congressional campaigns over the next two decades.[11] *Veterans in Politics* also argued, reductively, that Union veterans insisted on keeping memories of the war alive solely to gain public concessions of gratitude. Dearing deserves credit for breaking the first academic ground on Union veterans. However, her cynicism toward the postwar Republican Party and GAR reduced veterans to one-dimensional and self-serving figures. Following Dearing, professional historical studies on veterans experienced a peculiar and unexplained lull until the 1970s, a surprising development given the millions of U.S. military veterans demobilized after WWII. Renewed historical interest in Civil War veterans increased following the troubling accounts of returning Vietnam War veterans and their uneven civilian transition experiences. During this increased focus on social history, historians began reconsidering the experiences of ordinary soldiers and veterans from all previous conflicts, including the American Civil War.[12]

Modern scholarship on Civil War veterans has presented a more nuanced, complicated, and humanized portrait than first advanced by Dearing. For example, Joseph T. Glatthaar's pivotal *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in*

[11] Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*: *The Story of the G.A.R*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 110.
[12] Eric Dean argued that in the wake of the Vietnam War, an overly simplistic view of the American veteran emerged due to efforts of the psychiatric community to extend its cultural influence by categorizing greater areas of human behavior as "abnormal" and by pathologizing previously innocuous, transient, and complex behaviors under the umbrella of psychiatric "syndromes." Dean, "'A Scene of Surpassing Terror and Awful Grandeur': The Paradoxes of Military Service in the American Civil War," *Michigan Historical Review* 21, no. 2 (1995): 41.

the Savannah and Carolinas (1986) reoriented the field's conception of veterans as a distinctly ideological and highly motivated population. Gerald Linderman's oft-cited *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (1987) interrogated soldiers' thoughts and feelings to contextualize the fraught relationship between soldiers and civilians. It took forty years after Dearing's *Veterans in Politics* for the subsequent major work on the GAR to appear with Stuart McConnell's influential *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (1992), which investigated the significance of male fraternal ritual in the GAR and its promotion of a cult of patriotism around the Civil War. The GAR remains a historically overlooked and understudied institution.

Accounts of the individual experiences of Union veterans outside the GAR have been far more plentiful. This area of scholarship has investigated veterans' experiences with mental and physical health challenges, white supremacy, emancipation, segregation, and civil rights.[13] While David Blight argued that white Union veterans had little contact or solidarity with Black Union veterans, more recently, Barbara A. Gannon's *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (2011) counter-argued that white Union army veterans in the GAR retained a more enduring opposition to slavery and support of emancipation

[13] M. Keith Harris has argued Union veterans unquestionably shared the racist assumptions common among most white Americans in the post-Civil War era. However, the tendency to overlook racial inequities left unsettled by war was inconsistent with Union veterans' insistence that slavery had provoked sectional conflict and weakened the union. Other white Union veterans praised emancipation as a worthy and righteous act fundamental to national progress. Harris, "Slavery, Emancipation, and Veterans of the Union Cause: Commemorating Freedom in the Era of Reconciliation, 1885-1915," *Civil War History* 53, no. 3 (2007): 272.

than previously understood. Gannon provided the critical caveat that white veterans did not petition for full social equality for Black Union veterans.[14] In a rebuke of the "hibernation theory," M. Keith Harris's *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration among Civil War Veterans* (2014) argues that Union veterans refused to accept any argument that Confederate efforts to destroy the nation were as laudable as their efforts to save it.

Historians have also drawn our attention to the acute financial, physical, and psychological challenges Civil War veterans faced in the postwar era.[15] Theda Skocpol's landmark sociological study, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992), revealed how the federal pensions of Union veterans became the basis of the modern social welfare state.[16] Investigating family dynamics and social welfare themes, Patrick J. Kelly's *Creating a National Home: Building the Veterans' Welfare State, 1860–1900* (1997) presented the first comprehensive examination of the National Home for Disabled

[14] Barabara Gannon has argued that the GAR's exclusion of Spanish War veterans from GAR membership indicates that Union veteranhood—veterans' shared identity—did not cross generations and wartime experiences. Gannon, "'They Call Themselves Veterans': Civil War and Spanish War Veterans and the Complexities of Veteranhood," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 5. no. 4 (2015): 529. In his comparison of Civil War and Great War veterans, Ian Isherwood has argued the narrative of veteranhood for both cohorts shared many similarities: peace came with a new adjustment period and veterans looked to their own for support, care, and validation while memorializing their dead comrades. See Isherwood, "When the Hurlyburly's Done / When the Battle's Lost and Won: Service, Suffering, and Survival of Civil War and Great War Veterans," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 109-132.

[15] Susan-Mary Grant has argued that historicizing the process by which a citizen became a soldier, and the costs of that transformation, expands our understanding of the "authenticating experience" of combat and challenges our complicity in the construction of a contemporary war myths. Grant, "The Lost Boys: Citizen-Soldiers, Disabled Veterans, and Confederate Nationalism in the Age of People's War," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 2 (2012): 253.

[16] See Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992) and Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (1993): 85-116.

Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS).[17] Recent scholarship has also taken up the question of the comparatively under-studied Civil War cohort of Confederate veterans.[18] Jeffrey W. McClurken's *Take Care of Their Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Virginia* (2009) and Rusty Williams' *My Old Confederate Home: A Respectable Place for Civil War Veterans* (2010) ably trace Southern white families' efforts to support wounded and mentally ill veterans.[19]

Scholars have also scrutinized the specific experiences of Black Union veterans and the legacies of Black military service. Donald R. Shaffer's *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (2004) argued that Black Union veterans were a visible force in early postwar political mobilization and at the center of the demands for suffrage, but only in Louisiana did Black veterans constitute a

[17] Kelly traced the emergence of a gendered "warfare state" where men's rights and responsibilities were founded on the understanding that the state made claims on men for military service in return for pledging support for those bodies and minds damaged by war. Rather than emulating the asylums or almshouses of the day, the NHDVS intentionally fashioned its facilities to replicate a home and structured family life.

[18] Paul A. Cimbala's analysis of the resurgence of Confederate veterans in the postwar South demonstrates that the war aims of the Confederacy did not die with the surrender in 1865, but lived on and were enforced by state militias, home guards, and guerrillas. Confederate veterans, some of whom continued to wear their Confederate uniforms, also joined White Leagues, the KKK, and rifle clubs, all of which targeted African Americans with terrorist violence. See Cimbala, *Veterans North and South: The Transition from Soldier to Civilian after the American Civil War* (2015). Similarly, Caroline E. Janney's investigation of Confederate veterans making their way home in the spring of 1865 discloses how Confederate veterans first articulated resistance to changes in the Southern social and political order. These homeward-bound journeys, she argues, revealed the degree to which southern white civilians continued to support veterans even in defeat and highlighted the ways in which former Confederates might fight the results of emancipation. Janney, "Free to Go Where We Liked: The Army of Northern Virginia after Appomattox," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 4.

[19] More broadly, *Take Care of their Living* traces how the Virginia state legislature agreed to provide replacement limbs for amputees, pensions, and contribute toward homes for old soldiers and widows. Williams' *My Old Confederate Home* investigates how the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) provided financial assistance to the struggling home on the condition they be allowed to play some role in managing it. See Rusty Williams' *My Old Confederate Home: A Respectable Place for Civil War Veterans* (2010).

disproportionate share of Black officeholders during Reconstruction.[20]

The theme of Civil War veterans' mental health has been the most abundant source of recent scholarship. Larry M. Logue's *Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: Veterans and Benefits in Post–Civil War America* (2010) cautioned scholars from oversimplifying veterans as deeply damaged and institutionalized or elderly and well-adjusted. More recently, Logue and Peter Blanck's *Heavy Laden: Union Veterans, Psychological Illness, and Suicide* (2018) argue that evidence of the ongoing cost of the war was reflected, in part, by veterans' doubled rate of suicide compared to their civilian counterparts. Brian Matthew Jordan's *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (2014) and Brian Craig Miller's *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South* (2015) have provided some of the best recent investigations on the suffering of Civil War veterans and the related costs borne their families and communities.[21] My research adds to this growing body of literature by filling in the unwritten story of Union veterans in California and prioritizing the ideology of unionism as a category of analysis in understanding the politics of Union veterans. These matters because Union Veterans played a leading role in the culture

[20] Donald R. Shaffer's *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (2004), the first definitive study of Black Union veterans, analyzed a random sample of 1,044 black Union veterans and pursued their individual lives through federal pension files.

[21] Miller's *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South* (2015) argues that the importance of Confederate amputees transcends their actual numbers by examining how the process of amputation to reveals key facets of the war and its legacy in the South, including practices of masculinity, medicinal knowledge of the Confederate army, gender relations, post-traumatic stress, and postwar commemoration. Other key works on Civil War veterans' mental health include Diane Miller Sommerville, *Aberration of Mind: Suicide and Suffering in the Civil War-Era South* (2018), Frances M. Clarke, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (2011), David Silkenat, *Moments of Despair Suicide, Divorce, and Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina* (2011), and more recently, Dillon J. Carroll, *Invisible Wounds: Mental Illness and Civil War Soldiers* (2021).

and politics of Reconstrution-era California.

American Civil War veterans of the Union armies were among the most identifiable groups in the postwar U.S. However, historians are still working to understand the extent and degree of their economic, political, and cultural influence, particularly in the American West.[22] The 1.6 million men under arms for the Union armies who survived the profound trauma and disorientation of camp diseases and blood-soaked battlefields comprised a distinct and influential constituency in the late nineteenth century. From the elite Union veterans who dominated the White House to ordinary Union veterans who organized national fraternal associations, veterans made an indelible mark in their postwar communities in ways that remain unaccounted for in the scholarship.[23]

In postwar Northern and Western American society, the Union Army dead represented a more direct object of veneration than the war's surviving veterans. Americans in the North and West regarded the Civil War dead with undiminished pride and deep pathos because the sacrifices of the dead defined them eternally as

[22] James Marten, "Civil War Veterans," *A Companion to the U.S. Civil War*, ed. A.C. Sheehan-Dean (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 608-611.

[23] One impediment to understanding Civil War veterans is the paucity of texts they left to posterity when compared with the voluminous writing many did as soldiers. A profuse archive of wartime correspondence has provided historians with soldiers' reflections on the war, camp life, politics, religion, slavery, nationalism, duty, honor, manhood, and more. These candid materials reflected the policies of armies that did not subject soldiers' letters to censorship or discourage the keeping of diaries.[23] When the war ended, the pressures that contributed to superabundant writing faded although a small percentage of veterans, mostly (but not exclusively) officers, wrote prolifically about their experiences. Given this evidentiary challenge, scholars have scoured a variety of alternative sources to construct the current historical portrait of veterans. These studies have centered on investigations relating to veterans' transitions to peace and adjustment to civilian life, the development of a recognizable veterans' identity, pensions, and veterans' fraternal organizations. See James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 11-12.

selfless citizen-soldiers. By contrast, the war's surviving veterans presented troubling questions about safely reversing the process of converting citizens into soldiers.[24] Many Union veterans did not vanish back into their antebellum communities, as some nervous civilians hoped. Instead, veterans formed a network of socially active organizations constituting a national "imagined community" of Union veterans bonded by shared interests and ideologies.[25]

Union veterans organized for various socioeconomic, political, and cultural reasons. The primary challenge most Union veterans first experienced as civilians regarded securing regular employment. Veterans did not forget the promises made by wartime politicians regarding the benefits of service veterans could expect in peacetime. In the contracting national economy of the late 1860s, thousands of Union veterans struggled to find jobs and sought out political institutions for assistance. Responding to the demands of a restive and potentially dangerous mass of unemployed Union veterans, President Andrew Johnson instructed government administrators to give Union veterans, particularly veterans with disabilities, preference in appointment and promotion. Johnson's dictum proved hollow as a firm belief in American individualism convinced most government hiring boards that Union veterans had neither the moral nor legal right toward special treatment.[26] By

[24] Susan-Mary Grant, "Reimagined Communities: Union Veterans and the Reconstruction of American Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 3 (2008): 515.
[25] Grant, "Reimagined Communities," 516. Grant contends that postwar Americans' difficulty integrating the "living monuments" of the war, Black veterans and those living in Soldier-Homes, are evidence that an "imagined community" of Union veterans did not take shape in the nineteenth century. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).
[26] Grant, "Reimagined Communities," 516.

the 1880s, however, most Union veterans believed their service entitled them to a special dispensation of government support.[27] Union veterans eventually forced the federal government—over several decades—to accept that they had earned special treatment by "saving the Union." As I will show, the most critical element of developing a discourse of deservedness was the lobbying power of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest fraternal Union organization in the postwar era.

The decades-long quest for governmental financial support was only one of the factors that brought veterans together in such large numbers. Initially, Union veterans organized fraternal organizations at the regimental level, the primary fighting unit of Union and Confederate armies, and to which most veterans felt the most robust direct emotional attachment. Union veterans established fraternal organizations to share a fellowship (particularly within their former regiments), memorialize the fallen dead, confirm their loyalty to the U.S., and aid needy veterans and the widows and orphans of fallen soldiers.

By the 1880s, Union veterans often belonged to overlapping regimental and national fraternities. The most prominent Union veterans' fraternity was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), where camaraderie, rather than rank, characterized the primary connection between members. All members of the GAR were theoretically equal "comrades," the favored term they used to refer to each other formally and informally. In 1889, GAR Commander-in-Chief William Warner observed that "the

[27] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 18.

general and the private, the merchant prince and the clerk, the millionaire and the laborer, sit side by side as comrades, bound each to the other, by ties the tenderest yet the most enduring of any in this world, outside of the family circle."[28] A familiar unifying refrain within the Union veterans' community was, "We drank from the same canteen." If the past tied veterans together, so did the concerns of the present, the subject of which calls for further study.[29]

Historians have identified two areas where Union veterans most transparently manifested their collective leverage: shaping presidential elections and securing government pensions. The case of the former highlights the leading role Union veterans played in postwar politics as voters and as candidates for office. As political candidates, elite Union veterans dominated the White House for most of the second half of the nineteenth century.[30] For example, in the 1888 presidential election, Union veterans mobilized nationally to support the candidacy of the Republican nominee and Union veteran Benjamin Harrison against the Democratic challenger, Grover Cleveland. Reflective of the Democratic Party's sympathy for Confederate veterans and insistence on sectional reconciliation, Cleveland outraged Union veterans by proposing Union regiments return captured Confederate battle flags to their respective states. Far more incriminating, from the perspective of Union veterans, was

[28] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 53.
[29] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 55-60.
[30] Between 1868-1900, voters elected five Union army veterans to the White House, all GAR members: Ulysses S. Grant (1868, 1872), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), James A. Garfield (1880), Benjamin Harrison (1888), and William McKinley (1896). Elected in 1884 and 1892, Grover Cleveland was the lone Democratic candidate to disrupt what was otherwise Republican Party dominance of the White House by Union veterans.

Cleveland's veto of a proposed congressional expansion of veterans' pension benefits that contained expansive new language to cover all disabled Union veterans regardless of whether their disability was war-related.[31] When given a choice between a fellow veteran "who drank from the same canteen" and Cleveland, Union veterans provided Harrison the critical support needed to win the Electoral College in 1888.[32] The 1888 national election suggests that unionism continued to unify hundreds of thousands of Union veterans decades after the Civil War ended, just as Union veterans wielded decisive political influence at the national level. A closer look at state politics reveals that unionism was a powerful but flexible ideology that mobilized a range of political commitments.[33]

This dissertation supports historian Brian Jordan's claim that while some

[31] Larry M. Logue, "Union Veterans and their Government: The Effects of Public Policies on Private Lives," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 3 (1992): 426.

[32] Logue, "Union Veterans," 430. Logue granted the soldisoldier vote884 to help elect Harrison over the more popular Cleveland but cautioned historians to avoid characterizing Union veterans' political behavior as monolithic. Logue rightly suggested that historians need to investigate rather than assume veteran voting behavior because local political party strength, experiences with Soldier-Homes, and proximity to the GAR were only some of the variables that could determine an individual Union veteran's voting behavior, even within the states Harrison won. Some veterans voted in predictable ways while others did not, foiling attempts by advocates to unify the entire ex-soldier class.

[33] The Black Union veterans who ran as Republican candidates for office and voted for Republican tickets in national elections saw themselves as the guarantors of unionism in their communities. See Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck, "'Benefit of the Doubt': African American Civil War Veterans and Pensions," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 3 (2008): 377–99. Selected local level studies on Civil War veterans includes Natalie Joy Woodall, *Notable Civil War Veterans of Oswego County, New York* (2022), Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (2016), Robert E. Hunt, *The Good Men Who Won the War: Army of the Cumberland Veterans and Emancipation Memory* (2010), Rogers J. Adam, "Following Ulysses: The Search for Keystone Union Veterans at The Pennsylvania State Archives," *Pennsylvania History* 77, no. 4 (2010): 476–85, Dora L. Costa, et al. "Persistent Social Networks: Civil War Veterans Who Fought Together Co-Locate in Later Life," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 70 (2018): 289–99, David J. Naumec, "From Mashantucket to Appomattox: The Native American Veterans of Connecticut's Volunteer Regiments and the Union Navy," *The New England Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (2008): 596–635, Kurt Hackemer, "Union Veteran Migration Patterns to the Frontier: The Case of Dakota Territory," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 84–108, and Cheryl L. Wilkinson, "The Soldiers' City: Sawtelle, California, 1897–1922," *Southern California Quarterly* 95, no. 2 (2013): 188-226.

disillusioned Union veterans worked actively to suppress the war's memory, many more believed in an ideology of unionism that maintained the war "could not and should not be willed away."[34] Moving this study of Western veterans beyond the familiar confines of the Mississippi River, this dissertation makes the case that not only did veterans in California not "hibernate" after the war, but they organized in formidable numbers to establish fraternal organizations, run for elective office, support needy veterans and their dependents, lobby Congress for pension support, serve as editors for leading newspapers, and take sides in the debates on Chinese immigration. In each case, Union veterans in California interpreted the politics of Reconstruction through the lens of their Civil War experiences.

Reconstruction and the American West

Thirty-five years after its publication, Eric Foner's authoritative *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (1988) remains the reigning synthesis on the era of Reconstruction. Foner's innovation placed Black Americans as the central protagonists of Reconstruction. The story of Reconstruction became an accounting of the aspirations, political awareness, and initiatives of post-emancipation Black communities in the South targeted by organized white terrorist violence.[35] Foner praised the immediate postwar era's brief but remarkable political

[34] Brian Matthew Jordan, "'Our Work Is Not Yet Finished': Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War, 1865–1872," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 4 (2015): 486. Jordan contends that for many Union veterans, victory neither settled the war's deepest issues nor assured the security of the Union.

[35] Allen Trelease's *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (1971) was the first study of the KKK and the culture of Reconstruction-era political violence. Trelease traced how Southern Democrats (conspiratorially organized under the façade of the Klan) murdered their way

progress but lamented federal Reconstruction as an "unfinished revolution" that failed to create an enduring and inclusive biracial postwar South. Without supplanting Foner's *Reconstruction*, scholars have expanded our understanding of Reconstruction and the post-Civil War era into new research areas by challenging the field's established chronological, thematic, and geographic boundaries.

Contemporary histories of Reconstruction scrutinize changes in the role, scope, and responsibilities of the postwar federal government, new forms of labor organization, debates over citizenship, and the imperial path of the United States on the global stage. Although the Civil War and the American West are among the most recognizable subjects in U.S. history, their intersections have, until recently, remained obscured.[36] This dissertation follows Western historian Elliott West's call to integrate the Civil War and the colonization of the American West into a historical era he called "Greater Reconstruction," which lasted from 1845-1877. This broader geographic characterization of Reconstruction incorporated a series of conflicts between the federal government and opposing parties across the continent, mounting disputes over race, religion, citizenship, and questions over the reach of state power in

back into power in the South. These events, more than Republican retreat, resulted in the end of Reconstruction. Douglas R. Egerton's *The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America's Most Progressive Era* (2014) joins with most scholars in attributing the Republican Party's collapse in the South to white supremacist terrorism but argues that marking 1877 as the end of Reconstruction obscures the reality on the ground as Black politicians continued to represent Southern districts at least until 1901. Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America's Most Progressive Era* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014), 17. See also: J. Michael Martinez, *Carpetbaggers, Cavalry, and Ku Klux Klan: Exposing the Invisible Empire During Reconstruction* (2007), and Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (2015).

[36] Adam Arenson and Andrew R. Graybill, *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States*, ed. by Arenson and Graybill (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 1.

the West.[37]

One of the most productive developments in the historiography of Reconstruction in the last twenty years has been the so-called "Western turn." Shifting our geographic attention from its usual east-to-west orientation, historians have paid closer attention to how the seemingly separate events of the American West and the Civil War era constituted a more extensive, unified history of conflict over land, labor, rights, citizenship, and the limits of governmental authority.[38] Traditionally, histories of Reconstruction measured the promise of emancipation against the nation's failure to achieve equality through political reform. Accounts of the American West examined frontier spaces of encounter to explain how new territories and people became integrated into white colonized settlements of the U.S. By combining these two strands of historiography, scholars have provided improved interpretive models for re-thinking "the long nineteenth century."

The first modern integration of the Civil War and the American West was Alvin M. Josephy's aptly titled, *The Civil War in the American West* (1991), which provided a novel narration of the concurrent battles waged between Union, Confederate, and indigenous forces across the 1860s. That same year, Richard

[37] Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2003), 24, 26. West contended that "Greater Reconstruction" is a longer story of three interrelated conflicts: the U.S.-Mexican War, the Civil War, and the U.S. wars of conquest against Native Americans. Race, West, argued, "is not the burden of southern history. Race is the burden of American history."

[38] Western scholar Bill Deverell, in thinking about the historical disconnect between the West and the Civil War, argued that historians "forget the presence of the Civil War in the lives of people [in California] during the rise of Los Angeles. If you came to Los Angeles, on the make, ready to tackle the challenges and pitfalls of this place, and it was 1885, the Civil War was as close to you as the 1980s are to [someone in 2007]. It was with you." Deverell, "Convalescence and California: The Civil War Comes West," *Southern California Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (2008), 9.

White's *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (1991) made a compelling case that the American West "served as the kindergarten of the American state" because in the West, "federal power took on modern forms."[39] A more recent integration of the West and the Civil War era includes Heather Cox Richardson's *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (2007), which traced heated debates in the West over the appropriate relationship between government and its citizens (and non-citizens). In her revisionist narrative, Richardson critiqued the tendencies of Reconstruction scholarship to exclude the West and neglect the experiences of women, both critical elements which historians must now weave back into any narrative that claims to be comprehensive.[40]

Elliott West's *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009) demonstrated how the forces transforming America were "at work in Idaho and Oregon as much as in South Carolina and Massachusetts," each with results and consequences for the entire country.[41] Most recently, Kevin Waite's *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (2021) provides a detailed account of Southern slaveholders as visionary capitalists and imperialists who sought to extend their

[39] Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1991), 58. See also: Matthew E. Stanley "Was It for This You Fought?": Retreat from Reconstruction and the New White Supremacy in the Loyal West," *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (2017).
[40] Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 50.
[41] Elliott West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), *xxii*.

vision of empire to the American Southwest and beyond.[42]

I am particularly indebted to, and in conversation with, the scholarship on post-Civil War California. This body of research has investigated the state's conflicts over race, empire, and citizenship following the Civil War and how these events, in turn, influenced Reconstruction-era policymakers in Washington, D.C. Joshua Paddison's *American Heathens: Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (2012) argues that in studying postwar California, we see Reconstruction as "a multiracial and multiregional process of national reimagining [that ended not] with the removal of federal troops from the South in 1877, but a knitting together of North, South, and West around a newly robust white Christian identity."[43] Similarly, Michael Bottoms' *Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (2013) argues that despite its great physical distance from the South, California was a key site of Reconstruction, and it pioneered new forms of "private" segregation practices like housing covenants.[44]

Stacey L. Smith's essential *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (2013) argues that as historians expand the geography of Reconstruction to California, slavery as a

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[42] Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021). 2.
[43] Joshua Paddison, *American Heathens: Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2012), 5, 13. Paddison argued that from the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to the Fifteenth Amendment, Republican rejections of "heathen" citizens sprang from political necessity, racial prejudices, and religious convictions. The Republicans could not risk alienating their western constituency, particularly in California, which threatened to reject the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments if native Americans or the Chinese were included under its legal protections.
[44] Michael D. Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

racialized institution of coerced labor emerges not as a binary sectional struggle, but as a multifaceted and national one.[45] *Freedom's Frontier* argues that as historians reconsider the crisis over slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction in California, new explanations will upend familiar narratives of regional and national history and can provide the vital work to debunking persistent regional myths. In popular mythology, Smith argues, the American West was an "ultimate free-labor landscape, a place where autonomous, mobile individuals were at perfect liberty to pursue their economic interests and raise their social status."[46] Smith argues that the "Western turn" of Civil War era scholarship helps explain the paradox of Reconstruction as a period that witnessed the simultaneous break down of race-based civil and legal inequalities with the passing of the nation's most racialized immigration laws.[47]

Addressing similar questions, D. Michael Bottoms' *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850–1890* (2013) examines how the presence of tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants and hundreds of thousands of Native Americans in the West played on the minds of federal lawmakers as they attempted to protect southern freedmen and replace the antebellum definition of citizenship with a new set of uniform national parameters in the wake of emancipation. Bottoms demonstrates how, repeatedly during the second half of the 1860s, congressional debate over Reconstruction circled back to the multiracial

[45] Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emaciation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 3.
[46] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 4. Smith makes the case that Reconstruction-era California opens new insights into the "instability and fluidity of racial categories, particularly the ideological linkages between slavery and race."
[47] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 4-5.

populations of the West.[48] This dissertation contributes to this subfield by arguing that questions about the meaning of union were critical to California's passing of anti-Chinese legislation and the state's struggles over labor, civil equality, and political power. I show this by positioning Union veterans and the ideology of unionism at the center of the story of Reconstruction-era California in the state.

Dissertation Structure

California's Union veterans marshaled their service records to promote a unionist narrative of the Civil War, form fraternal organizations, memorialize the dead, lobby for pensions, secure investments, run for elective office, and to acquire jobs. In the subfield of Union veteran scholarship, virtually all studies have focused on veterans on the east coast, Midwest, or South. By contrast, veterans living in the American West have received little attention. This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature by providing a Western-oriented narrative of Union veterans and the distinct issues over Reconstruction that California's veterans encountered and debated. While California has until recently been treated as marginal to the central problems of Reconstruction, uncovering how the state's Union veterans adopted an ideology of unionism to fashion communities and reshape state politics enriches our understanding of the national struggles of the Civil War's legacies.

This dissertation draws on individual veterans' correspondence, fraternal and sororal organizational records, newspaper accounts, government data, and other

[48] D. Michael Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850–1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 6-9.

contemporary sources. While I acknowledge the smaller but significant population of Confederate veterans residing in California during my chronology of 1865-1900, this dissertation focuses on the state's Union veterans and their social, cultural, and political commitments. First, I trace how Union veterans formed influential organizations across California. I then examine how prominent Union veterans came to occupy positions of political and cultural influence and why their stories provide a beneficial lens through which to explore California's postwar class and racial tensions. In each case, I examine why unionism in California remained a vital if mutable, political ideology after the Civil War. While historians have long recognized the importance of Union veterans' fraternal organizations, there is no comprehensive account of the Woman's Relief Corp (WRC) and its relationship with the GAR. This dissertation fills part of that story with my analysis of the California Department of the WRC.

The prologue offers an overview of California during the American Civil War. Chapter one traces the origins, cultural production, and political activism of California's Union veteran community in the nineteenth century. There I argue that Reconstruction-era federal law and local practices of white supremacy support the call for greater integration of Western history in Reconstruction-era scholarship.[49] White Union veterans shared a commitment to defeating the Southern rebellion and

[49] Civil War historian Gary Gallagher acknowledges the importance of increased focus on the West but disagrees that it is necessary for understanding Reconstruction. "Reconstruction," he argues, "is about reconstructing the former Confederate states. That's what the term means. It is not really about the West, it's not about California, although thousands of veterans ended up in California." Gallagher, "Understanding Our Past," Battlefields.org, *American Battlefield Trust*, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/interview-historian-gary-gallagher.

restoring the Union but disagreed about their support of Black Americans' postwar citizenship assertions; in California, white Union veterans largely opposed Chinese immigration, although essential deviations from this trend emerged, as I detail in chapters 3 and 4. In chapter two, I argue that historians' treatment of Union veterans has undervalued the significance of California's "loyal women" and their commitment to unionism, the success of the GAR, and the well-being of the state's Union veterans. This chapter challenges the field's conventional wisdom by integrating the history of loyal women's postwar organizations—specifically, the Woman's Relief Corps—with the history of California's Union veterans and Reconstruction. This chapter demonstrates that loyal women sustained the GAR Posts with which they were associated by providing the volunteer labor necessary to advance the cause of unionism and support the state's neediest Union veterans.

Chapter three examines Reconstruction-era California's arguably most recognizable Union veteran (and non-GAR member), San Francisco-based journalist Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914). While literary studies on Bierce abound, this chapter's novel treatment of Bierce as a veteran is revealing because his understanding of unionism contrasted with most veterans and most white Californians over who could claim to be a free, rights-bearing person in postwar California.[50] I draw on Bierce's journalism to frame the volatile rise and fall of Denis Kearney and the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC) and to discuss unionism in the context of the class and

[50] Evelyn Atkinson, "Slaves, Coolies, and Shareholders: Corporations Claim the Fourteenth Amendment," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 10, no. 1 (2020): 56.

racial strife that gripped 1870s San Francisco. I show how Bierce's emerged as an unlikely defender of Chinese labor and immigration who argued that the Chinese had a legal and moral right to live and work peacefully in California. Lastly, chapter four examines the postwar life of former Union general turned prominent California Democratic Party politician William Rosecrans. Through Rosecrans' speeches, publications, and other correspondence, I show how his understanding of unionism—and the related contemporary California issues of political equality, racial hierarchy, capitalism, and empire—changed over time. In heterogeneous California, unionism shaped disputes over the legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction, giving rise to distinctive patterns in postwar party politics. Rosecrans' career as a veteran in California provides an important access point to understanding how unionism remained a vital ideology after the war.

In conclusion, the following dissertation, the first modern history of Union veterans in California, investigates how the state's Union veterans marshaled their service to form fraternal organizations, memorialize the dead, lobby for pensions, and play influential roles in popular and political culture during Reconstruction-era California. I trace how Union veterans integrated the memory of the Civil War into the fabric of early California and how they drew on their service to gain public recognition and government financial support. In my analysis of unionism, I show how Union veterans in California employed this capacious ideology to navigate disputes over race relations, labor organization, civil rights, citizenship, empire, and the limits of governmental authority. As such, this dissertation measures the changes

in unionism by Union veterans over time in postwar California.

In tracing the origins of California's Union veterans, cultural production, and political activism, I argue for integrating the history of the Woman's Relief Corps to provide a more comprehensive narrative of unionism and Union veterans in Reconstruction-era California. Chapters three and four examine how prominent Union Army veterans Ambrose Bierce and William Rosecrans' understanding of unionism deviated from most white Union veterans in California, particularly regarding the fraught issues of Chinese labor and immigration. In postwar California, unionism shaped disputes over the legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction, giving rise to distinctive patterns in postwar party politics.

From the valleys and the mines,
From the redwoods and the pines,
From the cities we can't be naming—
The boys have left their all,
At their country's call,
And rallied for the happy land of Canaan.[1]

PROLOGUE: California and the American Civil War

California's connection to the Civil War began a dozen years before hostilities broke out between the U.S. military and Confederate rebels in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. After claiming military victory over Mexico in 1848, the U.S. government assumed control of 900,000 square miles of territory in the vast American West populated by hundreds of thousands of Native Americans and Mexican Nationals. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S.-Mexico War by Mexican ceding 55% of its claimed territory to the United States. Two years later, the far western annexed land of *Alta California*, with its strategic ports, booming population, and bountiful mineral and agricultural wealth, formally joined the American political union as a "free state."[2] California's admission to the Union was at

[1] Selected verse from unnamed camp song sung by California's Army of the Pacific soldiers during the 1860s. Aurora Hunt, *The Army of the Pacific: Its Operations in California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Plains Region, Mexico, 1860-1866* (Glendale: A.H. Clark Co., 1951), 29.

[2] Chapter L, Section 1 stipulated California's official admittance to the Union by Act of Congress on September 9, 1850. The Compromise of 1850 were a series of resolutions in Congress meant to avert further political division between the North and South regarding the expansion of slavery in the newly conquered American West. "Comprimse of 1850," Milestone Documents: Nation Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/compromise-of-1850.

the center of an acrimonious dispute between Northern and Southern politicians vying to shape the settlement and political economy of the newly conquered territory. California's earliest white political leaders, which included antislavery Northerners and proslavery Southerners, forged a political system that used a variety of means to dispossess and disenfranchise people of color, targeting different groups in various legal and extralegal ways.

Nevertheless, a shared belief in white supremacy did not prevent political division in 1850s California that mirrored the sharpening sectional disputes between northern and southern states and between the Democratic Party and the rising Republican Party. By the end of the 1850s, the state's northern and most populated region, centered around San Francisco, identified politically with the northern states and the emergent Republican Party. These voters were well-traveled, having covered thousands of miles to become California voters; at least one-fifth of the white Americans who called California home in the 1850s arrived via the Panama Route.[3]

[3] Aims McGuinness, *Path of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 6-7. McGuinness argues that gold-rush demography is difficult to reconstruct, but the best estimates indicate that maritime migration from New York City to California via Panama was greater than overland migration to California over the California Trail between 1848 and 1860. John Haskell Kemble calculated that a minimum of 218,546 people traveled between New York and San Francisco by way of Panama during this period. During the same era, according to John Unruh, approximately 198,000 people migrated to California through Wyoming's South Pass—the principal portal for overland migration to California and other points west. These same calculations indicate that California-bound migration via the Panama Route exceeded overland migration through the South Pass in 1851 and again from 1854 through the rest of the decade. Panama's importance for immigration between the Atlantic and Pacific more generally was undoubtedly greater than the figure presented above, which omits passengers who crossed Panama with origins other than New York City and destinations other than San Francisco. For return immigration from California to the eastern United States, the Panama Route was by far the most popular route during the gold rush, especially after the completion of a railroad across Panama in 1855. Between 1849 and 1859, roughly one-fifth of the people who made it to California and then decided to return to the eastern United States made their voyage home by way of Panama.

The southern region of California centered around Los Angeles identified politically with the Democratic Party and expressed sympathy with southern slaveholders.[4]

Anticipating developments in the American Deep South, a secessionist faction of California Democrats emerged in the 1850s and nearly succeeded in dividing the state. According to the antebellum doctrine of union and secession, the federal union was a voluntary compact between states who surrendered none of the attributes of "state sovereignty." Disenchanted Democratic politicians in southern California understood secession as a legal right, and they pursued a path toward secession in 1859 when Andrés Pico organized an alliance between Mexican *Californios* and the region's proslavery southerners. Pico and his allies claimed the right to oppose state tax allocations for mining projects that only benefitted northern California, a western reconfiguration of South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun's famous opposition to the 1828 "Tariff of Abominations."[5] California's Democrats introduced the Pico Act, which proposed separating six counties in southern California into the "Territory of Colorado."

Indicative of apparent statewide acquiescence to southern California's separation, the bill passed the state Assembly and Senate before receiving the imprimatur of Democratic Governor Milton Latham. Significantly, proponents of

[4] See John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (2007) and Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (2021).
[5] The tariff protected northern agricultural products from competition with imports. Calhoun alleged the tax on foreign goods would raise the cost of living in the South while benefitting northerners. In opposition to the tariff, Calhoun articulated the doctrine of *nullification* which emphasized a state's right to reject federal laws within its borders, an early configuration of the states' rights theory of government.

southern California's secession did not call for leaving the U.S. but creating a new congressional territory that could eventually become a state. The Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in 1861 thwarted the Pico Act's momentum as the Republican Party claimed a majority in both chambers of Congress following vacancies opened by vacating Southerners.[6] The Republican Party in California stifled the Democratic Party's attempt to dismember the state. While California's free status and Union support seemed a given on the surface, a closer look reveals a deep division between the state's Democrats and Republicans that would resurface immediately after the war, with Union veterans counted as supporters in both parties.

In the early 1860s, the Republican Party won a slim majority in California elections, concentrating its power in San Francisco. Abraham Lincoln secured California's four electoral votes in the 1860 presidential election. Still, his razor-thin margin of victory—32.32% of the popular vote (38,733) compared with Democratic candidate Stephen A. Douglas's 31.71% (37,999) and John C. Breckenridge's 28.35% (33, 969), reflected the state's precarious political landscape.[7] The call for war amplified the state's patriotism and nationalism, but divisions persisted. To celebrate Lincoln's inauguration in March 1861, 25,000 pro-Union citizens convened in San Francisco and established a committee tasked with suppressing California's "treasonable combinations."[8] Although California was not required to furnish troops

[6] J.M. Guinn, "How California Escaped State Division," *The Historical Society of Southern California and of the Pioneers of Los Angeles County, Volume V* (Los Angeles: George Rice & Sons, 1901), 226.
[7] David Leip, "1860 General Election Results: California," *U.S. Election Atlas* 2019, https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/state.php?year=1860&fips=6&f=1&off=0&elect=0&minper=0.
[8] James McLean, *California Sabers: The 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry in the Civil War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 5.

from such a great distance from the front, thousands of white Californians of military age volunteered for the federal army. At the same time, approximately 250 Californians enlisted in the Confederate army.[9]

Although conventional narratives of the Civil War typically overlook California's role in Union victory, the state's human and material resources proved critical in defeating the Confederacy. Millions of dollars in transported California gold helped keep the U.S. Treasury solvent during the war. The Union Army's supreme commander, Ulysses S. Grant, reflected later that the U.S. may not have been able to "achieve victory in this great national emergency, were it not for the gold sent from California."[10] Contemporary French scholar M. Alexander Buchner claimed California gold had "struck the fatal blow to the institution of slavery in the United States."[11] Buchner may have overstated the case, but it is clear that California gold provided U.S. Treasury Secretary Samuel P. Chase leeway to introduce higher tariffs and establish the first federal income tax. The capital infusion from California promoted confidence amongst American and European backers of U.S. war bonds, enabling the federal government to finance the war and remain solvent while the Confederate economy floundered.[12] During the Civil War, California deposited

[9] McLean, *California Sabers*, 5. In an interview, Civil War historian Joan Waugh confirmed that no more than 250 Californians statewide joined the Confederacy. Waugh, "Traces of the Civil War in California," https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/stories-20170821.
[10] Imogene Spaulding, "The Attitude of California to the Civil War," *Historical Society of Southern California's Annual Publications* (Los Angeles: J.B. Walters, 1913), 125.
[11] Ann Casey, "Thomas Starr King and the Secession Movement," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 245.
[12] See Mark Thornton and Robert B. Ekelund, Jr., *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation: The Economics of the Civil War* (2004).

approximately $100,000,000 worth of gold to the federal treasury, a colossal sum.[13] Californians also financed the war effort in other ways. For example, it led all donations to the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) in 1862, accounting for 25% of the national collection.[14] By the end of 1863, Californians had donated $500,000 to the USSC's coffers.[15]

The successful proselytizing efforts of Unitarian clergyman Thomas Starr King helped solidify California's enthusiasm for the union. King, whom Lincoln claimed had "saved California" for the Union, began his career on the New England lyceum circuit (drawing favorable comparisons to Wendell Phillips and Henry Ward Beecher) before relocating to distant California. Once there, King became renowned for his energetic unionism and pro-emancipationist speeches before massive crowds.[16] Nineteenth-century California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft regarded Starr, who died from diphtheria at age 39, as "small of stature, delicate in health with a soft and luminous brown eye, betokening the gentleness of his disposition, he was yet, when aroused, able to sway multitudes."[17] King swayed California's multitudes like few politicians could. Unlike fellow San Francisco minister Dr. William A. Scott, who dared to pray for the well-being of Confederate President Jefferson Davis publicly, King was an unalloyed unionist who used his pulpit to condemn secession

[13] Matthews, *The Golden State*, 157.
[14] Richard Peterson, "Thomas Starr King in California, 1860-64: Forgotten Naturalist of the Civil War Years," *California History* 69, no. 1 (1990), 14.
[15] Matthews, *The Golden State*, 167.
[16] See Charles William Wendte, *Thomas Starr King, Patriot, and Preacher* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1921).
[17] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California: Vol. VII, 1860-1890, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft Volume XXIV* (San Francisco: The History Co. Publishers, 1890), 287.

and slavery and exhort Californians to support the Lincoln administration. King's boosterism flowed from his ability to direct Republican political goals by preaching the Gospel to the "unchurched" towns of frontier California.[18] The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) honored the unionist legacy of Thomas Starr King in 1883 when it christened its first "Post" in Santa Barbara, "Starr King Post #52."

In addition to supplying capital, California provided thousands of volunteers for the Union armies and its continent-spanning military engagements. According to the federal government's *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion,* California furnished 15,725 army volunteers and militia during the Civil War.[19] California volunteers—unlike other Union states—had to pay for their outfitting, including the added transportation costs, given their distance from the front.[20] This substantial investment of human and financial resources suggests the esteem white Californians accorded Union identity and military service, despite the state's spatial separation from the primary theaters of war. Californians helped police the American West while the bulk of the U.S. military fought in the South. The federal government stationed most of California's soldiers across the West to protect gold-carrying wagons, mail, and telegraph routes, "pacify" Indian revolts and repel any Confederate campaigns in the Southwest.

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[18] Peterson, "Thomas Starr," 14.
[19] United States Government, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies Series III, Vol. 4: Published under the direction of the Hon. Elihu Root, Secretary of War, by Brig. Gen. Fred C. Almsworth, Chief of the Records and Pension Office, War Department, and Mr. Joseph W. Kirkely* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 1268.
[20] Alvin M. Josephy contends that over 16,000 Californians served in the Union Army, making 15,000 a reasonable approximation. Josephy, *War in the American West,* 238.

Californians who fought the Confederacy directly did so under three companies organized under the 71st Pennsylvania Infantry. Led by a sitting U.S. senator from Oregon, Col. Edward Dickinson Baker, the 71st Penn. engaged Confederates at Ball's Bluff, Virginia, on October 21, 1861. Rebel forces repulsed the Union attack, causing hundreds of retreating men to drown in the Potomac in a significant defeat for commanding officer Gen. George McClellan. Baker died in battle and remains the only sitting U.S. senator killed in a military engagement.[21] In the summer of 1862, pro-Union Californians petitioned Massachusetts Governor John Andrews to authorize an all-volunteer California cavalry company—the "California 100"—to serve under the 2nd Massachusetts regiment. The 2nd Mass. participated in campaigns against John Mosby's Confederate Rangers, Gen. Philip Sheridan's Valley Campaigns of 1864, the Siege of Petersburg, and the Appomattox Campaign that ended the war. Before returning home in the summer of 1865, California veterans marched in a massive procession of victorious Union soldiers in Washington, D.C., "The Grand Review of the Armies," to mark the war's end.

As Stephen Hahn has argued, expanding the geography of the Civil War era to include California and the West recasts the Civil War as the largest in a connected series of violent confrontations the federal government undertook to achieve political and economic mastery over the continent in the nineteenth century.[22] Turning our

[21] "Senator Killed in Battle," Senate.gov, United States Senate, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Senator_Killed_In_Battle.htm.
[22] Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (New York: Random House, 2016), 3. See also: Adam Arenson, *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* (2015) and Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, *The World the Civil War Made* (2015).

attention to the role of the Far West in the Civil War suggests that the conflict over union was also a conflict over the American empire.[23] In this more comprehensive view of establishing federal sovereignty in the West, California soldiers acted as agents of Manifest Destiny rather than promoters of freedom and liberty.[24]

Nineteenth-century California functioned at times like a litmus test for the rest of the nation as its struggles over race, sex, slavery, and emancipation helped to define the direction of the postwar nation-state and its imperial ambitions.[25] California's Civil War-era soldiers enforced federal sovereignty by protecting government property, destroying Confederate forces in the South, and displacing and destroying Native American communities resisting white settlement in the West.[26] As this dissertation will show, California politics in the postwar era frequently pitted white Californians' resistance to Reconstruction-era legislation that threatened the established racial hierarchies in the state.

[23] Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 122-124.
[24] Josephy, *War in the American West*, 268.
[25] Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 14.
[26] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 14-15.

Mine humble muse with unfleg'd wing
Now raise thy voice and meekly sing;
Strike the lone harp, whose untun'd string
Hath made no sound before.
Nerve thy faint heart to sing one song,
To roll one feeble strain along,
Among the gifted ones that throng
Dear California's shore.[1]

CHAPTER 1: Unionism and Postwar California

In the late eighteenth century, policymakers viewed the West, and the Pacific Ocean beyond, as the gateway to "American destiny," real or imagined.[2] While California cannot stand as a metonym for the whole of the American West, it was the most populous, diverse, and economically dynamic state in the region.[3] The following chapter investigates the origins, cultural production, and political activism of California's Union veteran community in the nineteenth century. I do not have the space here to analyze the smaller but significant population of California's Confederate veterans, as my work concentrates specifically on Union veterans and their distinct cultural and political commitments, which cohered around a unionist

[1] J. Henry Rogers, *The California Hundred: A Poem* (San Francisco: W. H. Bancroft and Co., 1865), 5.
[2] Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (New York: Penguin, 2017), 2-4.
[3] Michael D. Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 7. Bottoms' study of legal repercussions of federal Reconstruction legislation in California paralleled similar events taking place in Nevada, Colorado, Oregon, Kansas, and the territories of Washington, Montana, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

ideology.[4] This choice aims to understand better how unionism and those directly responsible for union victory shaped social and political spaces in Reconstruction-era California and Union. A future study could address how Confederate veterans attempted to thwart unionism in Reconstruction-era California through the ideology of the "Lost Cause."[5]

Taking a continental view of the nineteenth century, the American Civil War was the largest of a series of military campaigns undertaken by the U.S. government to solidify its sovereignty across North America. Isolating the Civil War from the West obscures how invading Mexico, suppressing the southern rebellion, and displacing and destroying Native Americans each served the primary objective of increasing the territory and establishing the sovereignty of the U.S. The federal government undertook policies of racially re-ordering the South and West to consolidate its power across North America.[6] Bringing these previously separated narratives together allows scholars to understand better how the federal government imposed political and economic structures over recalcitrant Southerners, Native Americans, Mexicans, and other non-white populations. The following study of

[4] See Leonard L. Richards, *The California Gold Rush and the coming of the Civil War* (2007), Alvin Josephy Jr., *The Civil War in the American West* (1991), and Richard Hurley, *California and the Civil War* (2017).

[5] Confederate-sympathizing writers led cultural efforts to rehabilitate the South by constructing a "Lost Cause" narrative of the Civil War which justified the legitimacy of rebellion, valorized southern heroism, denounced Black citizenship, and lionized Robert E. Lee. In Lee's "Farewell Address to the Army of Northern Virginia," the fight against the North was always unfair because of the Union's resource advantages. This inevitability made Confederate defeat nobly tragic, or a lost cause. In depicting a conflict fought by outnumbered cavaliers in a doomed attempt to protect a courtly plantation society, the Lost Cause promoted a saccharine view of antebellum slavery that came to dominate the nation's shared memory of its worst calamity.

[6] Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2003), 24.

postwar California foregrounds the state's Union veteran community to understand better how they used their status to influence culture and politics and actively promote their specific narratives of the war.

Analysis of California's nineteenth-century newspapers provides an essential context for how Californians debated the contours of unionism.[7] That California's newspapers reported on the war in real-time was a testament to how rapidly communication technology had improved during the war, pulling the geographically distant frontier into the national orbit. Only a decade earlier, California's great distance and imposing geography represented fundamental obstacles to the federal government's integration of the state. During the 1850s, an overland journey from New York to San Francisco took three to four months. The great distance also caused the delay of mail and news to and from California.[8] Innovations by American electrical engineers flattened this distance with the telegraph.[9] On October 24, 1861, with hostilities underway in Virginia, California engineers completed a continent-

[7] Historians scrutinize nineteenth-century newspapers to gauge community attitudes. As Betty Houchin Winfield and Janice Hume have argued, by the 1860s, the rise of the reporter, professional standards, the concept of journalist objectivity, and the commercialization of the press helped shape a national identity. Winfield and Hume, *The Continuous Past: Historical Referents in Nineteenth-Century American Journalism*, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Columbia, SC: 2007), 121, 130.

[8] Aims McGuinness, *Path of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 7. McGuiness argues that until the establishment of the Pony Express and then the overland telegraph in the United States in 1860–61, the Panama Route was the primary, fastest, and most reliable route for the transmission of news and other information between the eastern United States and California. Until 1869, most of the mail was sent between the two coasts of the United States and most of the gold and silver that was sent eastward from California also passed over Panama. Steamship lines including the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, and the United States Mail Steamship Company won contracts from the U.S. government to ship mail.

[9] Mid-twentieth-century historian Hugo A. Meier argued that as early as the 1830s, American engineering was already "world-class." "Given a fulcrum," he observed, "the American engineer, like his Greek predecessor, could move creation." Maier, "American Technology and the Nineteenth-Century World," *American Quarterly* 10, no. 2, (1958), 123.

spanning telegraph line when Horace W. Carpenter, president of the Overland Telegraph Company, sent the first outbound message to Lincoln announcing the completion of the telegraph lines to California.[10] The telegraph had miraculously delivered news that had previously taken weeks or months to relay and enabled Californians to follow events on the battlefields as they unfolded, helping link the fate of the U.S. with the fortune of California.

Of the estimated 60,000 monographs that have studied the Civil War era, only a tiny percentage have focused on the lives of Union veterans, and there remains a great deal we do not understand about them.[11] It was only in the mid-twentieth century that historians began investigating the lives of ordinary active-duty soldiers.[12] Scholars avoided veterans as their primary historical subjects until the 1980s when a recognizable subfield developed. Today, many studies have examined phenomena ranging from veterans' variable adjustment to peace, drug and alcohol addiction, crime, the pension lobby, political activism, cultural imprint, and more.[13] By the end

[10] Alice L. Bates, "The History of the Telegraph in California," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 9, no. 3 (1914): 185.
[11] Paul D. Escott, *Rethinking the Civil War Era: Directions for Research* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), 1.
[12] Bell Irvin Wiley's *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (1943) and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (1952) are two of the earliest monographs of the ordinary Civil War soldier experience.
[13] A brief overview of major works on U.S. soldiers includes Dixon Wecter, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (1944), Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (1952), Gerald Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the Civil War* (1987), Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (1992), Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (2004), Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and their Unending Civil War* (2014), Richard Severo and Lewis Mumford, *The Wages of War: When America's Soldiers Came Home—From Valley Forge to Vietnam* (1989), Eric T. Dean, Jr., *Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War* (1997), J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Combat: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (1997), James. M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (1997), Larry J. Daniel, *Soldiering in the*

of the nineteenth century, most white Union veterans accepted some reconciliation with Confederate veterans. Still, few Union veterans ever conceded rebellion as legitimate. [14]

As Civil War veterans aged and their tempers cooled, their willingness to participate in battlefield reunions with former foes increased. The widely reported "Blue-Gray" veterans' reunions beginning in the late 1870s provided evidence to contemporaries that sectional enmity was waning. Of course, not all Union veterans or northern civilians were swayed by reconciliation. In 1887, a unionist newspaper observed that "when Memorial Day ceases to be an occasion when the voice of the old soldier or old sailor's friend can be heard—when the gray is equally lauded to the blue—when those who sought to tear down are made the subjects of laudation equally with those who preserve…then will the ceremonies of strewing the graves become meaningless and vapid."[15] However, this position did not reflect the attitudes of most white veterans or civilians by the close of the century. One of the consensus findings

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Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in a Confederate Army (2003), Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2008), Lesley J. Gordon, *A Broken Regiment: The 16th Connecticut's Civil War* (2014), Peter S. Carmichael, *The War for the Common Solider: How Men Thought, Fought, and Survived in Civil War Armies* (2018), and Brian Matthew Jordan, *A Thousand May Fall: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army* (2021).

[14] In 1951, C. Vann Woodward's *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* advanced the argument that racism caused the end of Reconstruction as white northern politicians agreed to rebuild national political alliances. Heather Cox Richardson's *The Death of Reconstruction Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (2004) agrees that racism was a fundamental component of the end of Reconstruction but argues there was a class dimension whereby a bipartisan coalition of white politicians and businessmen vilified a growing welfare state by arguing the federal government's responsibility toward Black people ended with the collapse of slavery. Michael Fitzgerald's *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South* (2008) takes yet another approach by arguing the end of Reconstruction resulted from the fiscal mismanagement of white and Black Republicans in southern state governments. This, Fitzgerald argues, alienated white northerners who blamed Black politicians in the South.

[15] James Alan Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 274-275.

in veterans' scholarship is that reconciliation between white Union and Confederate veterans culminated with the Spanish American War in 1898, a conflict that successfully brought white Americans together under the same nationalist umbrella for the first time after decades of political division.[16] When Union and Confederate veterans gathered on rare occasions, it garnered favorable newspaper coverage that helped sell the idea of reconciliation based on a shared experience of whiteness to the broader public. One of the largest of these "Blue-Gray" gatherings was in 1913, when 50,000 Union and Confederate veterans convened at the Gettysburg battlefield, presided over by President Woodrow Wilson. Wilson's address removed Black Americans from the war entirely in a telling example of how reconciliation worked in white culture.[17] Instead, Wilson focused on the former enemies' shared masculinity traits and history.[18]

By 1938, most Civil War veterans were no longer alive. Still, a determined group of twenty-five veterans convened again at the Gettysburg battlefield to hear President Franklin Roosevelt speak. Like Wilson, Roosevelt conspicuously did not reference slavery or emancipation when discussing the Civil War. "Men who wore the Blue and men who wore the Gray," Roosevelt told the aging veterans, were brought together "by the memories of old divided loyalties, but they meet here in

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[16] See Paul D. Escott, *Uncommonly Savage: Civil War and Remembrance in Spain and the United States* (2014).
[17] Woodrow Wilson, "July 4, 1913: Address at Gettysburg," *Presidential Speeches*, Miller Center, University of Virginia, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/july-4-1913-address-gettysburg.
[18] William B. Holberton, *Homeward Bound: The Demobilization of the Union and Confederate Armies: 1865-1866* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2001), *The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader*, eds. Larry M. Logue and Michael Barton (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 23, 29.

united loyalty to a united cause which the unfolding years have made it easier to see."[19] The cause of Black freedom so vivid to Union veterans in the 1860s and 1870s faded against the unifying ideology of white reconciliation by the end of the century. This dissertation will show that California's white Union veterans largely conformed to this pattern, with notable exceptions among the state's elite veterans.

The Grand Review of the Armies

In the spring of 1865, it was unclear how the nation would transition from war to peace and what role veterans would play. What was clear was that the massive volunteer Union armies in the field would not remain intact. Americans had long been wary of standing armies in peacetime, seeing them as a threat to the health of a free republic. Following the war's end, the federal government began the unprecedented process of demobilizing 1.6 million veterans under arms. On May 23-24, 1865, hundreds of thousands of tired, exultant, blue-coated soldiers converged in Washington, D.C., for a parade of unprecedented scale. The "Grand Review of the Armies," as the War Department officially called it, gave civilians a sense of the scale of the forces they had been reading about during the previous four years.[20] Feted by adoring crowds numbering in the thousands, the Grand Review featured 150,000 white Union troops but not a single Black Union veteran, as army and city officials

[19] Franklin Roosevelt, "Address at the Dedication of the Memorial on the Gettysburg Battlefield, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 3, 1938," *The American Presidency Project*, University of California, Santa Barbara, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-dedication-the-memorial-the-gettysburg-battlefield-gettysburg-pennsylvania.
[20] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 3.

agreed to exclude Black veterans from participation.[21] The persistence of northern racism during the celebration of national victory downplayed the United States Colored Troops' contribution to Union victory and anticipated a fully white-washed vision of the Civil War to come. During the Grand Review, California's surviving Union troops marched with their "patron" regiment, the 2nd Massachusetts.[22] In front of dignitaries and rapturous citizens, according to Union Army Major D.W.C. Thompson, California's colors were "greeted by enthusiasm as the highest and bravest in the land."[23] After shipping their distressed battle flags to Sacramento, California, veterans mustered out of the army in July 1865 from Massachusetts and began the long trip home.[24]

The issue of what the federal government owed Union army veterans appeared on display during the Grand Review of the Armies. On the parade route through the nation's capital, soldiers passed a banner from the Treasury Department that read: "The only national debt we can never pay is the debt we owe the victorious Union soldiers." The banner sentiment alluded to Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address which enjoined the nation to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."[25] By the end of the nineteenth century, Union

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[21] Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and their Unending Civil War* (New York: Liveright, 2014), 13.
[22] Since the aggregate of California troops was too small to form their own regiment, they marched as part of the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment.
[23] Major D.W.C. Thompson, quoted in Evans, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of California*, 138.
[24] Veterans on both sides revered Civil War battle flags, particularly those of regiment affiliation. The called for return of Confederate flags in the 1890s from northern statehouses was an affront to many Union veterans.
[25] Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," 4 March 1865, https://www.loc.gov/item/2020770559/.

veterans' helped convince Congress that the federal government inherited the responsibility of providing financial assistance to veterans.[26]

Pensions were not gifts instantly bestowed upon veterans because of their service by the federal government but hard won over time by the lobbying work of organized Union veterans' groups, none more so than the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). The GAR and other veterans' groups continually pressured the federal government to expand pensions to all honorably discharged Union veterans, drawing the ire of the Democratic Party and Confederate veterans exempt from such benefits. We can measure the effects of the GAR's success by the rising federal expenditures on veterans. In 1879, pension payments amounted to 11% of the federal budget; by 1890, and the apex of organized Union veterans' political influence, veterans' payments reached 40%. Economist Murray N. Rothbard has argued that Union veterans' pensions marked the birth of the national welfare state and served as a precedent for social welfare reforms introduced during the Progressive and New Deal eras.[27]

California's press circulated news about veterans' celebrations, and their accounts provide some of the earliest recorded discourse on postwar unionism in the

[26] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 10.
[27] Rothbard contends the Pension Bureau, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Republican Party, "acted in happy symbiosis." Murray N. Rothbard, "Beginning the Welfare State: Civil War Veterans' Pensions," *The Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics* 22, no.1 (2019): 70, 75. See also: Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992), Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (1993): 85-116, and Jane E Schultz, "Race, Gender, and Bureaucracy: Civil War Army Nurses and the Pension Bureau," *Journal of Women's History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 45–69.

state. Rocklin's *Placer Herald* proclaimed the Grand Review the "most imposing pageant ever presented on the continent," a common refrain in California's pro-Union newspapers.[28] Parade witness and Unitarian minister Rev. William Henry Channing observed that:

> Rome in her era of imperial grandeur, France and Germany in the medieval ages, Paris in the most splendid days of Napoleon, [and] London in the noontide of Wellington never looked on such a triumphal procession as rolled through the broad avenues of the capital of this Republic for twelve hours. 150,000 strong and thirty miles, at least, in length![29]

Channing further reflected on how Union veterans preserved the values of republican freedom. "For us and our for our children," Channing explained, "for our free churches, free courts, free legislative halls, free farmers' fields and mechanics workshops, free schools, and free presses, [veterans] fought and poured out their life's blood and bore the pitiless peltings of the storm and parching heats. Oh! God bless them and reward them and theirs!"[30] The readership of the *Soldiers' Journal*, which published Channing's speech, counted 20,000 subscribers, including Lincoln and Grant. At least some of those veterans we can imagine pausing when they read about a "reward" for union loyalty. What was fair recompense was unclear beyond what bounties and paychecks Union veterans received while on active duty.

Despite the many regional differences between Union veterans, they shared an

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[28] "Eastern News," *The Placer Herald*, 27 May 1865. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014998/1865-05-27/ed-1/seq-2/.
[29] "Channing on the Review," *The Soldiers' Journal*, 7 June 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89038091/1865-06-07/ed-1/seq-2/.
[30] "Channing on the Review," *The Soldiers' Journal*, 7 June 1865.

essential commonality in "drinking from the same canteen," or at least that is what unionists purported. This memorable and widespread phrase had any number of referents among Union veterans conveying the unforgettable experiences of combat and camp life. In 1889, GAR Commander-in-Chief William Warner's national address quoted from "The Canteen," a wartime poem written by Irish American Union soldier Charles Halpine:

> There are bonds of all sorts in this world of ours
> Fetters of friendship and ties of flowers,
> And true-lover's knots I ween;
> The boy and the girl are bound by a kiss,
> But there is never a bond, old friend, like this—
> We have drank from the same canteen.[31]

The Democrat-leaning *Placer Herald* recoiled at the suggestion of Black and white Union veterans marching together, ridiculing the Republican Party's villainous attempt to "foist the negro upon the people—socially and politically" as utter folly.[32] The *Herald* argued that Union victory restored the American political union "as it was" and did nothing more. In this view, it was easier to celebrate the downfall of Southern slaveholders than the emancipation of enslaved Black Americans. The "menace" of racial equality, the *Herald* argued, was "the intention of the radical portion of the Abolition party to compel the people of [California] to submit to negro suffrage."[33] The *Herald*'s editor wrote confidently of the ability of California's white

[31] Ian Delahanty, "The History and Legacy of the Grand Army of the Republic in Massachusetts," Office of the Secretary of State, Massachusetts State House Art Commission (2021), https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/849855.
[32] *The Placer Herald,* 8 July 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014998/1865-07-08/ed-1/seq-2/.
[33] *The Placer Herald,* 8 July 1865.

political rulers to repulse any attempt to undo the racial *status quo antebellum*. The white men of California, it argued, "are not yet so degraded that they will submit to such an imposition; the public man who [endorses] it will find himself shelved."[34] This white supremacist reading of unionism was only one among many that circulated among veterans and civilians in postwar California. From the perspective of the state's Union veterans, secession as a legitimate political ideology lost its currency with the collapse of Jefferson Davis's government. Its opposite, unionism, was the basis by which many veterans understood the postwar political world where Black Americans counted in the revised polity of the United States, though not as full social equals.

Support for unionism in wartime California was uneven across the state, and the war's end paved a path for a swift return of California's Democratic Party and its platforms of states' rights and white supremacy. During the war, California's "War Democrats" agreed to temporarily support the Republican ticket as part of a Union Party coalition, helping Lincoln defeat Democrat (and former Union general) George McClennan in 1864 with 58.6% of California's popular vote.[35] By 1865 and with Union victory assured, unresolved party tensions resurfaced, and the precarious Union Party dissolved. California's brief wartime political unity foundered on the shoals of the Reconstruction Amendments and its gendered fears of an enfranchised

[34] *The Placer Herald*, 8 July 1865,

[35] The average California voter did not support Lincoln as strongly as Union soldiers, although 58% voted for him in 1864, a significant increase from his narrow victory in 1860. McClellan's supporters denounced the "bayonet vote," insinuating Union soldiers voted for Lincoln as directed by their officers, although no evidence has yet been found to support that allegation. Nearly every California Union soldier voted for Lincoln: 2,600 out of 2,837 votes cast. Presidential Election of 1864: A Resource Guide," *The Library of Congress* Web Guides, https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/elections/election1864.html.

Chinese population.[36] Unlike the postwar South, the "redemption" of the Democratic Party in California was immediate.

California's Union veterans in 1865 were less preoccupied with party realignment than with how they would earn a living as a civilian. The Union armies of volunteer farmers and mechanics might seem ill-suited for mercenary work. However, within weeks of Appomattox, agents solicited California's Union veterans to join Maximillian's Mexican army, offering a bounty of $1,000. "The French gentleman," the *Herald* wrote, "can hardly afford to recruit a very large army at such a cost per man, but they say that a few of the tried soldiers of the Union will go a great way in giving efficiency and strength to Maximillian's army."[37] By comparison, the U.S. government promised recruits a $100 bounty award in 1861, which later increased to $300 in 1863.[38] Considering the median annual manufacturer's salary in California was $838, $1,000 was a princely sum.[39] Whether the money seemed too good to be true or the possibility that Union veterans had seen enough of "the elephant," few flocked to the Frenchman's banners. Maximillian's arrest and execution in 1867 by Benito Juárez's forces made the point moot.[40]

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[36] Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 211.
[37] "Recruiting for Maximilian," *The Placer Herald*, 15 April 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014998/1865-04-15/ed-1/seq-1/.
[38] William Marvel, "A Poor Man's Fight," *Civil War Series*, National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/civil_war_series/3/sec2.htm
[39] Clarence D. Long, *Wages and Earnings in the United States, 1860-1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 76.
[40] During the Civil War, the U.S. government recognized Juárez while the Confederate government recognized Maximilian, prompting northern fears of a Mexican-Confederate States of America alliance. For more on the connections of the Civil War to Mexican politics, see Gregory P. Downs,

The California 100 and the Union Cause

Celebratory receptions functioned as a marker of unionist sentiment in the print culture of postwar California. During the Civil War, poetry was a popular form of literature that sometimes imagined soldiers as emotive and sympathetic figures.[41] In California author J. Henry Rogers' "California 100," he expressed the state's gratitude while extolling California's distinct role in helping save the union from dissolution. Upon first hearing the news of the Confederate surrender, Rogers published a 100-page epic poem commemorating the accomplishments of the "California 100," which he distributed to newspapers across California. The pro-union *San Jose Mercury* admired the poem's patriotism and recognition of local heroes.[42] The *Mercury* emphasized that "Californians, especially, should appreciate the obligation they are under to the talented author for thus immortalizing her heroic 'Hundred.'"[43] According to Rogers, California's fabled 100 demonstrated their republican virtue by responding to the nation's call for aid and teaching Americans in the South an important political lesson:

> To leave their homes, and seize their guns,
> And hasten to Potomac's shore
> Where Southern war-clouds darkly low'r.
> They firmly stand by freedom's cause,
> And teach the South respect for laws
> Which she herself had made…[44]

"The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States' Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 2, (2012): 387-409.

[41] Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861-1865* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 101.

[42] *San Jose Weekly Mercury*, 27 July 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SJWM18650727.2.10&srpos=24&e=------186-en--20--21--txt-txIN-J.+Henry+Rogers----1865---1.

[43] *San Jose Weekly Mercury*, 27 July 1865.

[44] J. Henry Rogers, *The California Hundred: A Poem* (San Francisco: Towne & Bacon, 1865), 10.

Adjutant-General George S. Evans' *Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of California* (1867) provided a similarly expressive portrait of the California 100 for a narrower audience: the state's military and political elite. Submitted to wartime Republican governor Frederick Low, Evans' report surveyed the state's finances, military property, rosters of officers, disbanded regiments, companies, and battalions. According to the report, California's soldiers acquitted themselves with impressive "republican spirit," while the state's loyal citizens expressed laudable "patriotism and military zeal."[45] The state's loyal citizens included Union soldiers of Mexican descent. Although Evans did not mention Mexican *Californio* soldiers in his more narrative report, the data that supplemented the report documents the cosmopolitan makeup of the Union armies beyond the usual European immigrant subjects.[46] While the Mexican American complement of the Union army—born as citizens of New Spain or independent Mexico—was much smaller than those of Irish and German soldiers, including Mexican American soldiers, this report made visible a new kind of American representation from California. Evans' data listed *Californios* as majors, captains, and second lieutenants, suggestive of the respect the U.S. military had in recruiting Mexican American officers. Evans argued that California's heroic deeds "should be published to the credit of California and her citizens."[47]

California's newspapers functioned as a conduit for disseminating unionist

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[45] George S. Evans, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of California from November 30th, 1865, to November 1st, 1867* (Sacramento: D.W. Gelwicks, 1867), 5-7.
[46] James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For: 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 30. Research has shown that as many as 25% of Union soldiers were foreign born, principally from Ireland and Germany
[47] Evans, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 11.

discourse across the state. In the most immediate postwar moment, California's coverage of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox illustrated the ongoing divisions between the Republican and Democratic parties in the state and what the implications were for postwar California. San Francisco's Republican-leaning *Daily Alta* ran the triumphant headline, "Lee and His Rebel Forces Surrender to Grant: A Day of Rejoicing," praising Lincoln for his "brilliant successes, which, under Divine Providence, have been secured by the persistent energy, sagacity and fidelity of the Government, and by the skill, intrepidity, and self-sacrificing devotion of the Army and Navy."[48] The *Shasta Courier* re-printed the complete correspondence of Lee and Grant's negotiations and rejoiced in the collapse of the Confederate government.[49] Grossly underestimating the white southern opposition to Reconstruction, the *Courier* reported that denizens of Richmond, Virginia—the erstwhile rebel capital—generally regard "further resistance as unwise."[50]

Pro-Union newspapers frequently reiterated the primacy of law and order and the restoration of the union as the primary *casus belli*; however, notable critiques of

[48] "Surrender of Lee and His Army," *Daily Alta California,* 10 April 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18650410.2.7&e=-------en--20--1--txt-txIN--------1.

[49] "Appomattox" has long been used to symbolize Lee's surrender, although "Appomattox" as a marker of peace is problematic. Gregory Downs contends that peace did not reflect the policies of the postwar federal government until at least 1871, six years after Appomattox. Downs models an alternative chronology of "battle-time," "post-surrender wartime" (Appomattox), and peacetime where the structure of wartime government continued after Appomattox and employed the legal authority to reorganize the South. Peacetime was the cessation of this legal authority and the return of Congressional representation from former rebel states. I acknowledge these nuances but employ "Appomattox" to periodize all historical events following Lee's surrender to Grant.

[50] "Lee and His Army Surrenders," *The Shasta Courier*, 15 April 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015099/1865-04-15/ed-1/seq-3/>.

slavery and praise of emancipation appear. California's editors saved the highest plaudits for the Union Army. Weaverville's *Weekly Trinity Journal* gave tribute to "the well-laid plans and indomitable energy of Gen. Grant and to the undaunted heroism of the gallant soldiers of the Republic, all is achieved that we could ask—the victory is complete in every degree."[51] Unlike the *Currier*, the *Journal* warned readers not to expect "the Southern States at once settle into the peaceful avocations of their former years."[52]

For some California newspapers, Union victory heralded the beginning of a new era. The pro-Republican *Weekly Trinity Journal* enthused that loyal Americans "will soon see [Confederate] desperadoes exterminated or driven from the land, and the dawn of a bright and happy future break upon us." The *Journal* magnanimously praised Robert E. Lee, who "was game even to the last act of surrender." By contrast, then-at-large Confederate President Jefferson Davis was a frequent target of public ridicule and was "hooted at by [all] for his cowardly conduct in skedaddling." The *Sacramento Daily News* observed that Lee's surrender "would satisfy even the most incorrigible croaker that the rebellion has not only had its backbone broken, but its last legs amputated."[53] The *News*, like other triumphalist newspapers, conflated southern resistance against federal authority with the existence of organized armies,

[51] Our Flag goes Marching On," *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 15 April 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1865-04-15/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[52] Our Flag goes Marching On," *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 15 April 1865.
[53] "News of the Morning," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 10 April 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU18650410.2.8&e=09-04-1865-31-12-1865--en--20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-war-ARTICLE------1.

an error of judgment exposed by the terrorist violence committed against southern Black Americans and their white allies during Reconstruction.[54]

Other newspapers situated unionism and the Civil War in imperial terms. San Francisco's *Daily Alta California* argued that the U.S.'s military demonstration put the world on notice. The Union armies, it boasted, had "taken more cities, routed more armies, [and] won more victories in the short space of four years than all the nations of the world in the preceding fifty."[55] "Before a restored Union," the *Alta* claimed, "the whole of Europe would hesitate to measure its strength upon an equal field." For all its bluster, the *Alta* indicated that unionism was compatible with reconciliation, arguing it was "the duty of all good men to endeavor to staunch the wounds the country has received. In doing so, there may be much to forget—a great deal to forgive; but we should have charity equal to the exigencies of the case."[56] Three years later, Ulysses Grant successfully employed this rhetoric in his 1868 presidential campaign slogan, "Let us Have Peace."

The pro-Democrat *Colusa Sun*, whose masthead featured Daniel Webster's admonition: "Cling to the Constitution as the shipwrecked mariner clings to the last plank, when night and tempest close around him," remained hopeful for forgiveness and reconciliation.[57] "If a spirit of magnanimity actuates the victors," the *Sun* argued,

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[54] Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 191.
[55] "The Duties of Victory," *Daily Alta California*, 11 April 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18650411.2.16&e=09-04-1865-31-12-1865--en--20--21-byDA-txt-txIN-war-ARTICLE------1.
[56] "The Duties of Victory," *Daily Alta California*, 11 April 1865.
[57] "The End of the War," *Weekly Colusa Sun*, 15 April 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WCS18650415.2.5&srpos=56&e=09-04-1865-31-12-1865--en--20--41-byDA-txt-txIN-Lincoln-ARTICLE------1.

"we believe ourselves that peace will soon be restored."[58] The Sun averred that General Grant provided hope for peace when he authorized merciful surrender terms when anxious Confederates expected executions of vengeance that never materialized. For white Americans eager to put sectional differences behind them, the image of Lee's stoic resignation and Grant's magnanimity augured a postwar path of unity.[59] Historians have shown that the political and personal reality of Appomattox was far less congenial than it appeared, as Lee and Grant's meeting illustrated material differences regarding the meaning of surrender and fundamentally incompatible visions of the war's legacy.[60]

California's pro-Democrat newspapers warned readers that the root problems that prompted war still existed and speculated darkly about when the federal government would override a state's right to determine its "domestic affairs." In the summer of 1865, the *Marysville Express* imagined a bleak future where the Civil War was only the opening salvo of the assault on (white) American liberties everywhere. Under the headline "The Termination of the War is but the Crisis of National Disorder," the *Express* fumed that the "conductors of the 'Union' press on the Pacific coast, almost without exception, are already indulging their party with the interesting prospect, as a result of the close of the war, that they will have nothing now to do but

[58] "The End of the War," *Weekly Colusa Sun*, 15 April 1865.
[59] Elizabeth Varon, *Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at the End of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.
[60] Varon, *Appomattox*, 4. During the first anniversary of Appomattox, Lee and Grant's opposition remained pronounced. Northerners felt that while Lee observed his parole terms, he did not show satisfactory remorse for the war. Grant, disappointed that Lee never credited the mettle of the Union army, would come to see Black citizenship as evidence of the Union army's vindication through its political reconstruction of the South.

see how they can reward their friends and punish their enemies."[61] The *Express* argued that if the South held a distinct voice in its postwar governance, rational minds would reintroduce constitutional obligations to uphold states' rights.

Although conceding organized rebellion as a dead letter, these critiques clung to the principles of states' rights and white supremacy, anticipating white Californians' vociferous opposition to the Fourteenth Amendment only three years later. From the perspective of California's Democrats, the Republican Party dictated Black citizenship as a shameful undermining of white men's historically absolute authority. If the federal government could limit white men's erstwhile jurisdiction in the South, the *Express* implied, how long would it be secure in the West? These attitudes were tied directly to establishing white supremacy at the outset of the state's admission to the union. The end of slavery, white supremacist politicians argued, did not overthrow the established racial hierarchy of California.

In contrast, the *Weekly Union Record* welcomed the coming of emancipation. Although Black Americans' contributions to the Union victory rarely surfaced in white newspaper accounts of Lee's surrender, the *Record* argued the destruction of slavery as the war's most significant outcome. Calling our attention to nineteenth-century newspapers' dual roles as news providers and debate platforms, the *Record* reasoned that "slavery must cease to exist with the progress of civilization.[62] Opting for a tone of levity, the *Weekly Trinity Journal* re-printed a satirical "obituary" of the

[61] "Croak! Croak! Croak!," *The Weekly Union Record*, 15 April 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076422/1865-04-15/ed-1/seq-2/.
[62] "Croak! Croak! Croak!," *The Weekly Union Record*, 15 April 1865.

Confederacy widely shared among Union veterans: "Conceived in sin, born in iniquity, nurtured by tyranny, died of chronic attack of Punch; U.S. Grant attending physician; Abraham Lincoln, undertaker; Jeff Davis, chief mourner."[63] Unlike ordinary Confederate soldiers, Davis was an easy and frequent target of widespread editorial abuse from pro-union newspapers. Editorials like these condemned slavery and championed a free-soil vision of postwar California enjoyed by white men. This view belied the reality of California's multi-racial society built upon a racialized and gendered hierarchy of bound and semi-bound labor.[64] To California's white political rulers, the Civil War had not overthrown this hierarchy, and they attempted to sidestep postwar civil rights protections established by the Reconstruction Amendments by framing race-based immigration restrictions targeted at the Chinese as "antislavery laws," reflecting how Reconstruction policies sustained white supremacy in the volatile frontier.[65]

Returning to power in California following its wartime hiatus, the Democratic Party seized on white fears of potential Chinese citizenship and political influence by arguing that Chinese forms of bound labor were *de facto* slavery outlawed by the

[63] "A Timely *Jeu d'Esprit*," *Weekly Trinity Journal,* 26 August 1865, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1865-08-26/ed-1/seq-1/.
[64] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 207. California statutes in the 1870s that targeted Chinese immigrants avoided explicitly excluding them based on race, which ran the risk of violating the Fourteenth Amendment or the Civil Rights Act of 1870. Instead, California legislators claimed to be breaking up the transpacific slave trade of unfree Chinese laborers, typically represented by enslaved prostitute women. See Mae Ngai, *The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics* (2021).
[65] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 207.

Thirteenth Amendment.[66] In 1866, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment's precursor, the Civil Rights Act, which conferred citizenship on all "persons" born inside the United States but excluded Native Americans and Chinese, providing the legal backing to reinforce white settler-colonialism in postwar California.[67]

California's Democrats accepted the reality of Union victory but rejected the possibility of Black citizenship. Emancipation, they argued, was evidence of the kind of Republican misrule that could threaten California's racial hierarchy. Placerville's *Mountain Democrat* warned readers that "abolitionist misrule" represented an existential threat to all white Americans. Its editors blamed the forces of abolition for bringing about a war that "frightfully increased taxation, brought sorrow and mourning to thousands of homes, [and] filled the whole country with cripples and graves."[68] This argument had little reality in California, which did not experience any food scarcity and rioting that affected communities across the wartime South. As the African American population in California in the 1860s was small, California Democratic Party more routinely emphasized racial differences with the state's Chinese community, who, according to the government census of 1880, numbered

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[66] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 207. See also Michael Bottoms, D., *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (2013) and Joshua Paddison, *American Heathens Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (2012).

[67] Stephen Kantrowitz, "White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and the Two Citizenships of the Fourteenth Amendment," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 10, no.1 (2020), 31. Kantrowitz demonstrates how the nineteenth-century federal government used citizenship as a tool to bring Native people under U.S. jurisdiction, dispossess them of their land, and dissolve tribal organizations rendering assimilation into white American culture the only option for survival.

[68] "What Next?," *The Mountain Democrat*, 15 April 1865, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014487/1865-04-15/ed-1/seq-2/.

nearly 100,000 out of a state-wide population of 800,000.[69]

Whatever the result of the war, California's Democrats did not yield the state's constitutional power to restrict voting. San Francisco's leading Black newspaper, *The Elevator*, reported in 1865 that California's Democrats passed the following resolution: "Resolved, That the Democracy in California are opposed to the extension of the right of suffrage in this State to negroes, Indians, or Chinaman…[and] that neither Congress, nor the President of the United States, have any right under the Federal Constitution, to impose negro suffrage upon any State lately in rebellion, or to regulate the qualifications of voters in any State."[70] Stymied by Confederate defeat but committed to sustaining white supremacy, California's Democrats led the resistance against Reconstruction-era expansions of civil rights for non-whites in the state.

In defining unionism as an ideology, its essential criteria included suppressing Southern rebellion and demonstrating loyalty to the U.S. government. A distinct valence of unionism emerged in California's Black postwar press, which argued that emancipation and equality were the war's central and most prominent consequences. California's small but active network of Black newspapers insisted that victory was not possible without the participation and sacrifices of Black Americans. San Francisco's *Pacific Appeal* eagerly anticipated the nation's first Fourth of July

[69] Susan B. Carter, "Embracing Isolation: Chinese American Migration to Small-Town America, 1882-1943," Presentation at Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America San Francisco, CA, May 3-5, 2012.
[70] "Submitting to Manifest Destiny, *The Elevator*, 30 June 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=EL18650630.2.5&e=-------en--20--1--txt-txIN--------1.

celebration "untrammeled by pro-slavery as heretofore."[71] Unlike white editors, for whom the union's political indivisibility was paramount, Black editors stressed emancipation as evidence of the nation's progress. The *Appeal* pronounced the United States "virtually redeemed from the shackles of slavery by the events which have transpired on and since January 1, 1863," dating the onset of national redemption not with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter but with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the "Day of Jubilee." The *Appeal* predicted the 4th of July would become a day of celebration for Black Americans for the first time. "There is now no man, woman, or child with colored skin," the *Appeal* wrote, "who will not be enabled to rejoice, give thanks, and [sing] a song of freedom on Independence Day." The *Appeal* praised the sacrifices of Black and white Union veterans in advancing the republican ideals of freedom and liberty. Any "civic procession will be greatly embellished," the *Appeal* asserted, "by such an additional host of loyal colored men as will make the general procession look inspiring, fitting, and grand."[72]

Although significant political differences existed between California's partisan white newspapers, they consistently viewed Black postwar citizenship with suspicion, arguing that emancipation ended the system of chattel slavery but did not confer social equality with whites. From the end of the Civil War to the end of the nineteenth century, white racism coalesced around the antebellum Sambo imagery of Black men as "savage brutes" who threatened white womanhood and the nation's

[71] "The Ensuing Fourth of July," *The Pacific Appeal*, 24 June 1865.
[72] "The Ensuing Fourth of July," *The Pacific Appeal*, 24 June 1865.

racial order.[73] Mindful of California's racial politics, Black newspapers defended the loyalty and patriotism of African Americans as "true Americans" by contrasting themselves with the state's larger Chinese population, whom they argued were eternally "alien" and unassimilable. [74] Although emancipation was not on the Republican Party's platform in 1861, its wartime emergence gave the conflict a sense of moral rectitude beyond the presumed illegality of secession. Emancipation, as argued by Black newspapers, Black veterans, and later, Black scholars, made Union victory possible.[75] In the postwar disputes over the definitions of unionism and union cause, collective white memory of the war coalesced around the restoration of the Union only tangentially related to emancipation.[76]

Lincoln and the Union Cause in California

Only days after Californians learned about the news of Lee's surrender, a shocking announcement arrived by telegraph: President Abraham Lincoln was dead, shot in the back of the head by Maryland-born actor and Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth. The *Daily Alta* reported that never had a nation mourned the loss

[73] Mitch Kachun, "'Big Jim' Parker and the Assassination of William McKinley: Patriotism, Nativism, Anarchism, and the Struggle for African American Citizenship," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 1 (2010), 112. "Big Jim" Parker's heroism during the assassination of President McKinley was understood by contemporary Black commentators to illustrate how language, religion, patriotism, and military service unified Black and white Americans. See also: Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations: 1808-1915* (2003) and Kachun, "Forgotten Founder to Indispensable Icon: Crispus Attucks, Black Citizenship, and Collective Memory, 1770-1865," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29, no. 2 (2009): 249-286.
[74] See Michael Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (2013).
[75] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company Press, 1932), 61.
[76] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3.

of a leader more than Americans did for Lincoln. Having failed to secure an honorable victory on the battlefield, Confederate rebels "took the life of its chief representative instead."[77] "Rebellion, war, rapine, ruin, and assassination," the *Alta* reminded California's readers, "these are the principles and practices which form the glories of chivalry and slavery."[78] Lincoln's funeral train set out for Illinois on nearly the same circuit that brought him to Washington in 1861. The *Union Record* reported on a Union veteran fitted with a wooden leg who attended Lincoln's funeral carriage in New York City. He kissed the cloth that hung from the driver's seat and exclaimed to the crowd: "Heaven rest his soul!"[79]

Lincoln's popularity in postwar California was extensive but not unchallenged. Insubordinate Union soldiers in San Francisco who applauded Lincoln's death in public managed to make news headlines. James Walker of the 8th California Infantry risked court-martialing by declaring Lincoln a "Yankee son of a bitch" who "ought to have been killed long ago."[80] Walker's subsequent court-martial resulted in a guilty verdict and sentence of death by firing squad. During an appeal, Walker pleaded that an injury suffered during the invasion of Mexico compounded his frequent drunkenness to a state of *non-compos mentis*.[81]

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[77] "The United States in Mourning," *Daily Alta California*, 16 April 1865, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18650416.2.3&srpos=69&e=09-04-1865-31-12-1865--en--20--61-byDA-txt-txIN-Lincoln-ARTICLE------1.
[78] "The United States in Mourning," *Daily Alta California*, 16 April 1865.
[79] "A Relic of the Assassination," *The Weekly Union Record*, 2 Dec. 1865, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076422/1865-12-02/ed-1/seq-1/.
[80] Harold Holzer, Craig L. Symonds, Frank J. Williams, *The Lincoln Assassination: Crime and Punishment, Myth and Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 135.
[81] Martha Hodes, *Mourning Lincoln* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2015), 11. Lincoln had

Lincoln's first election in 1861 and assassination in 1865 bookended a turbulent period in California history. Partisan pro-Union violence in San Francisco flared up during the war when a mob attacked Democrat-affiliated newspapers, including one astonishing case where the Second Cavalry California Volunteers destroyed the press of a Visalia newspaper in 1863.[82] When newspapers reported on Lincoln's murder in San Francisco, the city slowly, then all at once, descended into chaos. At first, the response was calm as businesses closed and blackened their façades with mourning drapes. By the afternoon, shock gave way to anger and demand for retribution. A mob of Union supporters began "panting for some object upon which to wreak vengeance."[83] Union mobs attacked anti-administration newspapers, the *Democratic Press* and *Monitor*, while the city's overwhelmed police proved incapable of restoring order. Mobs then destroyed the offices of the Democrat-supporting newspapers *News Letter*, *Occidental*, and *Echo du Pacifique*, burning printing equipment in the street before the cheers of onlookers.

By late afternoon, beleaguered city police, supported by a detachment of the U.S. army from Fort Alcatraz, managed to disperse the crowds. Authorities arrested Confederate sympathizers for employing "treasonable language" or rejoicing in Lincoln's death as Fort Alcatraz's batteries issued half-hourly cannon shots in

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supporters and antagonists in every state. While California was inarguably pro-Union and had voted for Lincoln in two elections, it was no exception to the political divisions within states across the Union.

[82] Roger D. McGrath, *Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes: Violence on the Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 68.

[83] "Assassination of President Lincoln," *The Shasta Courier*, 22 April 1865, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015099/1865-04-22/ed-1/seq-1/.

symbolic grief over the fallen president. Contemporary author Theodore H. Hittell, a former state senator, observed that "nowhere was the sorrow for Lincoln's death more heartfelt than in California. As the dreadful intelligence flashed over the wires, gloom settled over the more sober and serious part of the community [while] the more excitable classes became wild with fury against the prompters of secession."[84] Anger over Lincoln's death would fade, but the preservation of Civil War memory and unionism in California had just begun.

Demobilization of the Union Armies

Veterans' place in postwar society hinged partly on their ability to become economically productive, law-abiding citizens. "In any war where great masses of men are involved," argued military historian Dixon Wecter, "the demobilized soldier, trying to find his way back to civil life, is the pivot that turns this group conversion from war to peace. Such times are the final tests of the good soldier."[85] Unprecedented in American history, the demobilization of the Union army was a complex and messy process taking eighteen months to complete. Some nervous Northerners speculated ominously on what would happen when two million men hardened by years of fighting and killing and no longer under the discipline the army might do when set loose. History has shown that most crimes involving returning veterans involved veterans as victims beset by gangs, peddlers, "sharps," and other

[84] Theodore Henry Hittell, *History of California, Volume IV* (San Francisco: N.J. Stone & Company, 1898), 392.
[85] Dixon Wecter, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944), 1.

swindlers targeting veterans' final wages. [86]

Postwar boosterism amplified the allure of California. Edward H. Hall's guidebook, *The Great West* (1866), addressed the general traveler, settler, miner, farmer, and others traveling west for "business or pleasure" but singled out Union veterans, lauding their desire for postwar success as "scarcely less glorious than the victories they have already achieved in the field."[87] Hall explained that the demand for labor in the West was the result of "the consequent high rates of wages which prevail there, and the almost certain competence [financial independence] and probable wealth which is always within reach of the enterprising laborer in the mines [who swell] the tide of immigration into the El Dorado of the West." Hall proclaimed California's unparalleled agricultural, biological, and mineral wealth. "San Francisco grows apace," Hall enthused, "and California gains in population and solid wealth every day. Her inexhaustible resources carry her forward in spite of herself."[88]

The number of veterans in California grew after the war as Union vets surged into the state from other parts of the country following demobilization, helping explain why Union veterans would become so influential in California politics. Records from 1860-1880 show postwar veterans' mobility reflected a decidedly East-West orientation and higher migration rates than their civilian native-born male

[86] Wecter, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, 1-3.
[87] Edward H. Hall, *The Great West: Railroad, Steamboat, and State Guide and Handbook for Travelers, Miners, and Emigrants to the Western Northwestern, and Pacific States and Territories with a Map of the Best Routes to the Gold and Silver Mines* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866), 3.
[88] Hall, *The Great West* 127.

counterparts.[89] Union veterans were a highly mobile population, far more likely to migrate than non-veterans after the Civil War. Following demobilization, thousands of Union veterans chose not to return to their antebellum communities and instead followed the promise of improved economic prospects in the American West.

The perceived availability of jobs and California's natural beauty lured Union veterans westward in droves.[90] While a narrative of Union veterans' "invasion" of the postwar South became the basis of the carpetbagger caricature, the white Union veteran population in the South was less than 2% of the total.[91] Although there are no precise numbers for the total population of Union and Confederate veterans in California, we can get some sense of their scale by expanding the state's fraternal organizations like the GAR. Between 1868 and 1915, California's Union veterans organized over 203 individual GAR "Posts" in California.[92]

In the next chapter, I examine the establishment of California's Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Women's Relief Corps (WRC) in developing the state's union veterans' community. Half of all Union veterans by the 1890s were active GAR members. These records represent a critical access point in better understanding the lived experience of Union veterans in California and the community of Union veterans that included "loyal women." The federal census of

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[89] Kurt Hackemer, "Union Veteran Migration Patterns to the Frontier: The Case of Dakota Territory," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 84.
[90] Chulhee Lee, "Health, Information, and Migration: Geographic Mobility of Union Army Veterans, 1860–1880," *Working Paper 11207*: *National Bureau of Economic Research Paper Series* (2005): 21.
[91] Lee, "Health, Information, and Migration," 21.
[92] The federal census of 1890 included a supplemental enumeration of Union veterans, reflective of their distinct demographic significance. Tragically, a 1943 fire destroyed the data for all states from alphabetically from Alabama to Kentucky, including California.

1890 included a supplemental enumeration of veterans, reflecting their political and demographic significance. Tragically, a 1943 fire destroyed the data for all states alphabetically from Alabama to Kentucky, regretfully including California.

This extraordinary war in which we are engaged falls heavily upon all classes of people, but the most heavily upon the soldier. For it has been said, all that a man hath will he give for his life; and while all contribute of their substance, the soldier puts his life at stake, and often yields it up in his country's cause. The highest merit, then, is due to the soldier.[1]

CHAPTER 2: The Origins of California's Union Veterans' Community

While scholars have paid considerable attention to the American Civil War's well-established roster of elite actors, we still do not know much about ordinary soldiers' lives as veterans in the postbellum United States.[2] This chapter reveals the lives of ordinary Union veterans in California through the origins and development of the state's largest postwar fraternal organization, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), and its auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC). The growth and expansion of the GAR was part of a broader proliferation of postwar associational activity from the end of the Civil War through the 1910s that scholars link to American men's suspicions and anxiety over modernization and industrialization.[3] In this context, what one scholar called the "age of great associational activity," the

[1] Abraham Lincoln, "Remarks at Sanitary Fair, Washington, D.C.," 18 March 1864, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume 7 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 254.
[2] Historian Maris A. Vinovskis memorably asked if social historians had "lost" the Civil War, alluding to the volume of scholarship on military elites compared to the scant work on ordinary soldiers. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 1 (1989): 34.
[3] W. S. Harwood, "Secret Societies in America," *North American Review* 164 (1897), 617.

GAR first mobilized.[4]

The GAR was an exclusive and finite cohort from the outset, as family members, women, and veterans from other wars remained exempt from membership although not excluded from the larger population of Union veterans' communities.[5] Veterans' families were at the center of veterans communities and were often the direct beneficiaries of the GAR's lobbying efforts on pensions.[6] This chapter traces how the GAR and the WRC emerged as the largest and most influential organizations advancing veterans' concerns nationally and in California.[7] The archived records of the GAR present critical documentation of the articulation of unionism as an ideology. When the War Department discharged 1.6 million military personnel between 1865-1866, the cohort they mustered out of service shared significant similarities related to their service. Because individual primary sources on veterans are limited and fragmentary, the institutional records of organized veterans provide an essential resource for gauging Union veterans' political commitments during Reconstruction-era California.

White Union veterans shared a commitment to defeating the Southern rebellion and restoring the union but disagreed about their support of Black

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[4] Gerald Gamm and Robert D. Putnam, "The Growth of Voluntary Associations in America, 1840-1940," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no. 4, (1999): 512.
[5] The Sons of Union Veterans, organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, are the legal successor to the GAR and remain an active memorial organization (http://www.suvcw.org/).
[6] Theda Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (1993), 85, 116. Skocpol argues that the pension system became one of the most successful social policies devised and sustained in the U.S. See also: Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992).
[7] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 189.

Americans' postwar assertions to citizenship. Although it can be challenging to identify the political attitudes of individual veterans, the records of fraternal organizations offer essential insights into the discourse of unionism and the principles that bound Union veterans to fraternities. Of the many Union veterans' organizations that thrived in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the largest was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), founded by a small group of former Union officers in 1867. Over the next three decades, the GAR opened hundreds of individual "Posts" nationwide.

Despite claiming "political neutrality," the GAR operated under a distinctly political ideology. Most white Union veterans who joined the GAR, wherever their personal views on race fell, agreed that emancipation and the contributions of Black soldiers played a pivotal role in Union victory. To emphasize their recognition of Union veterans based on service alone, the GAR did not discriminate against potential members by race. However, local practices of segregation and discrimination persisted, especially in the South, where Black Union veterans predominated. In theory, any man who served honorably in the Union Army during the Civil War earned the status of Union Army veteran, the primary eligibility requirement for GAR membership. GAR membership displaced hierarchies of wartime rank to flatten differences between fellow "comrades" of equal standing in favor of a shared legacy, although former officers typically occupied GAR leadership positions.

Scholarship on Union veterans has focused chiefly on fixed homosocial

narratives of white men. In contrast, this dissertation approaches the history of veterans by including all the men and women who served in or directly supported the Union Army as soldiers or veterans. Seen in this view, a much larger community of unionists emerged who shared similar commitments to the ideology of unionism, whether as veterans or in support of veterans. Excluding the "loyal women" (as they called themselves) from our narratives of Union veterans disregards women's historical significance to veterans' communities that were readily acknowledged, as I will show, by veterans themselves. In taking the concept of a broader veterans' community seriously, we encounter a much larger cohort promoting unionism and memorializing the Civil War during Reconstruction-era California.

In those handfuls of cases where Black men and women or loyal white women appear in the narratives of Union veterans, scholars render them as passive and peripheral historical characters lacking the dynamism of men. One Civil War scholar concluded, "The world of veterans remained male."[8] Arbitrarily limiting the historical world of Union veterans to men undercuts women's importance in the advancement of unionism in California. I challenge this conventional wisdom by linking the history of the Woman's Relief Corps in California with the history of the state's Union veterans. In my discussion of these men and women, I demonstrate that California, while geographically removed from the Civil War, emerged as an active site of unionism during Reconstruction due to the sheer numbers of Union veterans who

[8] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 219.

moved to the state and their penchant for organizing.

The WRC's official status as an auxiliary belies its significance to the thousands of Union veterans it supported and the thousands of women who made up its nationwide network.[9] On a similar basis of volunteerism and patriotism that motivated Union soldiers, these loyal women provided medical care to veterans, organized fundraising events, assisted war widows and orphans, promoted patriotic educational curricula, and organized commemorative events like Memorial Day. Beyond the importance of their work in the veterans' community, the history of the WRC also forms part of the rise of subsequent independent women's associations.[10] In addressing these developments in California, this chapter is indebted to scholarship that has explicated postwar practices of masculinity and the psychological impact of wartime trauma.[11] In addition, this chapter draws from scholarship that investigates

[9] John C. Kennedy argues that the WRC helped propel women's activism, especially in by the early twentieth century, despite their subordinate status to the GAR. Kennedy, *A Perfect Union: The Woman's Relief Corps and Women's Organizational Activism, 1861-1930*, (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 2017), *vii*.

[10] "Societies of the War of the Rebellion," *The Journal of Education* 63, 17 (1906): 458-468.

[11] Ian Isherwood's comparative analysis of Civil War veterans and their Great War counterparts reveals how both shared the burden of survival, the physical and psychological reminders of war, and a duty to memorialize the fallen. After 1918, "doughboys" and Civil War veterans shared the same physical "spaces of memory" in American society on Memorial Day parades and Armistice Day observances (although, pointedly, not membership in the GAR). Isherwood, "When the Hurlyburly's Done / When the Battle's Lost and Won: Service, Suffering, and Survival of Civil War and Great War Veterans," The Journal of the Civil War Era 9, no. 1 (2019): 109-112. Regarding women's civil war leadership and patriotic organizations, see Wendy Hamand Venet, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (1991), Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (1994), Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (1998), Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics* (2006), Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (2012), M. R. Cordell, *Courageous Women of the Civil War: Soldiers, Spies, Medics, and More* (2016), and Giesberg (ed.), *Women and the American Civil War: North-South Counterpoints* (2018).

how the Civil War disrupted or sustained forms of gender hierarchy.[12]

Like any contingent social category, the term veteran has changed over time.[13] Before the Civil War, a veteran was simply any man who served a term of military service in the Continental Army, U.S. Army, or local militias. Civil War veterans developed a distinct class identity from civilians and veterans of other wars due to the stakes of the war, the size of Civil War armies, and the expanded public profile of veterans.[14] Some Union veterans were frustrated by the rapid social and economic

[12] Key works include Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914* (1980) and Francesca Morgan, *Women and Patriotism in Jim Crow America* (2005), Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (1997), Tera W. Hunter, *To "Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (1997), Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife & Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (1997), Nancy Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms: Race, Rights, and the Politics of Household in the Delta, 1861-1875* (2003), Noralee Frankel, *Freedom's Women: Black Women and Families in Civil War Era Mississippi* (1999), Mary Farmer-Kaiser, *Freedwomen and the Freedmen's Bureau Race, Gender, and Public Policy in the Age of Emancipation* (2010), Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (2012), Sharon Romeo, *Gender and the Jubilee: Black Freedom and the Reconstruction of Citizenship in Civil War Missouri* (2016), Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (2003), Rebecca S. Montgomery, *The Politics of Education in the New South: Women and Reform in Georgia, 1890-1930* (2006), and LeeAnn Whites, *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (2016).

[13] Some scholars contend that employing "Union army" over "United States army" implicitly supports the Confederate view of secession as a "nation collapsed." These scholars propose a wholesale usage switch by historians to "United States army," a revisionist action that lacks merit. I employ the terms "Union army" and "Union veteran" rather than "United States Army and "United States Army veteran" because that is how they described themselves to differentiate from veterans of all other conflicts. The term *union* also carried great ideological weight for Union veterans. The men who volunteered for the sixteen federal armies of the United States were staunchly committed to the preservation of the union of states and its republican form of government whereas Confederate armies represented the forces of despotism and treason. Contemporary civilians, soldiers, and veterans interchangeably used the terms "Union armies," "northern armies," and "federal armies," to describe military forces loyal to the U.S. government during the Civil War. Employing the term "Union veteran" neither lends credibility to the Confederate experiment nor undermines the legitimacy of the United States as a political entity. See Michael Landis, "A Proposal to Change the Words We Use When Talking About the Civil War," *Smithsonian Magazine* (2015), Christopher Wilson, "We Legitimize the 'So-Called' Confederacy with Our Vocabulary, and That's a Problem," *The Smithsonian Magazine* (2017), and Paul Finkelman, "The Appeasement of 1850," Congress *and The Crisis of the Congress and The Crisis of the 1850s* (2012).

[14] John Casey, *New Men: Reconstructing the Image of the Veteran in Late Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 4, 73.

change after the war. Consequently, they sought comfort in the antebellum and wartime past within the walls of the GAR and other veterans' organizations. Union veterans joined the GAR to maintain fellowship, promote patriotism, memorialize the fallen, aid war widows and orphans, and lobby for federal pension relief.[15]

As a social club and site of networking, local GAR Posts functioned like similar organizations such as the Knights of Labor, the Grange, Odd Fellows, or the Freemasons. Progressive-era historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. argued that American men in the nineteenth century had matured into a "nation of joiners."[16] One study has demonstrated that by 1897, an estimated 73% of adult males in the U.S. belonged to at least one fraternal organization.[17] The GAR was the largest and most politically influential among the veterans' fraternal organizations that bloomed into existence following the war.[18] In turn, no institution was more critical to developing and disseminating unionism as an ideology than the GAR. The official history of the GAR characterized its members as "all who honored themselves" by enlisting in the Union army, whose "true allegiance" was based upon "a paramount respect for, and fidelity to [the U.S.] constitution and [its] laws."[19] Disloyalty, the GAR maintained, was the equivalent of dishonor.

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[15] Casey, *New Men*, 73.
[16] Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 2.
[17] Lynn Dumenil, *Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 32.
[18] See David Beito, "'This Enormous Army': The Mutual Aid Tradition of American Fraternal Societies before the Twentieth Century" (1997) and Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (1990).
[19] Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1889), *iii*.

As a rigidly exclusionary fraternity, the GAR was adamant about distinguishing Union veterans and veterans from all other conflicts while supporting U.S. military interventions abroad.[20] Owing to their patriotism and loyalty to the U.S. government, the GAR emphatically endorsed the war against Spain and, later, U.S. entry into WWI. One GAR leader observed that Spanish American War veterans were "entitled to all the honor we can give them, and will no doubt receive the thanks of a grateful people; they will doubtless, if they have not already done so, organize a society on their own, but there can be no merit in their becoming members of our organization, founded under different auspices and based upon entirely different principles."[21] This distinction provided an essential foundation for the ideology of unionism that rendered service in the Union army as separate and distinct from all other wars.

While all U.S. soldiers served their country in uniform, only Civil War soldiers had saved the republican form of government and the nation itself from permanent fragmentation. Black and white Union veterans who supported emancipation would add that unionism as an ideology was responsible for destroying American slavery, a providential act that transcended the restoration of the union by cleansing the nation of its sinful and barbarous racialized labor system. Former Union General Thaddeus S. Clarkson reminded Americans that "when the bugle blast of war

[20] The Sons of Union Veterans independently organized in 1881. In 1954, Congress chartered the SUV as the legal successor to the Grand Army of the Republic. Sons of Union Veterans, "National Headquarters," https://www.suvcw.org/.
[21] Grand Army of the Republic, *Journal of the National Encampment* (1898), quoted from McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 235.

was sounded, [veterans] not only buckled on our armor and went to the tented field, but we remained there and kept up our fight until that dear old flag, our own star-spangled banner, waved gloriously and triumphantly over every foot of American soil; until the genius of emancipation had redeemed a race of slaves, until the Constitution was obeyed, the laws maintained, and the union saved."[22] The commitment and sacrifices of Union veterans, Clarkson reasoned, galvanized people everywhere living under despotic rulers: "The oppressed and downtrodden of all lands have been inspired with new hope and courage by the result achieved in [our] mighty conflict, and now, a third of a century afterword, they look across the seas and, pointing to the United States say, 'There is a people who govern themselves.'"[23] In this articulation, Union veterans' defeat of the Confederate armies restored the American Union and established their credentials as the exemplars of republicanism in the nineteenth-century world.

[22] *The Los Angeles Herald*, 24 March 1897, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042461/1897-03-24/ed-1/seq-3/>.
[23] The Los Angeles Herald, 24 March 1897.

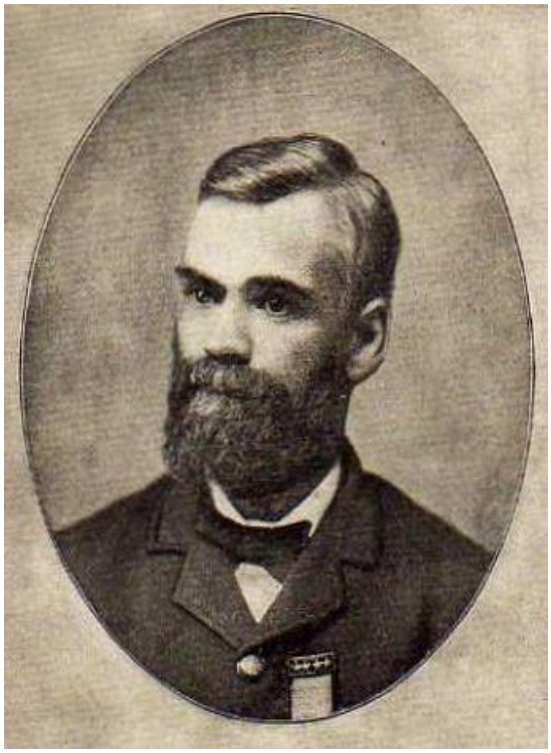

Figure 2.1: GAR Commander-in-Chief, Robert B. Beath.[24]

Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, a former Union army surgeon for the 14th Illinois Infantry, organized the first GAR Post on April 6, 1866, in Decatur, Illinois, almost five years after Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter.[25] Stephenson and other early founders imagined local GAR chapters, or "Posts," meeting spaces shared by Union veterans irrespective of class, region, race, political background, birthplace, or religious affiliation, just as the Union Army counted a diversity of men among its ranks. In 1868, the GAR elected its first Commander-in-Chief, John A. Logan, a

[24] Frontispiece of Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1889).
[25] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 24.

strident unionist known for his wartime boast that the Union armies would "hew their way to the mouth of the Mississippi with their swords."[26] On the same day, the GAR passed a resolution to support GAR member Ulysses S. Grant's campaign for U.S. president.[27] Despite the close associations of the GAR's founders with the Republican Party, the GAR officially strove to maintain an apolitical public profile to reach out to veterans outside the GOP's voting orbit. When asked about accusations of partisanship, GAR Commander J.M. Davis claimed that "the Grand Army of the Republic is non-political in its character, embracing within its ranks representatives of all political creeds…If comrades, in exercising the rights of citizenship, transgress the fundamental principles of our order, they retard its progress and work and do to it an irreparable injury."[28] In this way, the GAR was the most inclusive and exclusive postwar fraternal organization in the U.S.

The most richly documented aspect of Union veterans' lives appears as surviving federal pension application files. These documents disclose insights into the physical and psychological wounds of the war, veterans' economic status and geographic mobility, and the relationships between and among veterans.[29] Even then,

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[26] *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 8 Feb. 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1868-02-08/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[27] *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 25 Jan. 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1868-01-25/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[28] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 24 June 1884, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1884-06-24/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[29] Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992). By the end of the nineteenth century, the cost of the Union veterans' pension system was among the most contentious political issues in the U.S. The Republican-controlled federal government financed the pension system through high tariffs on imported goods that protected northern industries and made it more difficult for Southerners to export cash crops like cotton. The

significant limitations caution against over-generalization. First, the great difficulty acquiring pensions in the 1860s and 1870s convinced most veterans not to apply, leaving limited records. Scholars discovered much greater pension documentation after Congress passed the Arrears Act (1879), which provided back payments to any qualifying Union Army veteran from their original discharge date. This considerable expansion of social welfare motivated thousands of veterans and their dependents to apply. By the end of the nineteenth century, the federal government had constructed seventeen Soldiers' Homes (previously known as asylums), although only a relatively small number of veterans qualified.[30] "Soldiers' Homes" records provide scholars with an early record of actuarial data on morbidity and mortality.[31] Owing in no small part to the lobbying efforts of the GAR, Congress further expanded the Union veterans' pensions through the Dependent Pensions Act of 1890, which pensioned all honorably discharged veterans with a disability that prevented them from performing manual labor. By 1895—at the height of the GAR's lobbying influence—veterans' pensions accounted for 40% of all federal expenditures.[32]

In Mary Dearing's telling, enterprising Union veterans with political

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revenues from these tariffs financed payments for Union veterans and their families. See also: Megan J. McClintock, "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families," *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 2 (1996): 456–480.

[30] Susannah J. Ural, "'Every Comfort, Freedom, and Liberty": A Case Study of Mississippi's Confederate Home," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 55-56, 74. Ural's case study of a Mississippi veterans Soldiers' Home (informally, "Beauvoir") in Biloxi, Mississippi counted Confederate veterans, wives, widows, and three African Americans in its care, reflecting important trends in health care reform, regulation, and efficiency at the turn of the twenty-century.

[31] Marten, *Sing Not War,* 20-21.

[32] Sung Won Kang and Hugh Rockoff, *After Johnny Came Marching Home: The Political Economy of Veterans' Benefits in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research (2007): 31-32.

aspirations, like GAR co-founder John A. Logan, leveraged the GAR to influence congressional campaigns over the next three decades.[33] However, records show Union veterans, whether members of the GAR or not, consistently supported Republican candidates, especially Union veteran candidates, without requiring any prodding by the GAR.[34] Dearing's argument about the close relationship between the GAR and the Republican Party is more convincing, as Republican politicians measurably profited from the distinction of veterans' votes. From its outset, the GAR was an influential lobbying group. As the first organized interest group in the United States to successfully use the political process to transfer large sums of money to themselves systematically, organized Union veterans established a precedent for increased federal spending and even larger interest-group transfers in the twentieth century.[35]

For Union veterans, serving in the Union Army and surviving the Civil War produced implications beyond political affiliation. Saving the Union, they argued, was a peerless and life-altering experience. Union veteran and jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes' observed that "the generation that carried on the war has been set apart by its experience. Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched by fire…[year] after year, comrades of the dead follow, with public honor, procession and commemorative flags and funeral march-honor and grief from us who stand

[33] Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*: *The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 110.
[34] Randall G. Holcombe, "Veterans Interests and the Transition to Government Growth: 1870-1915," *Public Choice* 99, no. 3/4 (1999): 313.
[35] Holcombe, "Veterans Interests," 313.

almost alone and have seen the best and noblest of our generation pass away."[36] Holmes' underscored how Union veterans, by their service experiences as individuals and collectively with their regiments, felt permanently separated from civilians by this singular experience. Holmes argued that veterans carried an honorable burden to memorialize those who fell in the war and the veterans dying each year from war-related injuries or ailments.

Holmes' observations invite the question: how successful were Union veterans transitioning back to civilians? Earlier scholarship presumed most Union soldiers returned home and blended seamlessly and successfully into their antebellum communities.[37] More recent evidence suggests veterans experienced a wide range of transition experiences, from those of captains of industry and future politicians to others that suffered from debilitating physical or psychological war-related injuries and others that struggled with substance abuse. As walking reminders of the ongoing cost of the Civil War, Union veterans most grievously afflicted by war-related ailments were often cut adrift from the social moorings of northern and western society, even most painfully from their own families.[38] Recent analysis has revealed how Union Army doctors prescribed massive doses of dangerously addictive opiates,

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[36] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Memorial Day Speech," delivered before John Sedgwick Post No. 4, Grand Army of the Republic [30 May 1884], Keene, New Hampshire, https://speakola.com/ideas/oliver-wendell-holmes-memorial-day-speech-1884.
[37] Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (New York: Liveright, 2014), 103. In contrast, Paul Cimbala insists most veterans recovered from the horrors of battle and camp life based on a steadfast belief that their service had been honorable, and their memories of the war were bearable, if not glorious. Cimbala contends veterans quickly reestablished old familial relationships and engaged in the postwar economy to the best of their ability while not relinquishing their moral high ground as Union soldiers. See Cimbala, *Veterans North and South: The Transition from Soldier to Civilian after the American Civil War* (2015).
[38] Jordan, *Marching* Home, 103.

morphine, and laudanum for numerous medical conditions, establishing a broad precedent for addiction.[39]

Nineteenth-century Americans understood opiate addiction as violating prevailing norms of manhood, morality, and mental health. Beyond impugning their honor, Union veterans risked the denial of pensions if charged with the "deviancy" of addiction.[40] Public concerns over personal independence, charity, and the role of the government circumscribed civilians' complex views on Union veterans, at once thankful for their service but skeptical and even antagonistic toward fellow veterans unwilling to flourish in a postwar world.[41] The grim reality of thousands of destitute veterans unsupported without a social safety net increased pressure on charities to provide support.[42] Rather than obligation, sympathy was the primary criterion by which the federal government and charity workers judged the need of Union veteran petitioners. Sympathy for veterans demanded affinity, but not inclusivity, as "unworthy" veterans, including those suspected of "intemperance, profligacy, inconstancy [infidelity], or recklessness," could be refused financial support on moral grounds.[43]

Confederate and Union veterans rarely came together in significant numbers

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[39] Jonathan S. Jones, "Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans and Opiate Addiction," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 10, no. 2 (2020), 185-187.
[40] Jones, "Opium Slavery, 201, 204.
[41] Jeff McClurkin's study of postwar Virginia argues Confederate veterans faced the same challenges as Union veterans but without the assistance of the federal government. Confederate veterans' families turned to assistance from local churches, state governments, and elites. See McClurken, *Take Care of the Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 3-4.
[42] Sarah E. Gardner, "When Service Is Not Enough: Charity's Purpose in the Immediate Aftermath of the Civil War," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 1 (2019): 29, 49.
[43] Gardner, "When Service Is Not Enough," 49.

to commemorate the war. Still, on the occasions they did, it created a stir in the press eager to promote reconciliation. Captivating photographs of aging former enemies shaking smiling and hands generated widespread newspaper coverage as white northern civilians proved far more eager for reconciliation with the South and Confederate veterans than Union veterans. As the Civil War retreated further back in time, reconciliation between the civilian North and South came to rest on a sense of shared "whiteness" which lauded the demonstrated bravery of all white American soldiers.[44]

Proponents of national reconciliation sympathetic to the white South argued that neither Black Americans' contributions to victory nor emancipation merited inclusion in the consensus of the war's legacy.[45] For those white Union veterans who shared racist attitudes and beliefs common in their communities, unionism was compatible with white supremacy by acknowledging Black military service but denouncing "social equality" between non-whites and whites.[46] One historian has suggested that the modern rehabilitation of Black Union soldiers only arrived through the popularity of the film *Glory* (1990), a roughly accurate depiction of the famed 54th Massachusetts infantry regiment composed of Black soldiers led by white officers.

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[44] M. Keith Harris, *Across the Bloody Chasm: The Culture of Commemoration Among Civil War Veterans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 5-7.
[45] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Black Veterans Recall the Civil War," *The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader*, eds., Michael Barton and Larry M. Logue (New York: New York University Press, 2007).
[46] Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 181 (1990): 101. When discussing racial differences in the historical past, sometimes scholars confuse "race" as a timeless phenomenon rather than as an ideology reflective of its time and subject to change. Fields argues well-meaning thinkers mistakenly gloss over the ideology of race because they have accepted its premises as existing "outside of history."

Glory's redemptive story of Black Union soldiers as heroes starkly contrasted with their racialized depiction in *Birth of a Nation* (1915), which demonized them a century earlier.[47] The first modern academic investigation of the GAR concluded that it treated Black Union veterans with little more than a "separate and unequal status."[48] However, more recently, this account has been problematized by evidence that integrated GAR Posts were more numerous than previously understood.[49]

Despite being the objects of racism, discrimination, and violence, Black Union veterans occupied privileged positions in their communities, enjoyed more economic prosperity than Black non-veterans, and materially benefitted (along with their families) from the federal pension system.[50] The deep-rooted connections of wartime service to citizenship were reflected by the actions of widows of Black soldiers—the largest group of Union widows in the South—who successfully petitioned for survivors' benefits as part of broader assertions for full citizenship during Reconstruction.[51] The GAR's existence as a decades-long, nationwide, interracial fraternal organization in a society otherwise rigidly separated by a color line suggests the degree to which white Union veterans, at some level, recognized a

[47] Donald Robert Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 195-198. See also: Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm* (1956), the Southern Society Project, *The Black Military Experience* (1982), and Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle* (1990).
[48] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).
[49] Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 6-8.
[50] Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 8.
[51] Brandi C. Brimmer, *Claiming Union Widowhood: Race, Respectability, and Poverty in the Post-Emancipation South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 1-3.

bond with Black veterans who experienced similar wartime hardships.[52] Despite the GAR's official endorsement of emancipation and recognition of Black veterans, Black Americans who served in or supported the Union armies remained unheralded in postwar U.S. culture.[53]

Reflective of their strong connection to unionism, Black Union veterans organized GAR Posts soon after the war ended.[54] Historians have documented the establishment of Black GAR Posts in Arkansas, Washington D.C., Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.[55] By the end of the 1880s, every state in the South featured GAR Posts. Still, most remained segregated meeting spaces as a concession by the GAR leadership to southern white discomfort over biracial organizations.[56] In the American West, there were too few Black Union veterans to organize Posts, although records show at least one Post in Marysville (Yuba County) integrated with Black members.[57]

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[52] Brimmer, *Claiming Union Widowhood*, 3.
[53] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 105-106. Du Bois argued that the Civil War was "the largest and most successful slave revolt at the time," when all the slaves in the vicinity of the invading Union armies left the plantations and rushed to the army. "It was this revolt of slaves, DuBois argued, "and the prospect of a much larger movement among the 4,000,000 other slaves, which was the real cause of the sudden cessation of the war."
[54] Donald Robert Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 61-62.
[55] Gannon, *Won Cause*, 201.
[56] Brundage, "Black Veterans," 425-426.
[57] Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 87, and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, "California GAR Posts and History", https://www.suvcw.org/garrecords/garposts/ca.htm. According to Gannon, the GAR disbanded the Marysville Post in less than a year for reasons that remain unclear.

The GAR committed itself to defining veterans' eligibility regardless of wartime rank or race, a principle of essential equality the founders called "the broad foundation stone on which our Order rests."[58] Black veterans sought membership in the GAR partly because it offered a measure of social recognition and a sense of "manly respect" denied them as enslaved men; however, even as members of the GAR, Black Union veterans struggled to anchor their wartime service in public memory.[59] Although the GAR did not use its formidable lobbying strength to advocate for equal civil rights for Black Americans in any significant way, the GAR did assist Black veterans in completing pension applications and the honor of an official GAR funeral ceremony, an essential measure of public recognition.[60] Honorable service in the Union army also provided the basis for Black veterans to run for office, as evidenced by the emergence of prominent Reconstruction-era politicians Robert Smalls of South Carolina, P.B.S. Pinchback of Louisiana, and Josiah Walls of Florida. In a defiant expression of unionism, Black Union veterans in the South risked their safety and their families when they donned a GAR or Union army uniform in public.

In 1868, the GAR appointed Lucius Fairchild, a former Union general who lost an arm at Gettysburg, its first Commander in Chief. As the first commander, Fairchild articulated the GAR's principles of "fraternity, charity, and loyalty" through the GAR. Fairchild wrote that the fraternity of the GAR embraced "all who honored

[58] Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 5-6.
[59] Brundage, "Black Veterans," 437.
[60] Shaffer, *After the Glory*, 155-156, and Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 14.

themselves by enlisting in the Union Army."[61] Charity was the great "leveling experience" of military service, Fairchild argued, and ought to be "so broad as to [include] within its benefactions sufferers of every class, and of all sections of our country." Fairchild defined loyalty as an unwavering commitment to the system of free republican government in the United States and "discountenancing" acts of insurrection, treason, or rebellion. Each GAR member, just as he had done as a Union soldier, pledged his loyalty to the United States. Fairchild imagined that the men who once engaged in extraordinary wartime violence as soldiers would become virtuous citizens in peacetime, promoting "universal liberty, equal rights, and justice to all men [in] the spirit of goodwill and friendship for all law-abiding citizens."[62]

Due to suspicions over its secretive meetings and presumed partisanship with the GOP, the earliest iteration of the GAR struggled to recruit members in the 1860s and early 1870s, and it was not because veterans went into "hibernation." In the early postwar era, Union veterans organized in smaller numbers, typically at the company or regiment level, and few of them pursued pensions. As late as 1880, Union veterans comprised only 8% of all pension recipients.[63] In the crowded space of Union veterans' associations and fraternities, the GAR might have collapsed from inertia without the passage of the Arrears Act of 1879. The Arrears Act authorized all Union veterans, with proof of service and war-related disabilities, to claim—in a lump sum—all back payments since the war's end, which stimulated thousands of

[61] Lucius Fairchild, "Introduction," Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1889), 14.
[62] Fairchild, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 14.
[63] Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System," 97-98.

applications for pensions and GAR membership because the GAR helped veterans apply. In 1882, the GAR established the Washington D.C.-based Pensions Committee, a "pressure group" that operated in the capital for Union veterans over the next two decades. By 1890, the GAR membership reached 400,000, or approximately 39% of all surviving Union veterans.[64]

The GAR's origins in California began on April 15, 1867, when T.J. Blakeney established the GAR's Department of California (which later included Nevada) in San Francisco.[65] California newspapers reacted to the establishment of the GAR in expectedly politicized ways. Welcoming the establishment of the GAR in California in 1868 as a counterpoint for questionable federal leadership, one pro-Republican newspaper darkly speculated that "if Congress fails to remove Johnson—if its will is persistently defied, and if its work is to be torn to shreds by a vicious President… we shall be in worse conditions that if Lee had conquered in Virginia."[66] California's Democratic-supporting newspapers denounced the GAR as an undemocratic and unconstitutional militia. One Democrat newspaper accused the GAR of being a secretive, paramilitary wing of the Republican Party.[67] "The Republican Party," it warned, "to whom the GAR pledged its allegiance, [is] already doing all it [can] to overthrow the Supreme Court and destroy the Executive Authority of Constitutional

[64] Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System," 16.
[65] *Weekly Calaveras Chronicle*, 29 Feb. 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93052977/1868-02-29/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[66] *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 29 Feb. 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1868-02-29/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[67] *The Placer Herald*, 29 Feb. 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014998/1868-02-29/ed-1/seq-2/.

government."[68] Another Democratic newspaper mocked the GAR by comparing them to "ghouls" who "sally forth from their dark lantern meetings to make political food of the dead."[69] Responding to Democratic newspaper allegations against the establishment of California's GAR, one Republican newspaper assured Californians that the GAR was "an open organization with a simple mission of supporting disabled veterans and the widows and orphans of fallen soldiers."[70]

Early in Reconstruction-era California, contemporaries recognized the potentially decisive power of Union veterans in elections. In anticipation of the presidential election in 1868 pitting Union hero and GAR member Ulysses S. Grant against Democratic challenger (and noted Lincoln critic) Horatio Seymour, one California newspaper estimated at least 10,000 California GAR members could be counted on to vote the Grant ticket, correctly predicting that it would be enough to push the balance of a close vote.[71] Reflective of California's deeply contested political landscape and the powerful appeal of Democratic candidates, Grant narrowly won California's electoral votes but trounced Seymour nationally with 72.8% of the electoral vote.[72]

Like the GAR itself, the California GAR's growth began modestly in the late

[68] *The Placer Herald*, 29 Feb. 1868.
[69] *The Union Democrat*, 20 June 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025134/1868-06-20/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[70] *The Shasta Courier*, 21 March 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015099/1868-03-21/ed-1/seq-2/.
[71] *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 7 March 1868, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1868-03-07/ed-1/seq-3/.
[72] 1868 Election, The UC Santa Barbara American Presidency Project, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1868.

1860s, but by the 1880s, California GAR Posts were fixtures across the state. In recognition of the expansive growth of the state's GAR membership, in 1886, national GAR leaders selected San Francisco to host the National Encampment. This event hosted 320,000 Union veterans over a weekend of events. At least according to one Bay Area newspaper, unionism was alive and well in California in the 1880s. Following the National Encampment, the newspaper's editorial praised California's "magnificent hospitality" tendered to the Grand Army delegates as reflective of the magnitude of unionism in the state."[73]

Figure 2.2: Commemorative golden GAR membership badge presented to Ulysses S. Grant, December 18, 1879.[74]

[73] *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 2 Sept. 1886, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042460/1886-09-02/ed-1/seq-1/>.
[74] Ulysses S. Grant Gold Membership Badge, ID: AF.3113, Catalog: 3113, Accession: 18528, National Museum of American History: Behring Center, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1413552.

Affirming California's importance to the GAR in the 1880s, national GAR leaders selected San Jose to host the National Encampment only two years later, a significant cultural event akin to a festival. Reports from San Jose described the encampment as "crowded with gay throngs from the city, valley, and abroad, all anxious to see the old soldiers who have congregated here."[75] Connecting California to the Civil War, GAR leader Russell A. Alger reminded veterans that the Pacific coast owed its prosperity to the Union armies' bravery and the GAR's diligence. "In reflecting on the prosperity of California," Alger said, "it should not be forgotten that it is all due to the services of the GAR; without the deeds of the boys in blue, the country would have been ruined, and the Pacific never would have developed. The GAR does not want [money] for its blood, but gratitude demands that it should be cared for."[76] The primary group that cared for the neediest Union veterans in California was the GAR's official women-led and run auxiliary organization, the Woman's Relief Corps.

Loyal Women and the Woman's Relief Corps

The average Union soldier marched off to fight in the Civil War with the expectation that women's roles consisted of providing material and moral support.[77] Most Americans believed fighting was exclusively a "man's business."[78] Nineteenth-

[75] *Los Angeles Herald*, 23 April 1890, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025968/1890-04-23/ed-1/seq-1/>.
[76] *Los Angeles Herald*, 23 April 1890.
[77] Thavolia Glymph, *The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 6.
[78] McCurry, "Enemy Women and the Laws of War in the American Civil War," *Law and History Review* 35, no. 3 (2017): 668, 704. Women are never "outside" of war. As Stephanie McCurry has

century Americans' understanding of sexual differences did not consider the possibility of womanhood as historically contingent.[79] In this context, most northern women supported the Union cause without concomitant support for women's equality.[80] In what historian Stuart McConnel called the "static world" of the GAR, women's primary wartime role was to cheer on the men.[81] Although discounted by many subsequent historians, the voluntary labor provided by "loyal women" did not go unnoticed by Union veterans. GAR president Robert B. Beath praised the "magnificent showing of the executive ability of the ladies of the Relief Corps in organization."[82] "Large as is the amount thus expended for relief," Beath wrote, "it does not fully show the worth of this auxiliary [which has] so greatly aided the Grand Army in the relief of the unfortunate and needy comrades and their families."[83] As I will show, California's loyal women were the opposite of passive actors in their support of the Union veterans and mobilization to promote unionism across the state.

A recent analysis of state-level GAR and WRC data sets over four periods (1884–1890, 1891–1907, 1908–1917, and 1918–1924) has demonstrated statistically significant linkages between each organization. The data shows that GAR Posts

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shown, the federal government revised the jurisprudential guide governing the conduct of U.S. soldiers in the field (the Lieber Code) to classify southern women as "enemies of the state" under obligation to take an oath of loyalty. Loyal Black and white Union women serving in the Union army make a strong case for women being "inside" the war.

[79] Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 70, 73, 77.

[80] Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 9.

[81] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 218.

[82] Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1889), *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 660.

[83] Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*.

declined less rapidly in regions with stronger WRC associations. [84] Loyal women not only supported the GAR to a large degree, but they also sustained them. Under the guidance of canny women leaders, the WRC's organizational flexibility provided the Order the means to pivot, by the 1920s, into an influential, more independent women's association.[85]

The Civil War disrupted the worlds of men and women and their antebellum gender expectations. Activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued that the war fundamentally altered the nature of "American womanhood" because it provided women, for the first time, with direct, tangible experiences in citizenship.[86] New channels of wartime employment intensified a desire for what Stanton called women's "personal individual liberty." This desire spurred "a revolution in woman herself, as important in its results as the changed condition of the former slaves." From Stanton's view, women's quest for equality remained incomplete "until the chains of ignorance and selfishness are everywhere broken, and woman shall stand by man's side recognized equal in rights as she is now in duties."[87]

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[84] Adam Chamberlain and Alixandra B. Yanus, "'Our One Great Hope': The Interdependence of the Woman's Relief Corps and the Grand Army of the Republic," *Armed Forces & Society* (2021), 1-3, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X211001536.

[85] Chamberlain and Yanus, "'Our One Great Hope'," 3.

[86] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 20-21. The exigencies of the war upended traditionally gendered social spaces as women joined the Union armies to labor as nurses, cooks, spies, and in some exceptional cases, soldiers. Approximately 18,000 women worked in Union hospitals where job titles indicated race and class. Union army officials reserved the title of "nurse" to middle-class white women while categorizing working-class white and black women as cooks and laundress even if they labored as nurses. Even most white middle-class Union army nurses were only belatedly awarded pensions decades after the war, while working-class white and Black women encountered resistance in qualifying for government relief.

[87] E. C., Stanton, Anthony, S. B., Gage, M. J., & Harper, I. H, *History of Woman Suffrage, Volume II* (Rochester: Susan B. Anthony, 1887), 23. Stanton's presumption of the categories of "women" and

Postwar women's activists discovered that as much as the Civil War had disrupted American life, it did not prompt wholesale changes in the power relations between men and women. On the contrary, historian Judith Giesburg has argued that wars consistently do more to sustain gender hierarchies than overthrow them.[88] Given the legal and cultural conventions that constricted nineteenth-century women's lives in public, organizations like the Woman's Relief Corps offered opportunities to expand (if not overturn) the boundaries of the "domestic sphere."[89] The women who established the WRC never considered themselves "outside" of the Civil War but were present at its outset, through all its most significant challenges, and remained even after victory in the field. "In the dark days of rebellion," one WRC leader remembered, loyal women were soldiers' "most devoted and self-sacrificing friends. As wives, mothers, daughters, sweethearts, and loyal women, [we] were the worthy counselors and coadjutors of the brave men who found glory on the rugged front of an implacable war."[90] Unionism, as characterized by the WRC, was not the exclusive purview of men.

"enslaved" has been challenged by Colleen C. O'Brien, "'The White Women All Go for Sex': Frances Harper on Suffrage, Citizenship, and the Reconstruction South," *African American Review* 43, no. 4 (2009): 605–620 and Alison M. Parker, *Articulating Rights: Nineteenth-Century American Women on Race, Reform, and the State* (2010).

[88] Judith Giesberg, *Sex and the Civil War: Soldiers, Pornography, and the Making of American Morality* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 7.

[89] I am wary of conceptualizing loyal Union women's story as "contribution history," a methodology that purports to describe women's contributions to, their status in, and their oppression by, male-defined societies. A historian in this guise asks what women's contributions were to movements like abolition or the New Deal, with the movement typically foregrounding the narrative. See Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 1/2 (1975), 6.

[90] *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Department of California, Woman's Relief Corps: Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic* (Oakland: Woman's Relief Corps, 1894), The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, 125.

The WRC was the largest, but not the only loyal women's organization active in the late nineteenth century. The "Loyal Ladies League, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic," founded in 1881, also raised funds on behalf of needy veterans. By 1910, the Ladies Leagues reached 60,000 members, organized across twenty-nine states, and supervised an impressive annual charity budget of over $30,000.[91] The primary difference between the Ladies League and the WRC was membership criteria and, later, size. According to the Ladies League's charter, only blood-kin relatives of veterans could be members, which restricted the recruitment efforts while reinscribing women's civic standing through their relation to men. The WRC's earliest years only admitted mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of honorably discharged soldiers and sailors. Cognizant of the limits of exclusionary membership, the WRC modified membership criteria to include all "loyal women of good moral character," including the married and unmarried, childless and mothers, and wives, widows, and sisters."[92] The socially conservative WRC members who opposed membership expansion joined the Ladies League. Like the GAR, WRC membership was theoretically irrespective of race, but in practice, loyal Black women organized in separate, segregated Orders.[93]

Following thirteen years of local loyal women's associations supporting Union veterans independently, in 1879, GAR Chaplain-in-Chief Joseph F. Lovering

[91] *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps*, 125.
[92] Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 91.
[93] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 91.

called for establishing a national "Woman's Relief Corps" in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.[94] Lovering's wife, Elizabeth, also a minister, served as the first chaplain of the WRC's Department of Massachusetts.[95] Reflective of the Order's popularity and recruiting efficiency, WRC membership increased from 10,085 in 1883 to 63,000 by 1888, and by 1896, it exceeded 140,000 members.[96] In the WRC's first year of soliciting donations for veterans, it netted a modest sum of $1,154. By 1888, the WRC raised an astounding $73,289, a 6,350% increase.[97] By 1890, WRC membership exceeded 100,000 members and collected over $100,000 in charitable donations ($3,000,000 adjusted for inflation, 2021). The scale of this improvement did not go unnoticed. One senior GAR official observed that "the prosperity of the GAR largely depends upon the efforts of the Woman's Relief Corps."[98] One historian in 1906 observed that in "the earnestness of its work, and the extent of its charity, [the WRC] has no equal among the women's organizations in the world."[99] Based on their charitable fundraising alone, the WRC was one of the most critical sororal organizations in the postwar United States. Fundraising was only one way that supported Union veterans, promoted unionism, and broke new ground on how women could organize in the public sphere.

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[94] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 95.
[95] Woman's Relief Corps, *Synopsis of the Proceedings of the Department of Massachusetts Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic From its Institution in 1879 Until the Close of the Year 1886: First to Seventh Department Conventions* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co. 1889), 24.
[96] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 276.
[97] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 276.
[98] *The San Francisco Morning Call*, 14 Aug. 1890, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94052989/1890-08-14/ed-1/seq-8/>.
[99] "Societies of the War of the Rebellion," *The Journal of Education* 63, no. 17 (1906), 459.

The first WRC organized its first Order in California in 1883 to support the Heintzelman GAR Post in San Diego. The WRC impressed observers, with one newspaper reporting how an "innovation has been made in San Diego," meaning the novelty of an official "loyal women's" organization in the city, "which is meritorious, and is the first time such a thing has been introduced on this coast. We hope to see other Orders follow."[100] The WRC opened chapters across California in the 1880s, with an executive WRC California State Department established on February 20, 1885, to coordinate statewide efforts. [101]

The loyal women of the WRC remained under pressure to maintain a "feminine identity" and reserved decorum. California WRC President Jennie L. Southworth called on members to "stand forth clothed spiritually, mentally, and physically, in womanly garb, each one looking for the best work we can do, not what our neighbor has done or ought to do."[102] California's loyal women did perform well, as Deborah King, the National Inspector of the WRC, visited California Orders in 1886 and recorded in her report that "the Department of California has been wisely administered."[103] WRC California Department President C. Mason Kinne hailed the unionist spirit and impressive achievements of loyal women: "We are not less brave

[100] "Local Brevities," *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 10 July 1883, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042459/1883-07-10/ed-1/seq-3/.
[101] *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 10 July 1883.
[102] *Woman's Relief Corps*, *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Department of California, Woman's Relief Corps: Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic*, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (Stockton: Leroy S. Atwood, 1893), 19, 26, 28.
[103] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 7 Aug. 1886, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1886-08-07/ed-1/seq-1/.

than the noble defenders who defended our country… and now we represent 40,000 good, true, and loyal women of the land banded together to do what our loyal women did during the war, take care of the sick and wounded and the families of those soldiers who went out and battled for the Union."[104] Kinne's praise also reiterated women's gendered, subordinate status to the GAR. Modest loyal women "banded together under the banner of the Woman's Relief Corps to assist the Grand Army of the Republic, the greatest organization in the world," she wrote. "The next greatest organization in the world is the Woman's Relief Corps. We feel that we are secondary to them, and we mean to assist them in every way to perpetuate the principles of fraternity, charity, and loyalty."[105] The flexibility of unionism as an ideology allowed it to be compatible with nineteenth-century gender conventions and presumptions about racial hierarchy.

In deference to gender conventions, the WRC emphasized the caretaking role of loyal women. The Preamble of the WRC declared its mission to "assist [GAR] members and their families in sickness and distress, and all needy and sick soldiers, sailors, and marines, or the widows and orphans of deceased soldiers…and to do all in our power to alleviate their distress."[106] The GAR's motto of "Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty" was repurposed by the WRC. Still, leaders chose not to make a gendered change of "fraternity" to "sorority," once again reinscribing loyal women's

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[104] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 12 Aug. 1886, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1886-08-12/ed-1/seq-1/>.
[105] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 12 Aug. 1886.
[106] *Journal of the Annual Convention of the Department of Massachusetts*, Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army Republic (E.B. Stillings & Company, 1889), 20.

civic standing through their relation to men.[107] Like the GAR, the WRC considered loyalty a paramount republican value. "The spirit of loyalty," a California WRC President explained, "floats her banner from every Corps' altar, and there is a desire on the part of officers and members to do the work well."[108] Loyal women in California mobilized under the WRC to support veterans and promote unionism. The fusion of women and unionism connects to an older ideology of Revolutionary War era conception of "republican womanhood" that recognized women's choices and women's work served larger social and political purposes and remained fixed by cultural boundaries.[109]

The WRC's visual culture, seen in its medals, publications, postcards, and other print media, depicted an idealized young, white, middle-class nurse as the organization's avatar.[110] Founded by wartime nurses, the WRC identified the work of nurses as the model for all loyal women. The WRC admonished members to "cherish and emulate the deeds of our army nurses and of all loyal women who rendered loving service to their country in her hour of peril."[111] True to their pledge to support nurses alongside veterans, the WRC circulated petitions in 1889 and 1890 that amassed 160,000 signatures in favor of the Army Nurses Pension Act, which

[107] *Journal of the Annual Convention of the Department of Massachusetts*, 20.
[108] *Journal of the Annual Convention of the Department of Massachusetts*, 22.
[109] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 20-21.
[110] Alcott served in the Seminary Union Hospital in Washington, D.C. with nurse, author, and abolitionist, Walt Whitman, who recounted his wartime nursing experiences in the poetry anthology, *Drum-Taps* (1865).
[111] Lynne Bury, "Behind the History: United States Oldest Women's Hereditary Society," Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, http://suvcw.org/LGAR/History.html.

Congress passed in 1892.[112] Thirteen years after passing the Arrears Act for Union veterans, the federal government officially recognized wartime nurses as veterans of the Civil War that qualified for government pension payments for their service to the Union armies. Loyal women in California and nationally helped pressure the federal government to recognize women's contributions to the war effort and veterans' community without fundamentally challenging gender norms.

Perhaps because of this deference to gender, loyal women in California did not encounter the public opposition that activist women faced when organizing for women's suffrage.[113] The success of the WRC in California was a significant example of white women's political gains and public presence in the American West.[114] In 1893, the WRC joined the National Council of Women, a coalition of women's groups advocating temperance and suffrage. Although women's suffrage was not an official objective of the WRC, its leaders argued that the organization could better conduct social reform if women had access to the vote and a say in

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[112] Kennedy, *A Perfect Union*, 6-7.

[113] Virginia Scharff, "Broadening the Battlefield: Conflict, Contingency, and the Mystery of Woman Suffrage in Wyoming, 1869" (*Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States*, eds. Adam Arenson and Andrew R. Graybill. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 202, 205. Unlike the heavily populated east coast, the scattered population in the West forced colonizing white women to operate outside the "domestic sphere" as a matter of necessity. The sparse populations over western settlement opened spaces for white women to advance claims of citizenship through their presumptive moral superiority as the principles of white supremacy and colonization denied the same access to a larger population of Indigenous women in the region. Scharff suggests that the conditions of women's suffrage as a moral crusade in the West appeared because of the conquests of the South and the white supremacist colonization of the West. After winning the vote in November 1883, women in Washington Territory voted saloons and brothels out of existence across the territory. See also: Mildred Andrews, **"**Nevada Bloomer Stands by Her Man," *Woman Suffrage Crusade, 1848-1920* (2004), https://www.historylink.org/File/5662.

[114] Between women's suffrage in Wyoming in 1869 and the first WRC Corps in California in 1883, large-scale Native American resistance to encroaching white settlement and seizure of Indigenous lands culminated in the Nez Perce War of 1877. Eliot West argued that "Greater Reconstruction" ended with the Nez Perce War.

government operations. The suffrage issue is an ideal way to show the WRC changing over time. At its founding, the WRC did not advocate for women's suffrage. As the women's suffrage movement grew, the WRC saw suffrage as conducive to its organizational reform objectives and eventually supported it officially. By the early twentieth century, the WRC expanded its platform to include support for women's suffrage, which they formally endorsed in 1910.[115] Following the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, the WRC reiterated its endorsement of suffrage and urged women to demand enforcement of their voting rights. The WRC argued that empowered, informed, patriotic women were essential to sustaining a healthy republic.[116] Reflecting the adaptive capacity of the WRC amidst a shrinking Union veteran population, the twentieth-century version of the organization pivoted toward advocating for maternity care, child labor laws, education reform, and the "Americanization" of immigrants to protect the republic against the radical European ideologies of bolshevism and anarchism.[117] This articulation by the WRC presented unionism modified for the changing needs of the early twentieth century.

The WRC officially promoted an agenda "to encourage the spread of universal liberty and equal rights to all men" but said little publicly about what universal liberty should look like. [118] The WRC followed the GAR in unofficially

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[115] Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 283. The California state legislature granted women the right to vote in 1911, nine years prior to national enfranchisement via the Nineteenth Amendment.
[116] Kennedy, *A Perfect Union*, 169-172.
[117] Kennedy, *A Perfect Union*, 7.
[118] Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief*

tolerating segregation at the local level and out of respect for local white concerns over integration. Segregation was distasteful but unavoidable, WRC president Agnes Hitt conceded, as there was little the WRC could do to alter "southern prejudice."[119] Like the GAR, white members of the WRC acknowledged emancipation and the contributions of Black Union soldiers to Union victory. Still, they did not advocate for full racial equality or force local chapters to integrate. The racism of the famous nineteenth-century veterans' newspaper *American Tribune* was forthright on the subject of immigrants and their place in the postwar U.S.: "What good results from the presence of our foreign-born rotten banana sellers, thieving rag dealers, Italian organ grinders, Chinese washman, and Bohemian coal miners whose aspirations would make a dog vomit?"[120] This characterization reflected another paradox of unionism from the perspective of the GAR and WRC, simultaneously powerful but fragile and constantly under threat.

While it claimed to be race-neutral, the WRC was a segregated organization across the first two decades of its existence. Only in the early twentieth century did the WRC appear willing to embrace the contributions of loyal Black women. In 1911, the WRC made one step in that direction by promoting a formerly enslaved woman, Julia Layton of Washington, D.C., to National Inspector of the WRC's Black Orders that dotted the southern landscape. Layton traveled alone through the South at

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Corps: Department of California and Nevada, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic (Oakland: Woman's Relief Corps, 1910), 41, Call # 263411, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.
[119] *Journal of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention*, 41.
[120] Wallace E. Davies, *Patriotism on Parade; the Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 294.

significant risk to her safety in her first function as an inspector and in demonstrating her commitment to the union cause. She recalled being exposed to danger daily "with my left hand in the hand of God and a six-shooter in my right."[121] Although the WRC members Layton encountered were born into slavery and had received little in the way of formal education, their commitment to unionism and the values of the WRC remained ironclad. "There is one thing you don't have to teach my people," Layton argued, "and that is *loyalty*." However, as long as segregated Orders existed, the opportunity to forge a truly "national sisterhood" was lost.[122] Despite Layton's promotion, racial segregation persisted in the WRC through the early twentieth century.[123] Undeterred by exclusion, Black WRC members took the lead in challenging the mythology of the Lost Cause and upholding the unionist causes of emancipation, freedom, and equality.[124]

The WRC in California operated at a time when public opposition to Chinese immigration unified white Californians across party lines.[125] Like the GAR, white members of the WRC tended to share similar racial attitudes to other white people in their communities in California. One California WRC leader bemoaned immigrant

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[121] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 89.
[122] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 89.
[123] Wallace E. Davies, "The Problem of Race Segregation in the Grand Army of the Republic," *The Journal of Southern History* 13, no. 3 (1947): 369. By the 1920s, the WRC embraced a more progressive stance, lobbying for maternity care, child labor, and education reform, women's suffrage, the "Americanization" assimilation of immigrants, and combating radical European ideologies of bolshevism and anarchism.
[124] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 252-253. Lloyd A. Hunter argues the Lost Cause owed its sustainability to the creation of a "new religion" in the Confederacy as an ideological article of faith handed down between generations. Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion," *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, eds. Gary W Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 185.
[125] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 13.

communities whose "reeking dives are eating into our republic like a loathsome cancer."[126] Opponents of Chinese immigration in California argued that Chinese prostitution was a form of slavery and therefore prohibited by the stipulations of the Thirteenth Amendment. This opposition stemmed from increasing unease felt by white Californians in "managing" the state's Black, Chinese, Mexican, Hawaiian, Filipino, Irish, French, and Indigenous inhabitants.[127] Operating as self-appointed "moral guardians" of the republic, the California WRC campaigned against the practice of importing Chinese women "for the purposes of prostitution."[128]

Former Union general John Franklin Miller, a GAR member and U.S. Senator representing California led lobbying efforts to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Miller argued that "one complete man, the product of free institutions and high civilization, is worth more to the world than hundreds of barbarians."[129] When Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, the pro-Republican *Sacramento Daily Record Union* reported rejoicing in the state capital: "On receipt of the news this afternoon, guns were fired, and flags were raised in congratulation of the passage of the Chinese bill before the Senate, and much credit is accorded [California] Senators Miller and [James] Farley."[130] The Democratic *Los Angeles Herald* praised Senator

[126] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 13.
[127] D. Michael Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 5.
[128] O'Leary, *To Die For*, 99.
[129] *United States Congressional Record* (Bound Edition), March 17, 1882, 47th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1,487 (1882).
[130] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 11 March 1882, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1882-03-11/ed-1/seq-4/>.

Farley's "magnetic leadership in the United States Senate" which made Chinese exclusion possible.[131] "No Californian is unaware," the *Herald* observed, "that the safety of our children in the land that God gave to our fathers depends on the exclusion of the Chinese."[132] Union victory and the Reconstruction Amendments may have politically and racially reordered the South, but white Californians resisted any challenges to the state's antebellum racial hierarchy.

To educate new members about the organization's identity and mission, the California WRC distributed an annual collection of essays, poetry, and aphorisms entitled *Choice Quotations*. These texts connected members to a repository of collective wisdom which included entries from prominent WRC, GAR, and Republican leaders, but also Shakespeare and the Bible.[133] *Choice Quotations*' entries articulated the ideals of unionism, republican womanhood, patriotism, and nationalism. WRC president Lizzie Belle Cross's paean to the national flag connected the nation with the sacrifices of loyal women:

> Your stripes of red throb with the lifeblood of thousands; your stripes of white sigh with the burdens with the burden of women's tears; your field of blue breathes the steadfastness of a country firmly united; and your stars sing of union that is welded together by the might hand of an Almighty God.[134]

Other entries reflected the WRC's uncritical view of the American government as

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[131] *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 22 April 1882. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042459/1882-04-22/ed-1/seq-3/>.
[132] *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 23 June 1882, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042459/1882-06-23/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[133] The Woman's Relief Corps, *Choice Quotations: Compiled by the W.R.C., Santa Ana, Calif.* (Evening Blade: Santa Ana, CA, 1905), *vii*, University of California, Irvine, Special Collections and Archives, Irvine, CA.
[134] Woman's Relief Corps, *Choice Quotations*, 7.

fully justified in all its military engagements: "America [was] ever in the right… every soldier that has borne arms in the United States [has done so] for liberty [and] freedom."[135] The WRC understood themselves as protectors of the Civil War's memory and the nation's moral guardians. In one entry, Amanda Nelson of Los Angeles emphasized that "true, pure patriotism is the watchful sentinel who guards the welfare, safety, and the morals of our beloved country."[136] The WRC emphatically supported the war against Spain in 1898 by organizing the installation of U.S. flags in public schools.[137]

Figure 2.3: Woman's Relief Corps inaugural postcard featuring WRC Medal.[138]

[135] Woman's Relief Corps, *Choice Quotations,* 13.
[136] Woman's Relief Corps, *Choice Quotations,* 29.
[137] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 474-475.
[138] Woman's Relief Corps, "The WRC Medal [1883]," womansreliefcorps.org. The WRC Medal is a Maltese Cross attached to a red, white, and blue grosgrain ribbon. The center features the American flag encircling five figures: the Goddess of Liberty, a Soldier, a Boy, a Woman, and a Child. The

Public schools were a primary site of WRC activity and their efforts to promote unionism. In California, the WRC was ever on guard for "disloyal" interpretations of the Civil War in schools. The California WRC led efforts to expunge textbooks (and sometimes officials) that characterized secession in any way as legitimate. The WRC warned educators that texts depicting the war as "a quarrel between two factions, in which both were equally to blame" would be targeted for removal.[139] WRC California President Ella F. Van Horne believed that children needed to learn the value of patriotism at school, arguing that inculcating "into the hearts and minds of the rising generation the deep principles of patriotism and love of Country and Flag is the great and lasting endeavor of our Order."[140] Conforming to gender conventions of women as caretakers and educators of children, the WRC claimed the responsibility of raising patriotic children who learned about the Civil War from a unionist perspective. Women and children in California also played a leading role in the earliest acts of memorialization for the Union dead.

Memorial Day in Postwar California

Memorial Day evolved from "Decoration Day," when freed Black South

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Soldier symbolizes fraternity (employed by the WRC in deference to the GAR), the Boy represents Union loyalty, the woman symbolizes motherhood, giving, mercy, kindness, and charity, and the Child stands as hope for the nation's future, and the principles of freedom and justice for all. Like the GAR, the motto of the WRC was "Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty."

[139] Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2019), 120-121.The United Daughters of the Confederacy identified the patriotic education of children as within the appropriate purview of women to supervise. The UDC lobbied for preferred textbooks, established education committees, placed Confederate flags and portraits of Confederate heroes in classrooms, and sponsored commemorative events for children which cast the South's past in a favorable light.

[140] Woman's Relief Corps, *Journal of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Woman's Relief Corps: Department of California and Nevada, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic* (Oakland: Woman's Relief Corps, 1910), pg. 41, Call # 263411, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

Carolinians and their white abolitionist allies laid flowers over the graves of Union dead on May 1, 1865.[141] Similar annual memorial practices emerged in the 1870s, eventually coalescing around Memorial Day in late spring. As early as 1874, California GAR Posts organized commemorative events on Memorial Day by visiting the graves of fallen comrades and tombs of the unknown soldier. In 1882, the federal government officially renamed Decoration Day "Memorial Day," including observances of soldiers who died in previous wars.[142] One California newspaper observed that Memorial Day activities "awaken in the hearts of the participants a remembrance of the sacrifices of the struggle as well as its results."[143]

In Southern California, reporters documented an official Memorial Day for the first time on May 31, 1879, when the GAR opened its first Los Angeles Post, named for veteran Frank Bartlett who survived the war as a double amputee.[144] One GAR leader in Los Angeles explained that "the one central idea of our Memorial Day is loyalty. The richest legacy which this country possesses today is the memory of these loyal men whose hearts ceased to beat that the great heart of the nation might continue to throb."[145] Memorial Day events underscored the republic's past glories while sustaining the memory of the war for future generations of citizens. "As we

[141] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 67.
[142] In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared Memorial Day a federal holiday to take place on the last Monday in May
[143] *Weekly Trinity Journal*, 30 May 1874, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025202/1874-05-30/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[144] *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 31 May 1879, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042459/1879-05-31/ed-1/seq-3/.
[145] *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 31 May 1887, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042460/1887-05-31/ed-1/seq-8/>.

strew these fresh flowers and drop the silent tear upon the graves of our comrades gone before," the leader explained to posterity, "let us renew our pledges of loyalty… to country, to principle, to each other. Thus, may the exercises of the day, while they honor the dead, also be of value to the living."[146] This discourse demonstrated that unionism was not just about the past and showing gratitude for the dead but that the ideology for which the Union armies fought was still guiding the present course of the country. The Civil War did not end veterans' commitments to their nation.

Memorial Day provided the most visible platform for WRC to celebrate the Union cause, remind members of their commitments to care for veterans and their dependents and educate children in the lessons of patriotism. California WRC President Jennie L. Southworth characterized Memorial Day in plainly religious terms: "Yearly, as did the Mohammeds [*sic*] of old, so come the WRC from the hillside and plain, city and village, to the Mecca of the year, bearing our love and memories in fragrant flowers, with grateful hearts and willing hands make beautiful their honored mounds."[147] While Memorial Day began as a day of somber reflection, its practice of taking place outside in the late spring encouraged the inclusion of amusement and sport as part of the festivities.[148] As the primary organizer of Memorial Day events, the WRC established the practice as an annual event.

California WRC President Abbie E. Johnston reflected that Memorial Day

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[146] *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 31 May 1887.
[147] *Woman's Relief Corps*, *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Department of California, Woman's Relief Corps: Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic* (Stockton: Leroy S. Atwood, 1893), 19, 26, 28, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.
[148] *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Department of California*, 26.

was "one of the sweetest and saddest of our duties… we are privileged to the honor to those comrades who laid down their lives for the country we love." [149] Memorial Day was as much about the dead as about the living. Johnston observed that the WPC "cannot afford to lose the golden opportunity thus afforded us of inculcating in our children love of country, honor for the nation's preservers and respect for the memory of our heroic dead."[150] During Memorial Day services in Sacramento in 1894, GAR leader John C. Babcock expressed the aggrieved righteousness of Union veterans: "the nation had drifted away from the declaration of its founders that all men were born free and equal…but has since been baptized in fire and blood and the lapse corrected. Whether we are called pension paupers or no, that fact remains that we helped to save the country from those who hated us then and hate us now…[whatever] we have done for human liberty stands now to our credit and will so stand."[151] Babcock took the opportunity of Memorial Day to condemn slavery, connect unionism's origins to an inclusive reading of the Declaration of Independence, and dismiss veterans' critics, likely alluding to Democratic opponents of expanded veterans' pension benefits.

Presiding over Memorial Day services in San Francisco in 1895, attorney Samuel M. Shortridge (later, U.S. Senator) employed conciliatory language to mark

[149] *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Department of California*, 28. "Aside from our personal and institutional obligation," Johnston reminded loyal women, "we cannot afford to lose the golden opportunity thus afforded us of inculcating in our children love of country, honor for the nation's preservers and respect for the memory of our heroic dead."
[150] *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Department of California,* 28.
[151] *The Sacramento Record-Union*, 31 May 1894, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015104/1894-05-31/ed-1/seq-3/>.

the observance of the Union dead. "We have not come to open old wounds or stir up old animosities or resentments, but to impress upon the hearts and memories of our youth that the dead fell not in vain, to write upon their lives that the American people are not unmindful of the tears, the blood, the death through which this flag has passed."[152] Fearful of the fragility of unionism to future generations, Shortridge warned his audience, "the nation that forgets its heroes should perish by the wrath of God forever from the face of the earth."[153]

Monument construction for Union dead, though less ubiquitous than Confederate monuments in the South, were also critical memorial expressions of visual culture organized by the California GAR and WRC. The death of Ulysses S. Grant in 1885 spurred a national debate over a monument in his honor. U.S. President and GAR member Rutherford B. Hayes argued that "If the matter [of a monument] is pushed promptly by the Grand Army of the Republic while the public mind is intensely interested in all that concerns General Grant, there is every reason for confidence that a national monument can be built which will be worthy of General Grant and of our country."[154] Led by GAR and WRC fundraising efforts, the publicly funded General Grant National Memorial Monument ("Grant's Tomb") was dedicated in 1897 and recognized as a national memorial by Congress in 1959.[155] The

[152] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1895, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1895-05-31/ed-1/seq-1/>.
[153] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1895.
[154] *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 27 July 1885, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspaper, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1885-07-27/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[155] Grant's Tomb remains the nation's largest mausoleum. General Grant National Memorial, New York, National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/gegr/index.htm.

following year, the United States' war with Spain intensified Memorial Day festivities that linked the union cause with American imperialism. One San Francisco newspaper reported that during Memorial Day weekend in 1898, "the boys of the *Maine* were not forgotten, and a miniature battleship named after that ill-fated vessel was covered with flowers in honor of the men who first gave their lives for Cuba libre."[156] Memorial Day remained a day of observance for soldiers who represented the United States. Southern states organized their own separate Confederate Memorial Day in the 1870s.[157]

Figure 2.4: WRC California Department President Abbie E. Johnston (1894).[158]

[156] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1899, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1899-05-31/ed-1/seq-3/.
[157] See Richard Gardiner and Daniel Bellware, *The Genesis of the Memorial Day Holiday in America* (2014).
[158] Gardiner and Bellware, *The Genesis of the Memorial*, frontispiece.

Although southern states created specific Confederate Memorial Day holidays, sometimes Confederate veterans controversially mourned alongside Union veterans. The symbolism of the gray uniform marching with veterans in blue drew immediate censure from GAR leaders. On a visit to Los Angeles for Memorial Day in 1896, GAR national commander I.N. Kalker addressed a recent report of Confederate veterans marching in a Memorial Day parade in New York City:

> We are willing to take by the hand all of the Confederate veterans who laid down their arms at Appomattox and have been good citizens and patriotic men since then. What I am opposed to is their appearing in gray uniforms and bearing their banners. I do not think this is calculated to have a good effect upon our children growing up. Those men should do as Gen. Lee advised them at the surrender, lay aside that uniform and bury their flag; it is past and gone now.[159]

Kalker's view did not parallel most *fin de siècle* white Americans who were less offended by southern flags or uniforms and were increasingly comfortable mourning Union and Confederate dead equally with veterans of other wars.

By the 1890s, Union veterans reached their highest visibility during Memorial Day events in California, although the rigidity of earlier Confederate exclusion lessened as reconciliation became the order of the day. During San Francisco's official Memorial Day services in 1899, the city's GAR Rawlins Post led a massive parade followed by soldiers of the United States 6th Infantry Band, uniformed city firefighters, U.S.-Mexico War veterans, and finally, carriages containing the

[159] *The Los Angeles Herald*, 16 April 1896, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042461/1896-04-16/ed-1/seq-8/>.

chaplains, orators, and leading WRC members.[160] San Jose newspapers reported children controversially decorating the graves of Union and Confederate dead, with Confederate veterans in attendance. In nearby Santa Cruz, Memorial Day was observed as a public holiday where all businesses closed, and flags flew at half-mast and half-staff while children decorated the graves of the unknown soldier. To the east in Bakersfield, newspapers approvingly reported that the "Blue and Gray fraternized today" and marched together with citizens and children in tow. Every GAR member "made a special effort to prevent any harsh allusions to the men who wore the gray, and there was none."[161] Undoubtedly, some veterans shared I.N. Kalker's alarm at permitting Confederate veterans to participate in Memorial Day events. However, in California, with its history of Democratic Party sympathy for the Confederacy and its veterans, reconciliation between Union and Confederate on Memorial Day appears more as the norm than the exception.[162]

Thirty-five years after the end of the Civil War, the once pronounced ideological differences between white veterans faded, as evidenced by the evolution of Memorial Day practices in California. During Memorial Day in Fresno in 1899, Union and Confederate veterans marched together and ran up the Stars and Stripes in front of the Fresno City Courthouse.[163] In 1899, one San Francisco newspaper declared that after decades of disunion between North and South, the sections were

[160] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1899, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1899-05-31/ed-1/seq-3/>.
[161] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1899.
[162] See David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001).
[163] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1899.

indisputably reunited: "The war with Spain cemented North and South in a bond of fraternal sympathy never again to be broken."[164]

In 1900, President William McKinley—the last president who served in the Civil War—made headlines when he appeared at a joint Union-Confederate battle of the Antietam memorial monument. San Francisco's *Call* celebrated the moment by reporting, "Another link in the chain which binds together the once warring factions of the North and the South was forged today by the dedication of a monument erected to the memory of the men who wore the gray as well as those who wore the blue, who died in mortal combat in the bloody field of Antietam."[165] The article did not mention the battle's connection with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

In what would become a common theme for notable speakers presiding over Civil War reunion events, McKinley ignored the war's causes and focused all his attention on praising the valor of the war's white combatants. "We meet here after all these years with but one sentiment—that of loyalty to the Government and love for our flag—and [determination] to make any sacrifice for the American Union. I am glad of that meeting between Grant and Lee at Appomattox. I am glad we were kept together, and the Union was saved. There must be comfort in the fact that American soldiers never surrendered to any but American soldiers."[166] Notably, the president of the United States, himself a former Union soldier, would dedicate a monument to the battle of Antietam without acknowledging the battle's direct connections to slavery

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[164] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1899.
[165] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1900, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1900-05-31/ed-1/seq-2/>.
[166] *The San Francisco Call*, 31 May 1900.

and emancipation.

In this chapter, I traced how a commitment to unionism helped ordinary Union veterans and loyal women in California to organize in the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and its women-led and run auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC). Organized Union veterans, perhaps half the total in California, maintained membership with the GAR for the rest of their lives. Through the GAR, they found fellowship with former soldiers, expressed loyalty to the U.S. government, supported needy veterans, and participated in memorialization events. The GAR and WRC archival records represent vital primary source records of the articulation of unionism by Union veterans in California. In California, I have traced how white Union veterans shared a commitment to defeating the Southern rebellion and restoring the national union but disagreed about their support of Black Americans' postwar assertions to citizenship and of Chinese immigration. I traced how the GAR did not discriminate against potential members by race but permitted local practices of segregation and discrimination to persist, especially in the South, where Black Union veterans predominated.

Secondly, this chapter critiques the scholarship on Union veterans focused chiefly on fixed homosocial narratives of men. I offer an alternative history of Union veterans' *communities* in California to illustrate the organizing impulse of unionism for men and women and how these groups maintained memories of the war in the public consciousness. Readily acknowledged by contemporaries, to exclude "loyal women" from our narratives of Union veterans disregards women's significance in

promoting unionism, supporting Union veterans, and memorializing the war.

LANGUAGE, *n.* The music with which we charm the serpents guarding another's treasure.[1]

CHAPTER 3:

Ambrose Bierce and San Francisco's "Terrible Seventies"

As central as the Grand Army of the Republic is to our understanding of Union veterans, they only represented, at most, half of the total population of Union veterans. When we imagine Union veterans in their totality, we find as much diffusion amongst individuals as we find uniformity in formal organizations. Union veterans shared the formative experiences of camp life, marching, and battlefield fighting, but how individual veterans drew on their service identity to navigate the postwar era remained highly variable.[2] When viewing veterans as members of the GAR, their political attitudes tend to be conservative and nationalistic, always holding the federal government in high regard. Union veterans outside the GAR had a wider range of opinions about their experience in the war, the Union cause, slavery, and emancipation. In those cases where ordinary non-GAR Union veteran voices appear in the nineteenth-century record, they provide valuable alternative

[1] Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*, http://www.thedevilsdictionary.com (originally, Alfred Bird, London, 1906).
[2] Michael Barton and Larry M. Logue, *The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 4.

articulations of unionism, sometimes aligned with, and other times opposed to, the ideology of the GAR.

This chapter examines one of California's most recognizable Union veterans (who never joined the GAR), journalist and provocateur Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914). I shift from focusing on veterans' institutions to concentrating on an individual veteran through biography.[3] A study of Bierce as a Union veteran in California is helpful because his political views contrasted sharply with the GAR and because Bierce commanded a privileged position to convey these views. Bierce's journalism regularly covered California's class and racial tensions and the state's struggles over who could claim to be a free, rights-bearing person in light of the newly passed Reconstruction Amendments and Civil Rights Act of 1866.[4] I draw on Bierce's journalism, correspondence, and other contemporary sources to frame one of the most politically volatile events in postwar California, the rise and fall of Denis Kearney and the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC).

In appealing to the ideology of unionism and the Civil War, I will show how the WPC argued that ordinary Americans successfully removed the previous "slave power" from the country, only to have a "Chinese slaveholder" reappear in California after the war. This turbulent era revealed how Californians struggled over the changing meaning of racial equality and free labor during Reconstruction. In this

[3] Lois W. Banner, "Biography as History," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (2009): 580, 582. Social history can capture trends across time and space at the aggregate level but has the capacity to lose the individual humanity of the subjects under study and become so replete with "facts and forces" that it no longer contains fleshed-out human protagonists.
[4] Evelyn Atkinson, "Slaves, Coolies, and Shareholders: Corporations Claim the Fourteenth Amendment," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 10, no. 1 (2020): 56.

chapter, I will show how Bierce articulated a less patriotic and more inclusive form of unionism in Reconstruction-era California than expressed by the GAR. Bierce had little regard for the GAR's unquestioning loyalty and nationalism. The Civil War framed his view of the world less about flags, nations, or race than about right and wrong, even when he personally disliked the people he defended. Everywhere he looked in the postwar world, he saw men abusing power, and these were the primary targets of his editorial invectives. The postwar U.S. government and Western capitalists welcomed Chinese immigrants as cheap laborers to California, the promised land of opportunity for anyone willing to work hard without the benefits of citizenship. In the world that the Civil War made, Bierce argued, the marketplace and the law were no longer guided by *de facto* white supremacy.

Bierce's robust stable of biographers prioritizes his fiction and the more sensational aspects of his personal life but have offered little of his life as a veteran in California. Unlike the loyal comrades of the GAR who celebrated the government, Bierce was regularly critical of the U.S. government, the War Department, the California state government, and the city government of San Fransisco. Bierce's wartime experience with callous and negligent Union commanders prompted a lifelong mistrust of elites, representing a central theme in his editorials.[5] Bierce never identified as an abolitionist, but he did advance arguments supporting political equality exclusive of race or country of birth. Bierce was also a key eyewitness of

[5] Peter J. Morrone, "The Ethics of Moral Resistance: Ambrose Bierce and General William B. Hazen," *The Midwest Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2013): 402, 404.

Reconstruction-era California, providing regular editorial updates on the class and racial conflicts that convulsed 1870s San Francisco. In California's largest city, violent disagreements over immigration policy and citizenship helped redefine the social construction of "whiteness" in the postwar era.[6] Bierce's unionism, I argue, emphasized a humanistic logic of ethical priorities stripped of nationalism and white supremacy. In Reconstruction-era San Francisco, Union veteran Ambrose Bierce unexpectedly emerged as one of the Chinese community's few white public defenders.

A striking difference between Bierce and the GAR (and WRC) regarded the value of patriotism. According to the GAR, no republic could survive without its citizens' consistent and enduring patriotism. It was the patriotism of the Union army which vanquished the Southern rebellion. In Bierce's characteristically cynical view, patriotism was insidious. Patriotism, Bierce observed, "is one of the most abominable vices affecting human understanding. Patriotism would be understandable if it were defensive; but it is also aggressive, and the same feeling that prompts us to strike for our alters and fires impels us likewise to go over the border and quench the fires and overturn the altars of our neighbors."[7] Bierce further dismissed the notion that patriotism conferred any degree of practical military advantage on the battlefield. "It

[6] Edward J. M. Rhoads, "'White Labor' vs. 'Coolie Labor': The 'Chinese Question' in Pennsylvania in the 1870s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 2 (2002), 27. After 1870, white persons and persons of "African nativity or descent" could acquire American citizenship. Whether Chinese people counted as "white" in this context was not clear in the mid-late nineteenth century.
[7] Ambrose Bierce, *Prattle*, 9 February 1878, *An Aversion to Fools: The Lost Journalism of Ambrose Bierce as published in the San Francisco* Argonaut *"Prattler" columns, 1877-1879*, ed. Richard H. MacPherson, Kindle, 2010).

is all very pretty and spirited," Bierce wrote, "what the poets and that sort of people tell us about Thermopylae; but reader, you and I know that there was just as much patriotism at the one end of that pass as there was at the other."[8] Bierce condemned patriotism as "a fever, pitiless as the grave, blind as stone, and irrational as a headless hen," and claimed that Confederate soldiers (often outnumbered) were just as patriotic and committed as Union soldiers, so any argument suggesting patriotism as a marker of moral righteousness was spurious on its merits.[9]

Bierce understood that his role as a journalist demanded exposing and critiquing abuses of power by American elites.[10] When queried by his readers to explain how Bierce, a former army officer, could disparage patriotism in this way, Bierce replied that he was only relating "unpalatable truths" others were too timid to express.[11] According to Bierce's unionism, the Civil War and the subsequent Reconstruction had remade the United States, and the antebellum order of legalized white supremacy no longer existed. Although Reconstruction scholarship has traditionally focused on the geographic South, recent work has demonstrated that contests over race citizenship convulsed the South and West, with each region

[8] *Prattle*, 9 February 1878, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[9] *Prattle*, 9 February 1878, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[10] Arthur Weinberg and Lila Weinberg, *The Muckrakers: The Era in Journalism That Moved America to Reform—the Most Significant Magazine Articles of 1902-1912* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 4. The origins of "muckraking" journalism begin with editor Samuel S. McClure. In 1902 *McClure's Magazine* published Lincoln Steffens' withering critique of turn-of-the-century urban corruption, "Tweed Days in St. Louis," regarded by scholars as the first muckraking article. A month later, McClure published Ira Tarbell's serialized "History of the Standard Oil Company," a searing assessment of John D. Rockefeller's business practices. Thornton, "Muckraking Journalists and their Readers: Perceptions of Professionalism," *Journalism History* 21, no. 1 (1995): 30.
[11] *Prattle*, 9 March 1878, *An Aversion to Fools*.

affecting the other with lasting implications for the nation.[12]

Bierce's journalism described events in 1870s San Francisco, where violent disagreements over immigration, free labor, and the Reconstruction Amendments collided in ways dissimilar to events in the postbellum South. Irish workingmen in San Francisco employed the discourse of white supremacy when they formed "anti-Coolie" gangs in protest of Chinese workers gaining employment in construction and factories (especially for the Central Pacific Railroad) and the Democratic Party's need for an issue to rally voters.[13] Postwar anti-Chinese racism in California prompted state efforts to resist "radical" Republican legislation.[14] Bierce argued that the postwar federal government created legitimate opportunities for immigrating, enterprising Chinese in California who had as much a right to earn their daily bread as San Francisco's Irish, African American, or Swedish populations. Although Bierce rarely wrote anything flattering about Chinese people in San Francisco, he maintained

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[12] Adam Arenson, *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 11-12. Numerous studies have addressed the implications of Reconstruction in the American West. See Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (2007), Elliott West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009), Joshua Paddison, *American Heathens: Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (2012), Michael Bottoms, *Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (2013), Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (2013), Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, *The World the Civil War Made* (2015), and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (2016).

[12] Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1991), 58. See also Matthew E. Stanley "Was It for This You Fought?": Retreat from Reconstruction and the New White Supremacy in the Loyal West," in *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (2017), John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (2007), and Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (2021).

[13] Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 3-5.

[14] Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 203.

that white terrorist violence against the Chinese violated their fundamental civil rights.

A cultural elitist, Bierce frequently ridiculed leaders of the city's Irish workingmen who argued that Chinese immigration left California's white working men at risk of losing their livelihoods. The city's workingmen reasoned that by employing large numbers of Chinese for lower wages, California's corporations undermined free white labor in the state, which threatened the basis of an independent citizenry and popular sovereignty.[15] Irish workingmen formed a radical political party, the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), to resist Chinese immigration and demand a more equitable share of the wealth they produced. The WPC argued that unregulated corporations and their armies of low-paid Chinese laborers subverted the basis of republican government and white men's status as masters of their households. The WPC warned that if white workingmen failed to support their families, their daughters would be "dragged into degradation and disgrace" and their sons "made hoodlums."[16] The story of the rise and fall of the WPC, and their successful push for Chinese exclusion, reveals how a belief in white supremacy undermined Reconstruction.

A Circuitous Road from Indiana to California

Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce was born the tenth of thirteen children in Meigs County, Ohio, on June 24, 1842.[17] Disgruntled by his family's fundamentalist

[15] Atkinson, "Slaves, Coolies, and Shareholders," 55.
[16] Atkinson, "Slaves, Coolies, and Shareholders," 59.
[17] Each of the Bierce children's names started with the letter "A": Abigail, Amelia, Ann, Addison, Aurelius, Augustus, Almeda, Andrew, Albert, Ambrose, Arthur, Adelia, and Aurelia.

Christianity and desire to strike out on his own, Bierce left home at age nineteen to briefly work as a printer's apprentice before leaving Indiana forever. In 1861, Bierce answered Lincoln's call for 100,000 volunteers to repress the Southern rebellion. Enlisting as a private in the 9th Indiana Infantry Regiment, the capable young Bierce earned a field promotion to lieutenant. Army commanders reported that Bierce was an accomplished topographical engineer "of such incisive and distinguished merit that it made the operation of Union General William B. Hazen and others not only possible but successful."[18] According to his biographers, Bierce's finest moment occurred in the fall of 1864 when he designed and supervised extensive Union fortifications around Pulaski, Tennessee, before General William T. Sherman's "March to the Sea."[19]

When the war ended, Bierce bypassed his native Indiana and family to set out west with his old boss General Hazen to obtain a captaincy commission in San Francisco. To Bierce's dismay, the army rejected his bid, although his biographers have not identified on what basis his application was not accepted. Intrigued by a potential future in San Francisco, Bierce landed a job at the nearby U.S. Mint. In 1868, the self-educated Bierce submitted his first essays to the literary journals *Golden Era* and *Alta California* and found employment as a journalist with the San Francisco *News Letter*, a financial weekly that reserved a full page for Bierce's "Town Crier" column, a platform well-suited for his wry humor. Drawing on the

[18] Adolphe Danziger De Castro, *Portrait of Ambrose Bierce* (New York: Beekman Publishers Inc., 1929), 8.
[19] M. E. Grenander, *Ambrose Bierce* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 23.

satirical stylings of Swift and Voltaire, the *News Letter*'s owners promoted Bierce to the editor at age twenty-six. Only three years removed from the end of the Civil War, Bierce discovered a relationship with a receptive San Francisco reading audience that lasted through the next three decades.[20] There is no simple answer to what attracted a consistently high San Francisco readership to Bierce's journalism in each city paper he provided editorials. Bierce did not obey the established rules of journalistic etiquette. His flippant tone contrasted with the Victorian decorum that characterized contemporary area writers, earning him the sobriquet "the wickedest man in San Francisco."[21] One biographer explains Bierce's popularity by arguing that his journalism was "delightful in sarcasm [and] splendid in heresy." Bierce portrayed himself as the city's editorial jester "to whom impudence was allowed."[22] In one telling exchange, Bierce advised the people of San Francisco to "continue selling shoes, selling pancakes, or selling themselves. As for me, I sell abuse."[23]

In 1872, Bierce married Mollie Day, a young woman from a prominent San Francisco family. As a gift from Mollie's wealthy father, the newlyweds took an extended honeymoon to London, where Bierce caroused with, among others, Mark Twain and California's best-known poet, Joaquin Miller. After three years, the couple returned to a restive San Francisco in 1875, wracked by economic depression. This time, Bierce resumed his editorial work as an editor for the San Francisco *Argonaut*, a

[20] Grenander, *Bierce*, 14.
[21] Marcus Klein, "San Francisco and Her Hateful Ambrose Bierce," *The Hudson Review* 7, no. 3 (1954): 392. Bierce was never nationally famous, but he was widely known in the Bay Area and London.
[22] Klein, "San Francisco," 392.
[23] Roy Morris, *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1995), 5.

newspaper that effectively replaced Bret Harte's popular but defunct *Overland Monthly* (1868-1875). [24]

As a newspaper with pretensions toward literary merit, the *Argonaut*'s masthead announced its intention to "purify journalism in San Francisco."[25] The founding editors, Fred Somers and Frank M. Pixley hired Bierce to contribute a regular column known variously as the *Prattler* or *Prattle*. As the *Prattler*, Bierce introduced himself to readers as an "excessively amusing and caustic lunatic, semi-occasionally saying things that force the conclusion of genius being no remove whatsoever from insanity."[26] In his *Argonaut* columns, Bierce became increasingly alarmed at the labor relations in the city and what he thought were its duplicitous labor leaders.

At the same time, Bierce critiqued what he understood as collusion between local and state-level politicians and railroad barons who contributed to increasing inequality in postwar California. Explosive incidents of class conflict in Reconstruction-era San Francisco triggered a decade of racial and labor tension and violence, best exemplified by the meteoric rise and fall of labor agitator Denis Kearney. Unlike most white Californians at the time, including most Union veterans,

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[24] Daniel A. Metraux, "How Bret Harte's satirical poem 'The Heathen Chinee' helped inflame racism in 1870s America," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 33 (2011): 173. Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, and Ina Coolbrith (the state's first poet laureate) filled the *Overland Monthly's* pages with historical fiction, travel narratives, poetry, and journalism. Harte's 1870 poem, "Plain Language from Truthful James," satirized prejudice against Chinese in the West.
[25] Richard H. MacPherson, *An Aversion to Fools: The Lost Journalism of Ambrose Bierce. As published in the San Francisco* Argonaut *"Prattler" columns*, 1877-1879 (Kindle, 2010). Like so much else of the archival record of nineteenth-century San Francisco, the 1906 earthquake destroyed much of the *Argonaut's* archive.
[26] "Prattle," 22 April 1877, *An Aversion to Fools.*

Bierce's experiences in the Civil War and his conception of unionism led him to oppose efforts to restrict Chinese immigration and condemn racialized violence perpetrated against San Francisco's Chinese community.

San Francisco and Ambrose Bierce

During the 1870s, San Francisco residents had good reason to be leery about the future. Rising economic inequality, chaotic bust, boom speculation cycles, political infighting, corruption, and mob violence marred a city reeling under national and regional economic contraction. Even Memorial Day, the most hallowed of all days on the GAR and WRC calendar, could be the subject of ribald humor. Bierce reported on a local GAR Post that refused to decorate the graves of Confederate dead. "And now, no doubt," the *Prattler* observed, "a full fathom down under this reunited county the moldy bone work of many a Northern, and presumably Republican, warrior executes a quiet rattle of satisfaction at this evidence of surviving loyalty, the while his eye-sockets, like saucers rubbed with phosphorus, emit a faint lamination, and ghastly grows his grin."[27] Here Bierce cast cynical if eldritch doubt on the endurance of loyalty to the union cause and the limits of reconciliation between veterans. In what surely must have disquieted the proudest Union veterans, Bierce's short stories in the 1880s and 1890s presented the Civil War as a bleak hellscape where soldiers and civilians alike failed to escape its gravity. Soldiers in Bierce's Civil War fiction had little time to muse on the merits of unionism and patriotism when misery and death lurked around every corner.

[27] "Prattle," 7 June 1877, *An Aversion to Fools.*

Bierce shared a complicated relationship with fellow Union veterans. In contrast to the GAR, Bierce was frustrated by Union veterans pressing the federal government for jobs and supplemental pay. As a former officer with a well-paying postwar job, Bierce shared the more common view among civilians (and Democrats) that Union veterans were seeking a handout from the government for cash and jobs. Bierce, himself grievously injured during the war, thought what the government owed non-disabled veterans was their wages for wartime service and nothing more. "Look ye, comrades—soldiers of the 'Grand Army of the Republic,' 'Boys in Blue,' and patriots of all sorts of kinds," the *Prattler* wrote:

> I am vain enough to think (and it seems necessary to explain) that I did the country some service myself in a soldiering way. I know I got my head broken like a walnut at the business and that the best Government on the face of the earth had the honesty to cheat me out of five month's pay, while exacting to the last cent the price of my clothing and subsistence during the same turbulent season of 'bloody noses and cracked crowns.' I do not discern, however, that all this constitutes a 'claim' to any further favor than it would be for my country to pay what it justly owes me; and should, I hope, have the dignity to decline any [government job] if indelicately tendered me from any considerations other than ability to intelligently perform its duties.[28]

As with other writings on Union soldiers and veterans, Bierce seemed surprised that soldiers would try to leverage their service for more than what they initially offered in wages. Nowhere in this passage does Bierce remark upon the singular work of "restoring the union" that triggered special dispensation from the government, which was the basis of the GAR's primary demands. Bierce defined the relationship between Union soldiers and the federal government as employees paid for their

[28] "Prattle," 21 September 1878, *An Aversion to Fools.*

services. This passage reflected a position shared by political conservatives and the Democratic Party that the federal government owed Union veterans their wages and nothing more. Ignored in this critique by Bierce were those veterans who suffered debilitating injuries from the war and required immediate financial and medical support, as well as the widows and orphans of deceased veterans.

As a cultural elitist, Bierce shared the suspicions of conservatives who admonished veterans unwilling to rejoin society and make their way without special favor from the federal government. Bierce's argument was weak since even the most generous pension outlays did not adequately provide for the neediest of veterans, nor did Bierce acknowledge the tremendous physical and physiological ailments many veterans acquired during the war. Bierce had a long-lasting connection with his regiment, so his sense of unionism was more fraternal than loyal and patriotic. Veterans were only one of the many groups Bierce targeted. As the *Prattler*, Bierce denounced the actions of California's politicians, religious and business leaders, rabble-rousers, and columnists at rival newspapers.[29] Nevertheless, no single individual drew Bierce's ire more than Denis Kearney, the leader of the radical Workingmen's Party of California.

In the 1870s, the primarily foreign-born Irish working class in San Francisco promoted white supremacy and aligned themselves with the Democratic Party. Paralleling white supremacist violence roiling the South, white San Franciscans

[29] Lawrence Berkove argues that scholars mischaracterize Bierce as hopelessly nihilistic. His satire, like Swift's, reflected a set of intelligent, moral principles. Berkove, *A Prescription for Adversity: The Moral Art of Ambrose Bierce* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), *xiv*.

harassed, discriminated against, and assaulted the city's Chinese population. A crucial difference between the violence in the South and California lay in the political access of the victims. After the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment granted Black men the right to vote, Black voters and polling centers became targets of white terrorist violence in the South. In San Francisco, restrictive legislation excluded Chinese people from the public sphere.[30] It was not the Chinese voter but the Chinese worker who drew the ire of disaffected workingmen in San Francisco. In the summer of 1877, working-class white men in San Francisco violently reacted to railroad workers' confrontations with industrialists in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Baltimore, and Syracuse by rioting and targeting the city's Chinese, whom they blamed for their poverty and unemployment.[31] The riots lasted three days, producing a much broader statewide political reaction. In the fall of 1877, the primarily Irish opponents of Chinese labor and immigration formed a political organization, the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), to achieve what mobs could not, pass legislation that protected white labor.

In postwar California, railroads and related capital intense projects demanded thousands of low-paid laborers. While railroads played a vital economic role in California as a job provider and symbol of modernization and settlement, they became the primary object of worker revolts when relations between owners and

[30] Ethington, *The Public City*, 32. Denying the Chinese men right to vote implied that they had no public voice whatsoever and would eternally remain, in Ethington's phrase, "private beings" in California.
[31] Rudi Batzell, "Free Labor, Capitalism, and the Anti-Slavery Origins of Chinese Exclusion in California in the 1870s," *Past & Present* 225 (2014): 146.

employees soured. In the late 1870s, the ideology of white supremacy energized the city's white working-class labor movement, which denounced Chinese laborers and demanded restrictions on future Chinese immigration, a platform shared by white labor and political organizations operating in late nineteenth-century California.[32] Reflective of their radical political ideology, candidates for the Workingmen's Party of California campaigned for compulsory public education, demanded that district attorneys declare public officials who violated the public trust as felons, and promised to limit "special interest" influence over the state legislature.[33] The WPC's first formal platform explained their political crusade to the voters of California:

> Whereas, the Government of the United States has fallen into the hands of capitalists and their willing instruments; the rights of the people, their comfort and happiness are wholly ignored, and the vested rights of capital are alone considered and guarded…Great money monopolies control Congress, purchase the State Legislation, rule the Courts, influence all public officers and have perverted the great Republic of our fathers into a den of dishonest manipulators…In California, slave labor has been introduced, to still further aggrandize the rich and degrade the poor. The whole tendency of this class legislation has been to undermine the foundations of the Republic and pave the way for anarchy and misrule.[34]

White opposition to Chinese labor and immigration that began in mining towns in the 1850s migrated to urban centers by the 1870s. San Francisco was by far the largest

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[32] Neil L. Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1991), 160.
[33] Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest*, 146-147. Historians have labeled the Workingmen's Party of California the culmination of an "anti-Chinese movement" in the state, but that label only tells part of the story. The radical social program advocated by the WPC in the 1870s included progressive taxation, limits on land holdings, and regulation of stock markets. The WPC also demanded universal, secular, and compulsory public education to include lectures by labor leaders on the dignity of the working class. The WPC did not call for the overthrow of capitalism or the social order but believed the government should provide a larger distribution of wealth to the working class.
[34] Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest*, 66.

city in the state and counted the largest population of the state's Chinese people.[35]

White supremacy was an ideology common across the political spectrum in postwar California. On the eve of the Civil War, the Democratic Party in California split into one faction that condemned secession. In contrast, the other faction, the "Chivalry Democrats," or "Chivs," remained the party's states' rights, pro-southern wing. Following the outbreak of war, California's pro-Union Democrats and Republicans agreed to temporarily set aside their differences in forming the fusion Union Party.[36] The unionist wartime alliance dissipated immediately following the Confederate defeat. Emboldened against the Radical Republicans' "activist" federal government in 1867, Chiv Democrats successfully ran attorney Henry H. Haight, an

[35] Eric W. Fong and William T. Markham, "Anti-Chinese Politics in California in the 1870s: An Intercounty Analysis," *Sociological Perspectives* 45, vol. (2002): 203-205. Studies of California's 1870s labor markets have shown the organizational capacity of urbanized white workers was strongly correlated with the state's institutional discrimination against its Chinese population. In the 1850s, the conditions that promoted anti-Chinese activity flourished mostly in mining towns. By the 1870s, those conditions existed expanded to include most urban areas, most transparently in San Francisco. See also Robert McClellan, *The Heathen Chinee: A Study of American attitudes toward China, 1890-1905* (1971), Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (1975), Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (1991), Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese struggle against discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (1994), Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (1998), K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan, eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era* (1998), Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (2003), Estelle Lau, *Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration, and Chinese Exclusion* (2006), Diana Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion laws in the Nineteenth-century American West* (2007), Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (2008), Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (2013), Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion and the Making of the Alien in America* (2018), Rudi Batzell, "Free Labor, Capitalism, and the Anti-Slavery Origins of Chinese Exclusion in California in the 1870s," *Past & Present* 225 (2014), Susan B. Carter, "Embracing Isolation: Chinese American Migration to Small-Town America, 1882-1943" (2012), Julie Novkov and Carol Nackenoff, "Civic Membership, Family Status, and the Chinese in America, 1870s–1920s." *Polity* 48, no. 2 (2016), and Edward J. M. Rhoads, "'White Labor' vs. 'Coolie Labor': The 'Chinese Question' in Pennsylvania in the 1870s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 2 (2002).

[36] Glenna Matthews, *The Golden State in the Civil War: Thomas Starr King, the Republican Party, and the Birth of Modern California* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4.

avowed white supremacist, for governor. In his Governor's Message in 1869, Haight ridiculed California's Chinese population as "a stream of filth and prostitution pouring in from Asia whose servile competition tends to cheapen and degrade labor."[37] A decade later, the Workingman's Party of California would reproduce Haight's rhetoric to surprising effect. Concerned about the upstart WPC threatening the traditional two-party control of the state, California's Republicans and Democrats once again shrewdly coordinated their efforts to muzzle the radical WPC.[38]

In contrast to the rhetoric of Western boosters since the Gold Rush, postwar California was not a bastion of individual liberty, competition, and free labor but a complex system of radical freedom and unfreedom.[39] The veneration of California as a land of free labor persuaded thousands to trek to the golden state long after hydro-powered industrial machinery stipped those gold mines clean. The immigrants that arrived in California in the 1870s discovered a society buckling under unresolved conflicts over free labor, race relations, and rising economic inequality. During the 1870s, ordinary Californians wondered whether self-sufficiency was feasible for most of the state's residents when a cabal of 516 California business elites owned one-fifth

[37] Gertrude Atherton, *California: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914), 287.
[38] Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 281. The WPC successfully lobbied for a creation of a Board of Railroad Commissioners to regulate the railroads and make it illegal for corporate employers to hire Chinese laborers. In 1880, the United States Circuit Court struck down the anti-Chinese hiring law as unconstitutional.
[39] Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 4. Smith argues the "re-racialization of slavery" in postwar California was one of the ways in which state politicians of both parties evaded Reconstruction-era guarantees of due process and equal protection under the law under the cover of "anti-slavery" rhetoric and legislation.

of the state's arable land.[40]

Despite a downturn in the postwar California economy, the state remained a favored destination for immigrants. The Irish and Chinese arrived in similar numbers and competed over the same kinds of jobs, particularly for the railroads.[41] California's ongoing industrialization increased the need for wage labor to facilitate hydraulic mineral mining, railroad and telegraph expansion, and industrial-scale agriculture in the fertile Central Valley. In the postwar era, San Francisco's population proliferated as immigration and natural increase raised the urban population from 149, 473 in 1870 to 233,000 in 1880.[42] Nowhere was the anti-Chinese sentiment more pronounced in California than in San Francisco.[43] Between 1866 and 1870, anti-Chinese activists successfully lobbied the state assembly to ban Chinese immigrant women, only for the Supreme Court to strike each passed ban unconstitutional.[44] Contractions in the state and national economy reduced the availability of jobs and the wages for those offered, increasing resentment from the Irish working class toward the city's Chinese and its railroad tycoons. Gertrude Atherton, a contemporary

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[40] Robert A. Burchell, "The Faded Dream: Inequality in Northern California in the 1860s and 1870s," *Journal of American Studies* 23, no. 2 (1989): 216.

[41] The 1870s census recorded 50,633 Irish and 49,733 Chinese immigrants to California. The 1880s census recorded 81,502 Chinese and 62,601 Irish immigrants. James Gregory, "California Migration History 1850-2017," America's Great Migration Project, Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium: University of Washington (2022), https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/California.shtml.

[42] Eugene P. Moehring, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840-1890* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004), 325. The 4.58% rate of growth in the 1870s was the last time the city ever had more than 2% growth in a decade. See http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty40.htm.

[43] United States Government, *Ninth Census: Volume I* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 14-16. The 1870 federal census shows San Francisco's population doubling from 1860 to 1870. The federal government tallied 136,000 whites, 12,000 Chinese, 1330 "free colored" persons, and 54 people listed as "Indians."

[44] Julie Novkov and Carol Nackenoff, "Civic Membership, Family Status, and the Chinese in America, 1870s–1920s," *Polity* 48, no. 2 (2016), 168.

California author, historian, and correspondent of Ambrose Bierce, called this turbulent period San Francisco's "Terrible Seventies."[45]

Like Bierce, Atherton charged leading labor agitators as the true villains of the social unrest. The fault of the city's ills lay not with individual workingmen, Atherton reasoned, and their legitimate concerns about rising economic inequality, but with the demagogues who agitated law-abiding individuals into unruly mobs. "Periodically," Atherton wrote, "labor is disgraced and crippled by agitators whose only ambition is a utopian condition in which they can, after looting, loaf for the rest of their lives and whose shibboleth is the brotherhood of man."[46] Atherton credited "better-behaved" labor leaders who accepted that systemic and lasting change only comes slowly and never through mob rule and dictatorship.[47]

Atherton warned readers that the city's white working class had much to fear from Chinese competition in the labor market because the Chinese worker represented the ideal employee from the perspective of the city's business elites. Not only did the Chinese agree to work for lower wages, Atherton argued, but they were "highly efficient and well-liked by their employers on account of their skill and industry, [and] because they were polite, even-tempered, and sober."[48] Atherton implied that Irish workers were impolite, poor-tempered, and frequently intoxicated,

[45] Emily Wortis Leider, *California's Daughter: Gertrude Atherton and Her Times* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 2, 4. Combining "strident rebelliousness and aristocratic hauteur," Atherton published more than fifty novels, essays, and short stories, as well as multiple volumes on San Francisco and California history.
[46] Atherton, *California*, 288.
[47] Atherton, *California*, 288.
[48] Atherton, *California* 303.

making them susceptible to labor demagogues in a way that Chinese workers were not. White workingmen, in Atherton's view, would never accept the Chinese as legitimate competitors in a free labor market because they believed the Chinese were the enslaved property of corporate masters.

At least four political organizations jostled for control of San Francisco and California in the 1870s; the establishment Democratic and Republican parties and two populist parties: the People's Party and the Workingmen's Party of California. Although there were some strands of solidarity between the Populists and the Workingmen's Party, native-born populist leaders in California did not appeal to the state's foreign-born population.[49] Reflecting the instability of San Francisco politics in the 1870s, no political party won the coveted mayor's office more than one election cycle in a row. The rancorous atmosphere between the city's bourgeoisie and proletariat caught the attention of Karl Marx, who wrote to a correspondent, "California is very important to me because nowhere else has the upheaval most shamelessly caused by the capitalist concentration taken place with such speed."[50] Amidst these racial and class tensions, the unassuming Irish immigrant Denis Kearney (1847-1907) began his cyclonic political career.

In 1878, Denis Kearney, a small business owner turned labor agitator, published "Appeal from California: The Chinese Invasion and Workingmen's

[49] Michael Rogin, "California Populism and the 'System of 1896,'" *The Western Political Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1969), 183.
[50] Karl Marx to Friedrich A. Sorge, 5 November 1880, *Letters to Americans, 1848-1895: A Selection*, ed. Alexander Trachtenberg, trans. Leonard E. Mins (New York Intl. Publishers, 1953), 126.

Address."[51] Kearney identified the archenemy of the working man, the "money men," who ruled over Americans under the guises of slaveholder, banker, land monopolist, railroad king, and "false politician."[52] Each form, he explained, shared the same disgraceful venality. "Such misgovernment, such mismanagement," Kearney charged, "may challenge the whole world for intense stupidity, and would put to shame the darkest tyranny of the barbarous past."[53] The working men of California, Kearney insisted, could no longer tolerate conventional politics to represent their interests:

> We, here in California…feel that the day and hour has come for the Workingmen of America to depose capital and put Labor in the Presidential chair, in the Senate and Congress, in the State House, and on the Judicial Bench…Workingmen must form a party of their own, take charge of the government, dispose gilded fraud, and put honest toil in power. In our golden state all these evils have been intensified. Land monopoly has seized upon all the best soil in this fair land. The poor Laborer can find no resting place, save on the barren mountain, or in the trackless desert. Money monopoly has reached its grandest proportions. Here, in San Francisco, the palace of the millionaire looms up above the hovel of the starving poor with as wide a contrast as anywhere on earth.[54]

California's Workingmen calling to "depose capital" and "dispose of gilded fraud" radical positions that may have attracted some laborers, but its opposition to Chinese immigration most effectively mobilized its base. Careful to ensure that Chinese and Irish workers never found common cause in their shared experiences of

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[51] Kearney first worked in San Francisco as a drayman, then started his own transport business. A drayman was the driver of a "dray," or a low, flat-bed wagon without sides, pulled by horses or mules to transport and deliver goods.
[52] Dennis Kearney, President, and H. L. Knight, Secretary, "Appeal from California. The Chinese Invasion. Workingmen's Address," *Indianapolis Times,* 28 February 1878.
[53] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times,* 28 February 1878.
[54] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times,* 28 February 1878.

immigration and physical labor, Kearney insisted opposition to Chinese in California immigration was about white men's wages as much as it was about protecting cultural integrity from business magnates employing Chinese labor over white men.

Kearney and the WPC emphasized gendered Chinese differences from white culture to demonstrate their "eternally alien" disposition to republican virtue and American values:

> To add to our misery and despair, [our] bloated aristocracy has sent to China—the greatest and oldest despotism in the world—for a cheap working slave. It rakes the slums of Asia to find the meanest slave on earth—the Chinese coolie—and imports him here to meet the free American in the Labor market, and still further widen the breach between the rich and the poor, still further to degrade white Labor…Their dress is scant and cheap. They are whipped curs, abject in docility, mean, contemptible and obedient in all things.[55]

Because Chinese workers undercut white men's wages in California, they would no longer be able to support their families, and eventually, Kearney warned, they would turn to vice and crime. An unemployed and destitute white working man, Kearney grimly predicted, could succumb to suicide and relinquish "his wife and daughter to prostitution, and his boys to hoodlumism and the penitentiary."[56] For the WPC, Chinese labor amplified economic inequality and represented an assault on (white) American morality and manhood.

The Workingmen's Party of California was a radical group, but they were not anarchists, as Kearney was careful to distance the WPC from anarchists and communists. Despite their bombastic speeches, the WPC had no interest in uprooting

[55] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.
[56] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.

the republican system of government. What they wanted was to reorganize the economic system such that workingmen enjoyed their "fair share" of the state's wealth and enjoyed representation among legislators and executives. Kearney warned that the WPC if compelled, would arm and protect itself from tyranny. "Do not believe," Kearney explained,

> those who call us savages, rioters, incendiaries, and outlaws. We seek our ends calmly, rationally, at the ballot box. So far good order has marked all our proceedings. But we know how false [and] how inhuman our adversaries are. We know that if gold, if fraud, if force can defeat us, they will all be used. And we have resolved that they shall not defeat us. We shall arm. We shall meet fraud and falsehood with defiance, and force with force, if need be.[57]

Kearney and the WPC shrewdly employed language that appealed to the ideology of unionism, including the charged language of slavery and freedom. By associating Chinese labor with enslaved labor, the WPC accused California business elites as being the "Slave Power" of California. Kearney also adopted gendered language to argue that white manhood was at risk of the doom of unemployment. Kearney wrote that the WPC "are men and propose to live like men in this free land, without the contamination of slave labor, or die like men if need be, in asserting the rights of our race, our country, and our families."[58] Pointedly drawing an analogy to Abraham Lincoln's "House Divided" speech in 1858, Kearney stipulated that "California must be all American or all Chinese. We are resolved that it shall be

[57] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.
[58] Kearney, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.

American and are prepared to make it so."[59]

In 1879, the WPC published *The Labor Agitators, Or, the Battle for Bread*, which detailed the party's origins and functioned as a recruitment platform. In the WPC's rendering of history, wealthy men of leisure have always ruled while the poor trusted those in power to look after their interests and protect their liberties. This plan of government had worked in creating a thriving early republic, the WPC argued, because wealthy men in power at the time of the founding "were truly patriotic and the poor were well content with their work in the legislative halls."[60] In the nineteenth century, the WPC wrote, the republican virtue that enabled this system gave way to the vices of corruption and greed at all levels of government. Craven capitalists, the WPC charged, took advantage of the Civil War to enrich themselves at the expense of the taxpaying public: "in every government department in the U.S., there was a confirmed system of fraud and robbery." This claim suggested that Kearney acknowledged the Union armies for restoring the union; the federal government had lost its trust in the people and was a compromised object of loyalty. The WPC lamented about the abuses of Reconstruction-era government, "Our navy is rotten with stealing. The Indian department is a disgrace to the age. The civil service is an

[59] In the 1858 Illinois Senate race, Lincoln told Republicans that the Democratic Party's solution of "popular sovereignty" failed to stem the growing unrest over slavery. "Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only, not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached, and passed. A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall— but I do expect it will cease to be divided." Lincoln, "House Divided Speech," Illinois Republican State Convention, Springfield Illinois, 16 June 1858, National Park Service: Lincoln Home, https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/housedivided.htm.

[60] Workingman's Party of California, *The Labor Agitators, or, The Battle for Bread* (San Francisco: Geo. W. Green, 1879), 1.

abomination. The land office is a den of thieves."[61] The criticisms about the alleged corruption of Reconstruction-era governments would not have been exclusive to the WPC. Still, the WPC used this familiar rhetoric to assert how California's white men, in particular, because of Chinese labor and immigration, were under existential threat.

The WPC alleged the labor game was rigged at the outset by great railroad barons who received lucrative federal grants by bribing members of Congress. The WPC also protested the elite real estate holders, who, in their view, stunted the state's economic development. Ordinary Californians understood the problem of land monopoly in the 1870s through a widespread belief that by hoarding private and public land, elite property holders constrained settlement and growth.[62] For working-class white Union veterans in California most susceptible to downturns in the labor market, the Chinese acutely threatened their financial security. Elite businessmen, the WPC charged, shamefully ignored the law against slavery and their good sense to maximize profits. These "soulless millionaires" imported "slaves" from China while demanding white men to select from the following options: "work as cheap as this slave, or leave, or die."[63] Naming the problem was only the first issue; solving the problem was the far more significant challenge.

The strategy of linking railroad barons with southern planters would have been an effective way to attract support from Union veterans and working-class

[61] Workingman's Party of California, *The Labor Agitators*, 3.
[62] David Igler, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 60.
[63] Igler, *Industrial Cowboys*, 60.

whites emotionally attached to the ideology of unionism. Blaming California's Democratic and Republican politicians for failing to live up to their land and labor reform promises, the WPC sold voters a bold vision for the state's future. Kearney promised that the Workingmen's Party of California would tolerate no "capitalists, tricksters, swindlers, or thieves." The WPC would, Kearney pledged to:

> fill the offices with honest poor men who will make laws to protect themselves. We will send the Chinese home, distribute the land of the grabber, tax the millionaire, make a new law to hang thieves of high as well as low degree, elevate the poor, and once more return to the simple virtue of honest republicanism.[64]

The WPC continuously appealed to racism to promote the party's infamous rallying cry, "The Chinese Must Go." "The Chinaman must leave the State of California," the WPC declared, "there can be no repose for anybody until this issue is settled."[65] The WPC explained to workingmen in California that they had no genuine support from established politicians, elite businessmen, or the press, so the WPC organized as the primary advocates for white workingmen across California.

Although politically incapacitated, the Chinese community in San Francisco protested their discrimination and rough treatment in English-language newspapers and found support from the petitions of liberal Protestant ministers.[66] In 1878, the bilingual Kwang Chang Lin published *Why Should the Chinese Go? A Pertinent*

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[64] Workingman's Party of California, *The Labor Agitators*, 3. 5.
[65] Workingman's Party of California, *The Labor Agitators*, 9.
[66] One of the better-known examples was William Speer (1822-1904), an American pioneer Presbyterian missionary, author, and outspoken advocate for the Chinese in California. Fluent in Cantonese, he helped establish the first Presbytery in Canton and later founded the first Chinese Protestant church outside of China. See Michael L. Stahler, "William Speer: Champion of California's Chinese, 1852—1857," *Journal of Presbyterian History (1962-1985)* 48, no. 2 (1970): 113–29.

Inquiry from a Mandarin in High Authority, as a rebuttal to the charges hurled at the Chinese by the WPC. The San Francisco's *Argonaut*, the newspaper for which Bierce was the editor and lead columnist, published Lin's essays. Lin's response to Kearney was firm: "The cry [in San Francisco] is 'the Chinese should go.' I say that they should not go; that they can not go; that they will not go."[67] Although Lin does not cite Bierce by name, he credited the *Argonaut* as the preferred medium for the promulgation of his letters on account of the paper's "reputed fairness to all."[68] Whether Bierce was personally responsible for Lin's essays is unclear.

Lin argued that Chinese people had become such an essential contributor to the state's economy and daily operations that expulsion would leave California in ruin. Lin further argued that California's Chinese population had become indispensable to the state's prosperity, and it could not afford to part with the Chinese "upon any consideration."[69] He argued that protecting the fundamental rights of Chinese labor provided a shield against "demagogism," in an apparent reference to Kearney. Lin appealed to white readers by praising his own positive experiences in San Francisco and the dignified values of the republican government in the United States. Lin boasted that "no soil is freer, no assemblage more noble, no regulations more just, than those which claim the proud title of American."[70] Lin dispelled the WPC's argument that the Chinese were inherently indifferent or hostile to American

[67] Kwang Chang Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go? A Pertinent Inquiry from a Mandarin in High Authority* (Bruce's Book & Job Printing House, 1878), 1.
[68] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 1.
[69] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 1.
[70] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 1.

culture and values with this language. Thirdly, Lin warned that expulsion or immigration exclusion threatened the mutually beneficial relationship between China and the United States, established by the Burlingame-Seward Treaty in 1868. The treaty, named for its authors, Republican attorney Anson Burlingame and Secretary of State William Seward, protected U.S. commerce conducted in Chinese ports and established Chinese consuls in American port cities. The treaty's most groundbreaking measures promised the Chinese the right to work and live in the U.S., as accorded to other "most-favored nations." Hailed by industrialists for opening new markets for U.S. goods and providing cheap labor in Chinese immigration, the Burlingame-Seward Treaty was short-lived, lasting only from 1867 to 1882.[71] Lin cited treaty Article VI, which conferred "equal rights" for Chinese living in the United States." The treaty, Lin argued, provided an enormous boon to American industrialists and the American economy, even at the expense of Chinese wealth:

> A numerous body of your citizens have established themselves in China, possessed themselves of the coasting trade…and thus deprived thousands of Chinamen from employment. The complaints of these poor people are not conveyed to you…because our government has too much respect for its treaty obligations.[72]

Although improved relations with China through the Burlingame Treaty swelled the dividends of American industrialists, American politicians, and newspapers

[71] Office of the Historian, "The Burlingame-Seward Treaty, 1868," Department of State, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/burlingame-seward-treaty.
[72] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 8.

resounded with "outcries against Chinese labor in America."[73] Lin reasoned that at the center of this schism was unsubstantiated and illogical racism and accused Americans of targeting Chinese consumers and natural resources but wanting nothing to do with Chinese people or culture.

Recognizing that historical and philosophical arguments were unlikely to win over the opposition, Lin alluded to a recent San Francisco City Assessor report that listed 28,500 Chinese employed as domestics, washermen, clothing and goods manufacturers, fishermen, farmers, merchants, brokers, clerks, porters, and others employed by mills, tanneries, and brickyards.[74] Lin argued that expelling these people would ruin the California economy by raising the prices of goods and services across California, which would be especially painful for the state's working class. "The Chinese," Lin wrote, "are the labor-saving machines that make these industries possible. Banish them, and the industries will perish. Then will your coast be deserted and your working men themselves forced to flee from it."[75]

Lin suggested that the roots of working-class misfortune in California stemmed from "governmental extravagance" and trade monopolies, not from the Chinese laborer. Working class misfortunes, Lin wrote, "do not spring from our presence here…on the contrary, they would be infinitely aggravated were you unfortunately to forget what is due to honor, to justice, and to your own interest, and attempt to drive us away from your shores."[76] Lin's task was nearly insurmountable

[73] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 8.
[74] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 14.
[75] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 14.
[76] Lin, *Why Should the Chinese Go?*, 16.

as racism against Chinese unified political support of exclusion. A variety of anti-Chinese diatribes in the U.S. during the 1870s referenced "the Yellow Peril" and "the menace from the east."[77]

For the white working class of San Francisco, the "Chinese Question" and the labor crisis were only two of the challenges that beleaguered the city. By the 1870s, silver deposit "bonanzas" discovered in nearby Nevada usurped the primacy of gold markets. Silver now functioned as the main propeller of the volatile San Francisco stock market. Silver bonanzas lured thousands of workingmen into purchasing stock ownership in dangerously speculative mines. One observer explained how "Californians of all classes have formed the habit of buying and selling in the mining exchanges, with effects on the popular temper both in business and in politics which everyone can understand."[78] Gambling on the stock market stretched workingmen's savings to the brink, given the heightened assumption of risk that attended nineteenth-century investment.[79] The fluctuations of the silver market at once created vast fortunes, sometimes overnight, but also could stifle regional economic development.[80]

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[77] Rosanne Currarino, *The Labor Question in America: Economic Democracy in the Gilded Age* (University of Illinois Press, 2011), 36, 38. Politicians and labor agitators agreed that the Chinese worked hard and saved their wages but saw abstemious Chinese as perverting the virtue of producer-citizen because they worked too hard for too little, denied themselves basic quantities of food and rest, and produced too much, too cheaply. By depicting Chinese as the perverted version of the ideal worker, white American expressed anxieties about the decline of property ownership and the increase of wage work.

[78] James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth: Volume II* (London: Macmillan, 1888), 1067.

[79] Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 3-5.

[80] In the least populated and less agricultural sections of the West (Colorado, Nevada, Washington, Montana), railroad and mining workers embraced populism because the overproduction of silver depressed its price and hamstrung regional development. So-called "Silver Republicans" supported moving off the gold standard to help stimulate silver mining in the West. See Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011.

Contemporary historian Theodore Hittell bemoaned how the illusory promise of silver wealth rendered speculators in San Francisco "wild with fever of gambling." Hittell mused that trading sessions at San Francisco's Stock and Exchange Board resembled a "snarling of a pack of wolves fighting over a carcass."[81]

As San Francisco's economy contracted in the 1870s, white workingmen decried the existential threat of Chinese labor and their abettors among the monied elite.[82] A ruinous drought compounded the state's woes by reducing job demand for the shipping and loading sectors dominated by white workingmen while paltry grain harvests forced thousands to apply for charitable relief. Workingmen villainized railroad executives and land monopolists as California's economy teetered on the brink of catastrophe.[83] Calamity struck in 1872 when $60,000,000 in crashing silver stock evaporated over several tumultuous days.[84] City bank failures during the Panic of 1873 further contracted California's economy.[85] These elements contributed to a growing pool of unemployed working-class Irish who lost some or all their savings in the stock market. Impoverishment, low wages, white resentment toward the Chinese,

[81] Theodore Hittell, *History of California: Vol. IV* (San Francisco: N.J. Stone and Company, 1898), 540.
[82] Lewis, *Mission to Metropolis,* 138.
[83] William Ralston, the one-time president of the Bank of California and among the state's most powerful financiers, resigned after charges of corruption, embezzlement, and stock manipulation surfaced. Declining yields from the Comstock Lode ruined thousands of California investors who had invested heavily in silver stocks.
[84] Oscar Lewis, *San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1966), 149.
[85] The Vienna Stock Exchange crash of 1873 and a series of related bank failures in Europe precipitated the Panic of 1873. European investors began selling off assets including massive investments in U.S. railroad corporations. Railroad stock disintegrated as boards struggled to get banks to lend them money. Railroad banker Jay Cooke, the primary financier responsible for funding the Union war effort, closed the doors of his bank, Jay Cooke and Company, one of the largest in New York City. When news of Cooke's bank failure spread, "bank runs" multiplied across the nation as account holders scrambled to get their money out.

and high unemployment enabled San Francisco labor leaders to mobilize the city's white working class, mainly the Irish.[86] The white workingmen of San Francisco protested low pay, working conditions, and economic inequality and blamed Chinese laborers for their deepening misfortune. More startling to the city's establishment, labor leaders accused political and corporate elites of rigging the system against the working class. Employing threats of violence, labor agitators marshaled the city's disaffected white workingmen into a legitimate political movement.

Like most white authors of the postwar era, Ambrose Bierce acknowledged Chinese "otherness" and rarely portrayed Chinese people in a flattering light, even when critiquing their discrimination. However, Bierce remained one of the only white columnists in San Francisco who objected to the mistreatment of the Chinese at the hands of white supremacist violence. In one editorial, Bierce lampooned the violence committed by the city's Christians against Chinese people. "On last Sunday afternoon," Bierce reported, "a Chinaman passing guilelessly along Dupont Street was assailed by a tempest of bricks and stones from the steps of the First Congregational Church. At the completion of this exercise the Sunday scholars retired within the hallowed portals of the sanctuary, to hear about Christ Jesus, and Him crucified."[87] This critique reflected how Bierce affirmed his position that the Chinese could right claim government protection from assault as law-abiding residents of the city.[88] Bierce's wartime experiences in the South exposed him to violence predicated

[86] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California: 1860-1890, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (San Francisco: The History Co. Publishers, 1890), 349-350.
[87] "Prattle," 8 Oct. 1870, *An Aversion to Fools.*
[88] Roy Morris, *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1995), 162.

upon white supremacy. Bierce's sense of unionism compelled him to critique white supremacy as an excuse for committing unlawful and unjustified violence.

The spark that ignited San Francisco's class unrest into full-blown riots was lit by railroad workers thousands of miles away to the east. During the summer of 1877, the Great Railroad Strike—the nation's first general strike—gripped the attention of San Francisco's workingmen, thousands of whom worked for the railroads. Disgruntled workers in the East and Midwest protested railroad wage cuts by refusing to work and destroying company property. Railroad executives complained to state governors, who ordered militias and federal troops to crush the labor agitation and get the trains moving again, which they did. Police arrested thousands of railroad workers, and hundreds of workers and militiamen lay dead.[89]

Against this convulsed backdrop, a public meeting of San Francisco's white workingmen convened in sand lots near City Hall. The question was: should they join their fellow railroad workers in a sympathy strike? Railroad owners in San Francisco judiciously averted a general strike and potential destruction of property by rescinding planned wage reductions. However, some eight thousand white workers, far outnumbering police, were not pacified by the railroad's announcement to maintain wages as the workingmen devolved into a mob intent on sacking Chinatown. "Anti-Coolie" organizations existed in San Francisco since the 1850s, but the scale of racially motivated destruction and lawlessness over the next three days in

[89] The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 was a national railroad worker uprising in response to pay cuts by railroads following the financial Panic of 1873. See David O. Stowell, *Streets, Railroads, and the Great Strike of 1877* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

1877 shocked residents as even churches were not immune to vandalism and destruction. Bierce reported that "during the riotous proceedings," a mob assailed the city's Protestant Mission in Chinatown.[90] In Reconstruction-era California, as in the Reconstruction-era South and North, white men deployed violence against people of color deemed a threat to white supremacy and white men's economic livelihood. Both Chinese and African Americans were the victims of intimidation and racialized violence, but the Chinese could not make claims of citizenship that African Americans could. Whereas the Republican Party had a vested interest in protecting African American voting rights in the South as the GOP's primary constituency, there was no such political party protection for the Chinese in California. Unlike in the South, where violence discouraged voting and office-holding, Reconstruction-era violence in San Francisco focused not on Chinese men as voters (the Chinese remained disenfranchised) but on driving Chinese people out of the labor market, if not out of the country.

During the 1877 riots in San Francisco, immigrants comprised a third of the city's population. Linking California politics to the radical political ideologies disseminated in nineteenth-century Europe, San Francisco's working-class crowds transplanted recognizable forms of Irish political protest to California.[91] San Francisco's Irish working-class rioting more immediately recalled New York City's working-class Irish riots that targeted the city's African Americans in 1863.[92] In both

[90] *Prattle*, 28 July 1877, *An Aversion to Fools.*
[91] Neil L. Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), 131-133.
[92] Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political* Protest, 134.

cases, the Irish presented themselves as aggrieved working-class whites. Starting on Jul 23, 1877, over three chaotic days in San Francisco, mobs of Irish workingmen burned an unknown number of Chinese-owned residential and commercial buildings to the ground. At least four Chinese people lay dead in the smoldering city, with a much higher number of unknown injured.

With police outnumbered, San Francisco's political establishment raised a civilian "Committee of Safety" armed with rifles and pick handles. This extralegal militia paralleled the city's "Committees of Vigilance" in the 1850s.[93] The Committee of Safety appealed for help to the federal government and dispatched the U.S.S *Pensacola* and *Lancaster* to the waterfront with a detachment of marines.[94] Like the Great Railroad Strike, which preceded it, the federal government crushed San Francisco's labor uprising and restored order. After three days of patrolling the streets, the Committee of Safety brought the city back under control. Demographic analysis has shown that the city's white working class—craftsmen, factory operatives, and common laborers—provided the bulk of the rioting crowd in July and the base of support for the Workingmen's Party that followed in the riots' wake.[95] The rioting crowd dissipated, but their ideology and movement had only begun.

Denis Kearney was among the armed volunteers patrolling San Francisco's streets. Owing to the contracted city economy in the fall of 1877, demand for

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[93] Philip J. Ethington, *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 88. Recorded vigilantism in California occurred as early as January 1849 when miners hanged three men in "Hangtown" (Placerville) and formed "vigilance committees" in San Francisco during the turbulent 1850s.
[94] Lewis, *Mission to Metropolis*, 140.
[95] Lewis, *Mission to Metropolis*, 140.

Kearney's hauling enterprise collapsed, and his business folded. Aggrieved, Kearney vented his frustration before workingmen crowds. His diatribes targeted the perceived enemies of the city's white working class: Republican and Democratic politicians, stockbrokers, mine owners, railroad executives, and the Chinese. Kearney argued before enthusiastic crowds that workingmen deserved a larger share of the state's productions of wealth, warning authorities that workingmen were prepared to use force if the "maldistribution of wealth" continued.[96] Kearney's threats of violence brought the attention of the police, who arrested him multiple times for illegally organizing assemblies that threatened public order. After each arrest, his popularity grew, and the crowds gathered to hear him swelled.[97]

In a striking connection to the Civil War that may have been directed towards Union veterans among his audience, Kearney and the WPC associated California's landed elite with southern slaveholders. Kearney argued that "moneymen have ruled us for thirty years. Under the flag of slaveholder, they hoped to destroy our liberty. Failing in that, they have rallied under the banner of the millionaire, the banker and the land monopolist, the railroad king, and the false politician to affect their purpose."[98] The "moneymen" were the boogeymen of the WPC, and the term appears throughout their literature. Despite this rhetoric, Kearney was no Marxist, and the WPC never called for overthrowing capitalism or the government but a more

[96] Lewis, *Mission to Metropolis*, 140.
[97] Ethington, *The Public City*, 259. Word spread of Kearney's rabble-rousing and workingmen's groups along the east coast invited Kearney to meet with labor leaders. Upon his return to San Francisco, thousands welcomed Kearney with a parade through the city's downtown.
[98] Denis Kearney and H.L Knight, "Appeal from California. The Chinese Invasion. Workingmen's Address," *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.

equitable distribution of the state's wealth to white working men. The WPC intended to use the political system, not mob action, to elevate workingmen to positions of power so they could "regulate" capitalism.

For example, Kearney argued that real estate interests had so thoroughly plundered the state's best land "the poor Laborer can find no resting place, save the barren mountain or in the trackless desert. Here, in San Francisco, the palace of the millionaire looms above the hovel of the starving poor." According to Kearney, California's "aristocracy" violated federal law in creating a new form of slavery through Chinese immigration. The moneyed elites, Kearney complained, raked "the slums of Asia to find the meanest slave on earth—the Chinese coolie—and import him here to meet the free American in the Labor market, and still further widen the breach between the rich and the poor, still further to degrade white Labor."[99] White workingmen, Kearney implied, were only willing to compete in labor markets against other white men and presumed the absence of Chinese labor would raise white workingmen's wages.

Appealing to white workingmen's conceptions of patriotism, race, and gender, Kearney promised the WPC would "die like men, if need be, in asserting the rights of our race, our country, and our families." To associate the WPC's demands with unionism, Kearney invoked Lincoln to argue that "California must be all American or all Chinese. We are resolved that it should be American and are prepared to make it

[99] Kearney and Knight, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.

so."[100]

Unlike the Great Railroad Strike protest, California's mob action led to the founding of a viable political entity that included white workingmen and middle-class members. On October 5, 1877, Kearney established the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), appointing himself president. James Bryce, a contemporary British writer and ambassador to the United States, wrote that the WPC consisted of San Francisco's "discontented and turbulent" Irish population and elements of "the lower class" of German immigrants.[101] According to Bryce, the WPC included "the better sort" of working men, merchants, clerks, and shopkeepers, suggesting that racial identification bound the WPC supporters together more closely than class identity alone.[102] White workingmen in California would argue that in the post-Civil War world, white men remained "naturally" superior to non-whites and would employ violence if the law threatened their political or economic power, just as aggrieved white men were doing in the South.

At WPC rallies, orators explained how the U.S. government fell into the hands of corrupted capitalists who ignored the plight of workingmen. Unlike Gertrude Atherton's recommendation for gradual and peaceful change, the WPC demanded immediate, systemic change by denouncing the city's Chinese and the corporations that employed them. Reflective of their organized labor roots, they also demanded eight-hour work days, *per diem* employment options for public works, and

[100] Kearney and Knight, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.
[101] Kearney and Knight, *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.
[102] Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 1072.

compulsory education for all children.[103] Their platform did not mince words: "The Republic must and shall be preserved, and only working men will do it."[104] Although the WPC's followers would never acknowledge the similarity, Black Americans in the South lobbied for the same systemic changes to improve the material lives of working-class people on similar grounds.[105]

Unlike anarchists or communists of the nineteenth century, the WPC did not call for the abandonment of capitalism, only a course correction from its current deviation. The WPC's warning of political violence implied one potential, if undesirable, outcome if legislative means failed to produce a lasting change for workingmen. Branding all those who employed Chinese as "public enemies," the WPC outlined their objective to "rid the country of cheap Chinese labor because it tends to degrade [white] labor and aggrandize capital."[106] "Let those who raise the storm by their selfishness, suppress it themselves," Kearney warned the city's political class: "If they dare raise the devil, let them meet him face to face."[107] In a brief period, Denis Kearney became the leader of aggrieved white workingmen who demanded improved wages, job security, and an end to Chinese immigration, if not their outright expulsion. Initially, Kearney and WPC succeeded in galvanizing anti-

[103] Ralph Kauer, "The Workingmen's Party of California," *Pacific Historical Review* 13 (1944): 282.
[104] Ethington, *The Public City*, 267.
[105] Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 48. Black Americans' quest for land and economic dependence during Reconstruction enabled the possibility of further aspirations of family autonomy and the creation of new churches and schools.
[106] Ethington, *The Public City*, 267-268.
[107] Denis Kearney and H.L. Knight, "Establishment of the Workingmen's Party of California [1877]," Sucheng Chan and Spencer C. Olin, *Major Problems in California History: Documents and Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 171-172.

Chinese racism by sweeping elective offices in San Francisco (mayor, sheriff, tax collector, treasurer, district attorney) and sending nearly one-third of the elected delegates to the California Constitutional Convention in 1879.[108]

In articulating the WPC's reason for being, Kearney linked unionism, manhood, and nationalism with white supremacy by arguing that the WPC "are men and propose to live like men in this free land, without the contamination of slave labor, or die like men if need be, in asserting the rights of our race, our country, and our families."[109] This characterization spoke to the WPC's ability to identify anxieties held by California's working men, none more effectively than charging Chinese labor with "degrading" white labor. Kearney claimed that Union victory ended the system of slavery in the South only for it to reappear in faraway California under the guise of Chinese immigration, a common form of reasoning among California's white supremacists. Kearney alleged that the Republican Party and its corporate cronies had violated the Reconstruction Amendments by permitting unfree Chinese "coolie" labor contracts.[110] The WPC dedicated itself to "abolishing" this new form of Californian slavery.

Ambrose Bierce rejected Kearney's arguments while he sympathized with the plight of San Francisco's workingman. Bierce believed that all people who immigrated to California had an equal right to be there to pursue their lives without

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[108] Shumsky, *Evolution of Political Protest*, 208.
[109] Dennis Kearney, President, and H. L. Knight, Secretary, "Appeal from California. The Chinese Invasion. Workingmen's Address," *Indianapolis Times*, 28 February 1878.
[110] Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 3. In one of the clearest ways that federal Reconstruction in the South and the West intersected, anti-Chinese legislators in California incorporated the language of abolitionists to restrict Chinese immigration.

the threat of violence or dispossession. Like Gertrude Atherton and other members of the city's educated middle class, Bierce was deeply concerned by the WPC's ability to agitate massive, unruly crowds to commit violence. As the *Prattler*, Bierce called for Kearney's arrest on multiple occasions. In one of his scathing editorials, Bierce charged that Kearney's "dirty-shirted recitals of ghostly grievances to mobs of fat and prosperous workingmen, must be repressed. If they suffer to go on throating their pestilent nonsense into spacious ears, they will beget a mischief. The Kearney-person must be got under lock-and-key."[111] Kearney invoked the Civil War and its legacy to attack Chinese labor as "slavery." In contrast, Bierce would invoke the Civil War and its legacy to defend Chinese people from violence and exclusion.

San Francisco's three days of rioting in the summer of 1877 soon upended the state's politics two-party system. Following the riots, voter disillusionment with the conventional party system fused with enthusiastic anti-Chinese sentiment to demand an end to Chinese immigration. WPC-backed candidates surprisingly won offices across California in 1878, including eleven seats in the state senate and seventeen in the state assembly. The WPC's most impressive achievement was electing fifty-one out of the 152 state delegates sent to Sacramento to revise the state's constitution.[112] Reflecting its grip over San Francisco, the WPC captured all thirty constitutional convention delegates from the city. What is noteworthy is how many Civil War

[111] *Prattle*, 13 October 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[112] Shumsky, *The Evolution of Political Protest*, 208. Despite sending one-third of the delegates tasked with redrafting the California constitution, the WPC's inexperience in law and formal politics produced little structural change to state law, although they did force the establishment of a regulatory body to oversee railroads.

veterans participated in revising the California state constitution in 1879.

According to the official *Biographical Sketches of the Delegates to the Convention to Frame a New Constitution for the State of California* (1879), made available to the public and later kept in state archives, the range of veterans involved in the delegation reveals a great deal about composition of Union veterans in postwar California.[113] One Union veteran delegate was Alphonse Prosper Vacqueral, a French immigrant who served in the U.S. Navy from 1863-1865.[114] Another delegate, Scottish Union veteran Peter Bell, arrived at age 18 and served in the Union Army from 1862 to the war's end. Bell described how his wartime experience transformed him into an American "as though born in New York instead of Glasgow."[115] A former Democrat, Bell had recently joined the Workingman's Party of California to protest Chinese immigration.

One of the leading delegates to the California Constitutional Convention was Union veteran Charles Carroll O'Donnell of San Francisco, a surgeon whose uncle fought for the Continental Army. In 1861, O'Donnell left California and "was one of the first to enlist as a field surgeon. Like all Californians, he did his duty and returned to the State with a practical knowledge [on] how to treat sword and gunshot wounds."[116] As reflected in California's contested postwar political landscape,

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[113] D.G. Waldron and T.J. Vivian, *Biographical Sketches of the Delegates to the Convention to Frame a New Constitution for the State of California, 1878: together with a succinct review of the facts leading to the formation of the Monterey Convention of 1849, a list of its members, and the Constitutional Act of 1878* (San Francisco: Francis and Valentine, 1878), 60.
[114] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 60.
[115] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 75.
[116] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 75.

California Union veterans did not all line up behind the Republican Party as veterans tended to do nationally in support of presidential candidates. White Union veterans like O'Donnell supported the Workingmen's Party of California and their demands for Chinese exclusion. "By the American workingman," his biographers reported, O'Donnell "is held in high esteem as the inaugurator of the anti-Coolie crusade, a war which he takes every opportunity to carry into the enemy's territory."[117] Although he was not a member of the city's working class, workingmen supported O'Donnell due to his fierce anti-Chinese convictions. Voters considered him "capable of representing [the WPC] and looking strictly after its interests."[118]

In an unexpected example of reconciliation among Civil War veterans during Reconstruction, Union and Confederate veterans were found among the supporters of the Workingmen's Party of California. This episode shows how unionism formerly divided Civil War veterans but could be accommodated as a point of white commonality in postwar California. For example, California voters sent Confederate veterans, including William Proctor Hughey, to the Constitutional Convention. Hughey joined the Confederate army as a captain and served on the staff of Gen. James Longstreet. Following his capture at Gettysburg, Hughey disavowed his former support of secession and rebellion and embraced the Union cause by taking an oath of allegiance to the United States government. Having long fought against the North, Hughey decided to live in the North, where he first went to Cincinnati and married

[117] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 75.
[118] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 75.

before coming to California in 1875.[119] As a California constitutional delegate, Hughey admitted he was "fully alive to the issue that either he or the Chinese must go."[120] Confederate army veteran David Smith Terry, better known as "Judge Terry" in California, was the most notorious Civil War veteran at the California Constitutional Convention.[121] Terry's infamy is well-supported by the historical record.[122] Originally from Mississippi, Terry moved to California in 1849 but returned to the South, where he joined the Confederate army as a general. Following the war, Terry fled to Mexico with his wife but ran afoul with the Maximilian regime and moved to Stockton in 1870 to resume a legal and political career. The biographers observed that Judge Terry was "altogether one of the remarkable men of the Convention, possessing vast power of thought, holding bold opinions, and being rigidly honorable to himself in their vindication."[123] Each of these otherwise disparate Civil War veterans suggests how some Union and Confederate veterans found common causes in postwar California through the ideology of white supremacy.

Delegate James Edward Dean, a Union veteran and long-time resident of

[119] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 77.
[120] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 77.
[121] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 135.
[122] An esteemed jurist and one-time Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California, Terry killed California U.S. Senator David C. Broderick during a duel in San Francisco in 1859. Both men were Democrats, but Broderick was an abolitionist while Terry was pro-slavery. Federal agents indicted Terry, but a California circuit court dismissed the case. Thirty years later Terry attacked a sitting California Supreme Court Judge, Stephen J. Field, a one-time friend of David Broderick, over a public scandal involving Terry's second wife, Sarah Terry. During the attack, Field's bodyguard shot and killed Terry. Following Terry's death, Sarah Terry was committed by authorities to the California Asylum at Stockton where she resided for the next forty-five years until her death. See Albert Russell Buchanan, *David S. Terry of California: Dueling Judge* (2012).
[123] D.G. Waldron and T.J. Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 136.

California, offers a useful example of how the Workingmen's Party of California appealed to Union veterans. Dean was in California pursuing a business career in 1861 when, "feeling he owed a duty to his country," he enlisted as a member of the Company G Fourth Infantry, California Volunteers, serving for three years. "Weary of internecine struggle and fratricide," he returned to California in 1864.[124] Although Dean was a longtime Republican, his constituents elected him on a WPC ticket like many other Civil War veterans. His biography assured readers that Dean was "free from bias on the great questions now agitating those who distinctively—and perhaps, unnecessarily, call themselves the laboring classes."[125] There was space, it seemed, for white Civil War veterans, workingmen, farmers, and the comfortable middle class in the Workingmen's Party of California.[126]

The WPC surprised observers when they captured the San Francisco mayor's office in 1878. Rev. Isaac Smith Kalloch, the controversial new mayor, enacted highly restrictive employment and mobility laws against the Chinese. From his pulpit in 1878, Kalloch prayed that "capital may respect the rights of labor, that Chinese may go, [and] that the grasping spirit of remorseless monopoly may be saved."[127] Enforcement of Kalloch's laws was uneven, and state courts invalidated the most egregious prohibitions. However, white supremacy continued to influence anti-

[124] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 147.
[125] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 147.
[126] The Grange was a political movement founded in 1867 by Minnesota farmer Oliver Hudson Kelley to advance agricultural science and promote the needs of farmers. The financial crisis of 1873, falling crop prices, and increased transit fees dramatically increased Grange membership in the 1870s. Grangers supported reform-minded groups such as the Greenback Party, the Populist Party, and later, the Progressives.
[127] Waldron and Vivian, *Biographical Sketches*, 204.

Chinese sentiment. In 1878, San Francisco's Catholic Church (with its sizable population of Irish parishioners) suspended its mission work in Chinatown and agreed with Protestant leaders like Kalloch in condemning Chinese immigration.[128]

From the perspective of Ambrose Bierce, Denis Kearney, and the Central Pacific Railroad's president Charles Crocker used different rhetoric but shared a similar desire to enrich themselves at the public's expense. Bierce understood men like Kearney and Crocker as cut from the same self-serving cloth, and both were frequent targets of the *Prattler*'s ridicule in the late 1870s. Reporting on the news of a recently constructed perimeter fence that fortified Crocker's imperial mansion in Nob Hill, Bierce observed Crocker "has the misfortune to live in a nice house, opposite which some hundreds of lawless miscreants are accustomed to meet and destroy it."[129] More worrying than the destruction of a fence, Bierce, in some ways, predicted the WPC when he suggested a mob might gain actual power through the ballot, warning Crocker that "the man-beast who is going to thrust a blazing torch under your house" could also be organized into voting themselves to office.[130] Bierce also used Kearney's Irish ethnicity as grounds for mocking him in limerick form:

> Thee was a bold ruffian, Kearney,
> Who rallied the hoodlum with
> blarney;
> But the officers collared
> The rascal who hollered:
> "I want to go home to Killarney."[131]

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[128] Joshua Paddison, *American Heathens Religion, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 144.
[129] *Prattle*, 3 November 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[130] *Prattle*, 3 November 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[131] *Prattle*, 3 November 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.

One way to explain Bierce's attacks on Kearney and the WPC's aggrieved victimhood was his belief in "fair play" to the city's Chinese and African American communities. The city's Chinese population, Bierce argued, were in no way the cause of economic unrest or threats to public order but were themselves the victims of discrimination and organized extralegal violence. Bierce also sympathized with the city's white working poor and would never "ignore the plights of the laboring class, nor withhold sympathy for the bottom dog in this struggle between the lucky rich and the unfortunate poor."[132] Bierce promised readers that as editor, he would never "be frightened by the declaration and noisy clamor of a mob of empty-headed, long-tongued demagogues who are stirring up public resentment that they may successfully pass the hat."[133]

Bierce's experiences in the Civil War and his sense of unionism were the basis of his later interest in exposing fraud and hypocrisy as a journalist. By way of example, Bierce reported that a well-known San Francisco immigrant, a Swede, had recently addressed the city's Scandinavian Club with the exhortation to "roll up their sleeves and go for the Chinese."[134] "I am not enamored of the Chinese," the *Prattler* confessed, "and the Scandinavians are a very good class of citizens; but I do ardently hope that the first and succeeding hand that is raised against the Chinese will be lopped off at the wrist."[135] What kind of advanced society that sang hosannas about liberty, Bierce wondered, would permit one group to assault another solely based on

[132] *Prattle*, 3 November 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[133] *Prattle*, 22 December 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[134] *Prattle*, 22 December 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.
[135] *Prattle*, 29 December 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.

hailing from a different country? Each could make the same claims to personal safety and freedom as the other.

If the federal government welcomed immigration to modernize the nation at discounted wages, the states had to abide by the law. If unionism meant anything, it required acknowledging the established rule of law. Should the United States "keep an open house," Bierce said of Kearney's arguments, "we do not need, neither will we tolerate, an intimation from any guest that the company is not sufficiently select. That is the cast-iron sense of the matter, Mr. Kearney, Irishman."[136] The law, Bierce argued, protected the Chinese in San Francisco, and what Kearney and the WPC threatened was anarchy. For all of Kearney's bluster, it was not anarchy that the WPC brought to California, but a new political party, whose fall came as quickly as its ascent.

California's Constitutional Convention of 1878 was supposed to be where the Workingmen's Party of California affected its mandate to "reconstruct" capitalism in the state and improve the lives of white workingmen. The WPC's public speech and member recruitment skills did not carry over into the work of legislation and jurisprudence. Among the seasoned lawyers of the Democratic and Republican parties, the WPC's inexperience revealed itself as the WPC's radical vision of reconstructed capitalism and more favorable distribution of wealth to white working men failed to materialize. The revised California state constitution of 1879 maintained a fundamental commitment to uphold the sanctity of private property. The

[136] *Prattle*, 29 December 1877, *An Aversion to Fools*.

Granger and WPC representatives, alongside Republicans and Democrats, together acknowledged that property rights were "inalienable." In their crusade against the Chinese in California, the WPC did succeed in adding new restrictions to state law that forbade the state from employing Chinese labor. Less concretely, an addendum urged the state legislature to "discourage immigration by all means within its power…and provide the necessary legislation to prohibit the introduction into this state of Chinese."[137] Even though the WPC as an effective political party ceased to exist by 1881, the political momentum they inspired against California's Chinese immigration remained federal until WWII.

As quickly as it had risen from the streets of San Francisco in the violent summer of 1877, the Workingmen's Party of California began falling apart in 1879 and disintegrated entirely by 1881. The party's decline was as rapid as its ascent. Splits in WPC leadership over the ideological disputes, disillusionment over the limited changes to the state constitution, and sharp improvements in San Francisco's and California's rebounding economies in the early 1880s reduced the party's appeal.[138] Returning from a trip on the east coast to visit party allies, Kearney lost his seat as president due to accusations of embezzlement. By the 1880s, the aging Kearney disclaimed his radical politics and called to reconstruct capitalism by joining San Francisco's elite business community. Having seen the fruition of the WPC through the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, Kearney quietly became a

[137] Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco*, 129.
[138] Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco*, 130.

wealthy commodities trader and leading member of the city until he died in 1907.[139]

With Kearney out of power and WPC losing momentum, most party members returned to the Democratic Party, which sustained the WPC's attacks on Chinese labor and alleged collusion between the railroads and the Republican Party. California's political pendulum, which briefly tolerated a radical labor party in the late 1870s, swung back to the center, leaving the WPC without a secure base and empty threats over destroying property rights. In the long view, the WPC exemplified how postwar political institutions incorporated more of the population than ever before. The WPC ceased to exist because it politicized its members to think like a party and no longer as a crowd. The lasting historical significance of the WPC was its capacity to transition from "crowd to party," a watershed political development in nineteenth-century American politics. The WPC's more immediate legacy was its successful mobilization of opposition to Chinese labor and Chinese immigration across the state's political spectrum and establishing momentum for Congress to act in restricting Chinese immigration.

On May 8, 1882, U.S. President Chester A. Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act into law. This legislation, which abrogated the free immigration clauses of the Burlingame-Seward treaty altogether, reflected how white European immigrant men fought for and received special labor protections in postwar California. The Chinese Exclusion Act instituted a ten-year moratorium on the immigration of Chinese workers into the U.S., the first restriction based purely on

[139] Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco*, 130.

race in the republic's history. Middle-class Chinese merchants, scholars, diplomats, and travelers could still enter with specific documentation.[140] The federal government declared those Chinese already in America ineligible for citizenship, effectively freezing America's 106,000-member Chinese community in an uncertain legal limbo.[141]

Ambrose Bierce unsurprisingly claimed part of the credit for Kearney's downfall. Kearney's fall also cost Bierce his job. The *Argonaut*'s founders (Republicans with business connections with the state's railroads) shared few ideological commitments with Bierce outside of opposition to Kearney and the WPC. By late 1879 Bierce was out of a job and uncertain about his future in California. News of gold discovered in the Black Hills of Dakota Territory lured Bierce into supporting a failed speculative mining venture. Returning with a lightened wallet to San Francisco in 1882, the San Francisco *Wasp* (a satirical weekly "born to sting") offered Bierce a new editorial perch from which to re-launch the "Prattle" series, which he did from 1882 to 1886.[142]

Like many other Civil War veterans, it was this time that Bierce "returned" to the Civil War. In Bierce's dark fiction set during the Civil War, soldiers experienced none of the "honorable strife" depicted by the GAR or most romanticized takes on the war. As a rebuke of the saccharine renderings of the Civil War popular during the

[140] Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 90.
[141] Seligman, *The First Chinese American*, 90.
[142] Richard Saunders, *Ambrose Bierce: The Making of a Misanthrope* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1985), 33.

1880s and 1890s, Bierce's grim stories underscored the discomforting ways war destroyed the bodies and minds of soldiers and civilians trapped within its maw.[143] Nobility and valor gave way to human folly and industrial-scale violence.

When the Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910, Bierce traveled south of the border to cover the conflict. As he set his sights on his last adventure, the Civil War, forty-five years behind him, never left his mind. In one of his last-known letters, Bierce explained that:

> Before visiting Mexico (if I can get it), I am going over my old battlefields of a half-century ago—Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Murfreesboro, Franklin, Nashville, Shiloh, and so forth. I'd like to show you…just how I saved the Union for the workingman and the suffragette, the socialist, anarchist and the Christian Scientist and the Puritan. Perhaps you can fancy the battle-scarred (or bottle-scarred) veteran posing all by himself on the scenes of his prowess of arms! Isn't it a touching picture?[144]

All at once, this scathing letter captured the apparent contradictions and tensions of Bierce's unionism. Bierce was a volunteer in the Union Army and proud of his service but felt it was his duty to mock self-serving and venal army, political, and business leaders. The one-time "wickedest man in San Francisco" passed the Mexican border in the fall of 1913 and wrote his last known letter from Chihuahua on December 26. Under unclear circumstances, Ambrose Bierce disappeared forever from the historical record. It would no doubt have pleased Bierce to read the salacious rumors concerning his death. Still, scholars know nothing of his final days covering

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[143] Martin Griffin, *Ashes of the Mind: War and Memory in Northern Literature: 1865-1900* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 13, 134-136.
[144] Ambrose Bierce, "Letter to Amy Wells, from Washington D.C. [1913]," *A Much Misunderstood Man: Selected Letters of Ambrose Bierce* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2003), 242.

the Mexican Revolution. This chapter has made the case that Ambrose Bierce's journalism in the 1870s provides an essential counterpoint to the GAR's rhetoric regarding the ways California's union veterans conceived of unionism, why they had fought in the Civil War, and how Union victory shaped the path of the postwar United States.

In late 1870s San Francisco, when an unlikely conglomerate of white supremacists, conservative religious leaders, politicians, newspaper editors, and white workingmen attacked Chinese laborers and businesses, Ambrose Bierce emerged as a defender of Chinese labor and immigration as he identified business and political leaders' corruption as the greatest threat to the postwar republic. I argue that what Bierce took from the Civil War was a firm, colorblind conviction of wrong and right spelled out in the language of the Constitution and legal agreements like the Burlingame Treaty. The legally backed white supremacy of the antebellum age ended, Bierce argued, with the passing of the Reconstruction Amendments, whether white Californians approved or not. Drawing on an ethical worldview shaped by his experience in the Civil War, Bierce argued that the Chinese rightly claimed a legal right to live and work in peace in California. Bierce's 1870s journalism reveals California's arguments over race, class, the federal reconfigurations of citizenship, and the ideology of unionism as an unstable concept.

May God save the Union! God grant it may stand,
the pride of our people, the boast of our land;
still, still 'mid the storm may our banner float free;
Unrent and unriven o'er earth and o'er sea.[1]

CHAPTER 4: William Rosecrans and the Decline of the Union Cause

Early in the Civil War, the term "union" emerged as an emotional rallying cry for northern soldiers and civilians.[2] Wartime unionism linked citizenship, combat, and manhood at a time when military service was enmeshed with gendered and raced understandings of republicanism.[3] Rooted in the much longer history of citizen-led militias, white northern civilian men were expected to volunteer to defend the republic from dissolution. Throughout the Civil War, disputes over the fundamental meaning of unionism shifted from an ideology exclusively designed to restore the union to an ideology that embraced emancipation and the vital contributions of enslaved and formerly enslaved African Americans as central to victory over the

[1] Opening lyrics to George Douglas Brewerton's patriotic wartime song, "God Save the Union" (1861). Jourdan Moore Houston and Alan Fraser Houston, "California on His Mind: The Easel and Pen of Pioneer George Douglas Brewerton," *California History 81*, no. 1 (2002): 20. Brewerton was an army officer, sketch artist, journalist, pastor, author, and painter best known for his western landscapes in oil and pastel.
[2] The war produced memorable musical expressions of unionism, including the North's most popular wartime song, George F. Root's "Battle Cry of Freedom" and its famous first line of "The Union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah!" See Root, "The Battle Cry of Freedom" (1862), "Civil War Music: 'The Battle Cry of Freedom'," *American Battlefield Trust*, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/civil-war-music-battle-cry-freedom.
[3] Matthew E. Stanley, *Grand Army of Labor: Workers, Veterans, and the Meaning of the Civil War* (Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 12.

Confederacy. This example was only one way the claimants of unionism morphed its parameters to meet changing political needs in the postwar era. This chapter adds to the preceding analysis of this dissertation by examining more deeply how California's Union veterans adapted the ideology of unionism to serve diverse political ends from the 1870s through the end of the nineteenth century.

With the Confederacy defeated and the threat of the union's dissolution seemingly vanquished, the future of unionism as an animating ideology remained unclear in national culture. In California, unionism remained central to veterans as their invocations of the war and its legacy played a fundamental role in shaping the political topography of the state.[4] In this chapter, I investigate the career of former Union Army general and California politician William Starke Rosecrans (1819-1898), with particular attention to his understudied life as a veteran, to examine how he articulated yet another variant of unionism in California from positions of political power. As an elite businessman, politician, and public figure, Rosecrans combined the religious intensity of his abolitionist views, his support of capitalism, sectional reconciliation, and imperialism. Rosecrans was also the highest-ranking Union general active in the Democratic Party and was one of the original incorporators of the Southern Pacific Railroad in California.[5]

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[4] I am indebted to the linguistic insights of Daniel T. Rodgers' *Contested Truths, Keywords in American Politics* (1987) regarding the power of language to shape politics. Rodgers asked how Americans used "certain of the central words in our putative political creed" from the time of American Independence, of which he foregrounded *utility*, *natural rights*, *the people*, *government*, *the state*, *interests*, and *freedom*. To this list, I would add *union*. Rodgers, *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 3.

[5] William M. Lamers, *The Edge of Glory: A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans, U.S.A.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1961), 441.

Analysis of Rosecrans' speeches, publications, and other correspondence indicates that over time, his understanding of unionism and his service record was employed to support emancipation and political equality, uphold racial hierarchy, and rationalize capitalism and empire. Throughout Rosecrans' life, multiple dimensions of unionism rose and receded, underscoring its flexibility and political usefulness. This chapter argues that investigating Rosecrans' career as a veteran in postwar California demonstrates that unionism remained a vital if mutable, political ideology after the war. In heterogeneous California, it shaped disputes over the legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction in ways that gave rise to distinctive patterns in postwar party politics in the state.

Unionism was not a neutral idea but a dynamic and potent concept that inspired devotion and sacrifice. For those loyal to the U.S. government, "union" functioned as a metonym of the dearly held American experiment in republican government. The championing of the union cause and memorialization of the Civil War by the fraternal Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and sororal Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) into the twentieth century provides compelling evidence of veterans' enduring devotion to unionism in postwar California. However, there is tension between unionism's consistency as an ideology connected to the precepts of republican government and the rule of law and unionism's protean character in quotidian political discourse. In unionism's most straightforward formulation during the war, patriotic men and women in the North (and West and South) condemned secession as treasonous. They praised the American union as sacrosanct. Throughout

the war, African Americans' collective resistance to slavery forced emancipation to become a constitutive component of unionism, if only at first as a measure of wartime expediency.

Abraham Lincoln's letter to newspaper editor Horace Greeley in 1862 provides an illustrative example of the protean quality of unionism. Before issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln's unionism prioritized the legal restoration of the states as they existed on the eve of secession, with the implication that slavery would remain in place where it was already legal in the South and border states. "I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt," Lincoln wrote, "I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored; the nearer the Union will be 'the Union as it was.'"[6] Lincoln's earliest articulation of unionism aimed for a limited war and respect for slaveholders' property rights, but as wartime events unfolded and military necessity dictated, Lincoln's expression of unionism changed to meet changing political conditions and his convictions. Following Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, unionism encompassed the restoration of the states and the emancipation of America's enslaved Black population.

William Rosecrans and the Politics of Unionism

Of all the controversial Union generals who commanded armies during the American Civil War, William Starke "Rosy" Rosecrans remains among the most

[6] Abraham Lincoln, "Letter in Reply to Horace Greeley on Slavery and the Union—The Restoration of the Union [1862]," the Paramount Object Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/342162.

understudied. Military historians have shed considerable ink debating the merits of his wartime record, but the most significant part of his life as a veteran remains unexamined.[7] By examining how Rosecrans' political attitudes as a veteran diverged from other California Union veterans, we find evidence of unionism's wide-ranging uses in postwar California. As an Ohio Democrat, Rosecrans voted for Stephen Douglas in the 1860 presidential election, but upon hearing newly elected President Abraham Lincoln's request for volunteers in 1861 to put down the Southern rebellion, Rosecrans committed himself to mobilize regiments in Ohio. After hostilities broke out, the War Department awarded Rosecrans command over the Army of the Cumberland, whose officer corps included a young Ambrose Bierce.

Years before Lincoln's wartime conversion toward abolition, Rosecrans' unionism embraced the restoration of union and the destruction of slavery as co-equal objectives. Rosecrans' wartime rebukes of "Copperheads," or anti-war Northerners, drew wide praise from Republicans and Northerners, and as the highest-ranking Catholic general in the war, his faith directly informed his unionism.[8] No stranger to

[7] The scholarship on Rosecrans' military record abounds: James A. Kaser, *At the Bivouac of Memory: History, Politics, and the Battle of Chickamauga* (1996), William Lee White, *Bushwhacking on a Grand Scale: The Battle of Chickamauga, September 18-20, 1863* (2013), Craig J. Manville, *The Limits of Obedience: Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood's Performance During the Battle of Chickamauga* (2015), Peter Cozzens, *The Battle of Chickamauga: This Terrible Sound* (2016), David A. Powell, *Decisions at Chickamauga: The Twenty-Four Critical Decisions That Defined the Battle* (2018), and William G. Robertson, *River of Death: The Chickamauga Campaign* (2018). There are, however, only two historical biographies on Rosecrans, William M. Lamers, *The Edge of Glory: A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans, U.S.A* (1961) and more recently, David G. Moore, *William S. Rosecrans and the Union Victory: A Civil War Biography* (2014). Both biographers focus on Rosecrans' military career with an eye toward historical rehabilitation, offering only passing remarks on his life as a veteran in epilogues.

[8] William B. Kurtz, "'The Perfect Model of a Christian Hero': The Faith, Anti-Slaveryism, and Post-War Legacy of William S. Rosecrans," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 31, no. 1 (2013): 96.

controversy or making enemies of his superiors, Rosecrans' support for emancipation drew scorn from Catholics (who generally opposed the Republican Party) and fellow Democrats.[9]

Rosecrans' military record is well documented, but the battle of Chickamauga (1863) is worth briefly revisiting because it initiated his lifelong confrontations with the Republican party. Following the Army of the Cumberland's victories at the battle at Stones River (1862) and the Tullahoma Campaign (1863), the War Department ordered Rosecrans to engage Braxton Bragg's Confederate Army of Tennessee near the Chickamauga Creek in northeast Georgia on September 18, 1863. Whether it was Rosecrans' poorly worded battle orders or that his staff officers communicated his orders poorly, the Army of the Cumberland met catastrophic defeat against Confederate forces at the battle of Chickamauga.[10] Bragg's defeat of Rosecrans came with an enormous cost to both armies in one of the war's rare clear-cut instances of outnumbered Union soldiers. The battle produced the war's second-highest casualties after Gettysburg and was the Union Army's most significant defeat in the Western theater. Ulysses S. Grant and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton blamed Rosecrans directly, and both men held grudges against Rosecrans for the remainder of

[9] Kurtz, "'The Perfect Model," 73. In recognition of his public faith and wartime heroism, the University of Notre Dame awarded Rosecrans the Laetare Medal, the most prestigious award given to American Catholics. "Recipients of the Laetare Medal, 1896," University of Notre Dame, https://laetare.nd.edu/recipients/#info1896.

[10] Kurtz, "'The Perfect Model," 356. Distraught, exhausted, and believing his army in disarray, Rosecrans returned to Chattanooga to wire the War Department of his army's collapse and need for support. Rosecrans misjudged the field, as the remains of the Army of the Cumberland commanded by Gen. George H. Thomas (thereafter known as the "Rock of Chickamauga") reorganized an effective defense to check further Confederate advance and prevent a rout of the remaining army.

their lives. After Grant replaced Rosecrans, Lincoln demoted him to oversee the Department of Missouri in 1864, an unheralded assignment where Rosecrans successfully repulsed Confederate Gen. Sterling Price's attempted capture of the state. By then, Rosecrans' star had faded, and he remained in Missouri while Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan led Union armies to final victory (and national prominence) in 1865. Revisiting the battle of Chickamauga for the *San Francisco Examiner*, fellow Californian and Army of the Cumberland veteran Ambrose Bierce observed that:

> Rosecrans caused the defeat of the entire right wing of his army—there is no dispute as to that. Rosecrans was swept from the field, and although many of his officers, among them his chief of staff, returned and fought all the rest of the day under Thomas, he held his way into Chattanooga, whence he sent to Washington a 'scare' telegram announcing the defeat of his army. And this while the guns of the unbeaten Thomas were thundering in his ears![11]

Rosecrans' conceptualization of unionism influenced his politics, faith, investments, and honor. Defeat at Chickamauga threatened to undermine his previous accomplishments in support of the union cause. Attacks on his integrity as an officer threatened his postwar professional opportunities. In Rosecrans' case, the men who fought under his command consistently vouched for his leadership and courage. Whatever tensions existed between Rosecrans and Grant, the ordinary soldiers and officers of the Army of the Cumberland held Rosecrans in high esteem. Given Rosecrans' documented record of bravery in battle, his retreat at Chickamauga was

[11] Ambrose Bierce, "War Topics," *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1902. Bierce reflected that Rosecrans was a "courageous and dutiful soldier. His men's belief in him and devotion to him were marvelous; but those of his higher officers had little confidence in him, and events justified their doubt."

not evidence of cowardice. On the contrary, Bierce and other veterans praised Rosecrans' courage despite his command errors. The continued support of his troops is vital to understanding how Rosecrans drew on his wartime record and reputation to advance his business and political career in California.[12]

A steadfast Ohio Democrat whose Pennsylvania ancestors fought in the American Revolution, William Rosecrans was an unabashed abolitionist from a prominent family of abolitionists. Rosecrans' emancipationist unionism reflected his religiously inspired prosecution of the war. On the march in the Western theater in 1863, Rosecrans wrote a letter to his father, Edward, condemning slavery. William praised his father's public abolitionism: "I am happy to see the splendid stand you take in the *Telegraph* against slavery with its horrors, barbarities, and base immoralities. Slavery is dead. Nothing can resuscitate it."[13] Like other religiously motivated abolitionists, William Rosecrans expressed to his father how the battle against slavery was about far more than a sectional dispute over states' rights:

> Slavery is doomed, and those who would now uphold it will be held up in a very short time to public odium and execration. No statesman will vindicate it, no friend of human progress will stretch out a hand to break its fall, no lover of humanity and religion will grieve for its overthrow. I have lived long enough in the South, to see [slavery's] workings [and] disgusting features, debasing the higher principles of our nature, warring with religion, and patronizing vice and

[12] Ambrose Bierce, "War Topics," *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 July 1899. Rosecrans never lost the ability to inspire the confidence of his men in what Bierce called the "the first duty" of generals. Bierce observed that some "of the most incompetent commanders in history have had it in a high degree and were thereby enabled to accomplish results not otherwise possible to them, especially in averting disaster. Notable examples (I mention them in the hope of arousing evil passions and provoking controversy) are McClellan and Rosecrans." In both cases, Democrats Rosecrans and McClellan were highly respected by their men but removed from command by Republicans in the War Department.
[13] "William S. Rosecrans Letter to Edward Purcell Rosecrans," 27 April 1863, William S. Rosecrans Papers Box 76, Special Collections Library, University of California at Los Angeles.

> immorality. Almighty God has certainly ordained its destruction in this country, where it has been more offensive and immoral than in any other, and until it is utterly extinct, this war cannot, from the nature of things, cease.[14]

Sympathetic to southern whites, most of whom supported his Democratic Party, Rosecrans argued that the destruction of slavery would be a boon to the South by improving the labor prospects and upward mobility of ordinary white men:

> I am in favor of a cessation of hostilities as early as possible; therefore, I am in favor of the President's [Emancipation] Proclamation. [Union-occupied Tennessee] was made for white people and free labor, and when slavery no longer blights its borders, we may expect to see the church and the school take the place of slave-pen and market.[15]

Rosecrans' quotation spoke to unionism's compatibility with emancipation, racial hierarchy, and white supremacy and reflected Rosecrans' ability as a politician to employ the rhetoric of unionism toward a specific audience.

Rosecrans' wartime correspondence indicated how his confidence in the providential order of the world undergirded his sense of purpose and expectation that the union would prevail. In a letter to his wife Ann, Rosecrans wrote: "It may be that by my hands [that God] will work out the deliverance of the poor negro from his bondage. You know what I think of the rebellion and slavery! Let us pray that God may deliver those captives now bought and sold like beasts. I will hope in Him [that] I will remember that He has redeemed them at the same cost as those whose skins are white."[16] Whether during his time as a Union general or later as a Democratic

[14] Rosecrans Letter to Edward Purcell, 27 April 1863.
[15] Kurtz, "Perfect Model," 73.
[16] Kurtz, "Perfect Model," 83.

politician in postwar California, Rosecrans' praise of emancipation existed comfortably alongside deference to a racial hierarchy, a paramount concern given the party's explicit alignment with white supremacy as early as the 1868 presidential campaign.

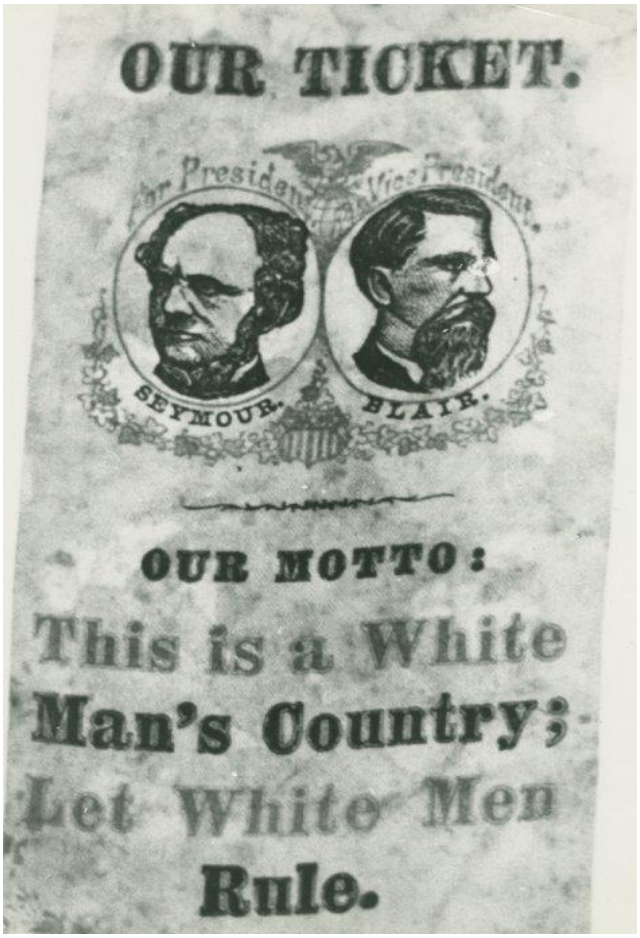

Figure 4.1: "Our Ticket, Our Motto: This is a White Man's Country; Let White Men Rule." Campaign badge supporting Horatio Seymour and Francis Blair, Democratic candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States, 1868. [17]

[17] Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library, New York Public Library Digital Collections, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/62a9d0e6-4fc9-dbce-e040-e00a18064a66.

Measuring the Impact of Unionism

In the wake of the Confederate defeat, unionism as an ideal became less coherent but remained politically potent for veterans and their supporters. The ideology of white Union veterans' early in the postwar era informed their support for a progressive set of political and racial commitments encompassing more than political realignment, adherence to the rule of law, and the acceptance of fairly contested elections.[18] Election analysis indicates that Union veteran voters supported Radical Reconstruction as an extension of unionism into the immediate postwar era. Union veterans in the late 1860s and 1870s connected unionism and Black civil rights through a repudiation of slavery and an affirmation of Reconstruction. The political positions of white northern soldiers, and their transformative experiences with slavery, provides context for why white Union veterans initially voted so decisively in support of freedom and citizenship for Black Americans.[19] Union veteran voters played, until recently, a historically unrecognized role in the Reconstruction-era white coalition that supported Black freedom during America's "Second Revolution."[20]

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[18] Although I am not taking up the subject of Black Union veterans in this chapter, it is important to note unionism for Black veterans cohered around emancipation and liberty far more directly than the repression of rebellion and reestablishment of federal power. See Brian Kelly, "W. E. B. Du Bois, Black Agency and the Slaves' Civil War," *International Socialist Review* 100 (2016): 48-68.
[19] Larry M. Logue, "Union Veterans and Their Government: The Effects of Public Policies on Private Lives," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 3 (1992): 426. See also: Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007), Barbara Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (2011), and Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (2013).
[20] Civil War-era scholars Charles A. Beard, Eric Foner, James McPherson, Gregory P. Downs, and Bruce Levine have characterized the Civil War, emancipation, and Reconstruction as a "second" American Revolution. See Foner, *Reconstruction*: *America's Unfinished Revolution* (1988) and McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (1992). Regarding the war's ideological transformations, see Downs, *The Civil War-Era Struggle over Cuba and the Rebirth of the American Republic* (2019).

White Union veterans' voting data from the 1860s and early 1870s demonstrated their support for the Republican Party and its commitment to protecting Black civil rights, particularly Black men's right to vote, including many Union veterans. Union veteran voters, more so than average white northern voters, demonstrated a higher receptivity toward the objectives of Radical Reconstruction, supported the establishment of legal racial equality, and consistently voted in support of Black suffrage.[21]

Many white Union veterans in the 1860s disdained the Democratic Party for their sympathies with the Old South and opposition to the war and the Lincoln Administration. The Democratic Party's association with the South was one of the many reasons that Union veterans aligned themselves with the Republican Party after the war. Union veterans supported the Republican Party's Reconstruction project in the defeated South. However, as this dissertation has argued, white Californians (including Union veterans) fiercely resisted Reconstruction's perceived threat against the state's system of racial hierarchy.[22] Union veterans helped make Reconstruction a political reality just as they contributed to the collapse of slavery through their victories in the field. This influence stemmed from the magnitude of their sheer numbers; by 1870, Union veterans constituted 24% of the electorate.[23] Likewise, Black Union veteran voters' support of the Republican Party in the South made

[21] Michael Weaver, "'Let Our Ballots Secure What Our Bullets Have Won': Union Veterans and the Making of Radical Reconstruction," *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 4 (2022): 1309. In the 1860s and 1870s, Union veterans support of the Republican Party was motivated both by their support racial equality, but also as a vote against the Democratic Party whom Union veterans associated with anti-war northerners and the proponents of secession.
[22] Paul Cimbala, *Veterans North and South: The Transition from Soldier to Civilian after the American Civil War* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2015), 113.
[23] Weaver, "Let our Ballots Secure," 1315.

federal Reconstruction a reality. Only by including Black Union veterans' votes did Ulysses S. Grant achieve a slight edge in the popular vote during the presidential election of 1868.[24]

While most union veterans nationally remained stalwarts of the postwar Republican Party, the story in California looks different for two primary reasons: 1) the state's resurgent Democratic Party opposed Reconstruction and resisted federal "interference" on voting, and 2) in the face of mounting opposition to Chinese immigration, the Republicans and Democrats both fashioned themselves as the defenders of white supremacy. In the case of California, Union veterans and GAR members were predominantly white. We still do not know precisely how many Black veterans lived in postwar California. Historians have faced difficulty extracting the racial identification of veterans through GAR records because the GAR did not record race as a membership category. GAR records indicate that Black Union veterans from across the country attended annual national GAR "encampments" held in San Francisco in 1885 and 1886; however, the GAR's records do not list individual members according to race. The documents do show, importantly, that prominent Black Union veterans participated in the encampment as featured speakers.[25]

At a meeting of the GAR Abraham Lincoln Post in San Francisco in 1883, to which Rosecrans was a member, California politician Chancellor Hartson delivered a speech entitled "The History of Our Government and its Perils, and the Fruit of the

[24] Cimbala, *Veterans North and* South, 116.
[25] Grand Army of the Republic, *Journal of the Twentieth Annual Session of the National Encampment Grand Army of the Republic* (U.S. Govt. Print. Office: Washington D.C, 1886), 28.

Great Conflict." This speech defined unionism as supportive of emancipation while maintaining a racial hierarchy. Harston emphasized that slavery was the greatest enemy of freedom and liberty everywhere its practice spread. Union victory had absolved the U.S. of the intractable and malignant system of chattel slavery, which undermined its claims to republicanism. "Among the important results of your victory," he told the gathered veterans, "is the removal of the cause of the 'irrepressible conflict'—American slavery—the prolific source of sectional animosity, political prescription, social ostracism, violence, conflict, and rebellion."[26] Hartson associated slavery, disunion, and secession as an "inevitable chain of consequences and effects linking together national calamities."[27] Acknowledging well-established ideas about white supremacy and free labor known at least since the Wilmot Proviso following the U.S.-Mexico War, Hartson characterized slavery as a threat to Union and free white labor, not as a moral travesty against the enslaved. [28] Slavery, in his view, both degraded white people and mistook oligarchical rule as compatible with republican government.

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[26] Chancellor Hartson, "Address Delivered Before Geo. H. Thomas GAR Post," 30 October 1883, UCLA Special Collections, Collection #1723572, 25.
[27] Hartson, "Address," 26.
[28] In 1846 during the U.S-Mexico War, President James Polk proposed a bill that would allocate $2 million to purchase additional territory from Mexico. Congressman David Wilmot proposed an amendment to Polk's appropriation "that, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico…neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted." This meant that by federal law, slavery would be illegal in all new territories acquired by the federal government. Wilmot was no abolitionist, he wanted to secure the newly acquired western land as the exclusive preserve of white men and free labor. Wilmot's "proviso" failed to pass the Senate and failed to conclusively address the legality of slavery in the newly acquired territories. "The Wilmot Proviso," American Battlefield Trust, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/wilmot-proviso. See Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (2012).

Hartson erased Black Americans' contributions toward destroying slavery and did not mention them as fellow citizens. This white supremacist view of unionism made no demands of the federal government to guarantee the safety of freed people from terrorist violence and did not appeal to political equality. The plaudits of the war, in Hartson's articulation of unionism, forever remained with white Union veterans. Hartson praised Union veterans for "rescuing liberty from the thralldom in which she was cast by wanton rebellion and placing the Government on an enduring foundation. Coming generations will rise up and bless you for their fortunate birth and increased happiness, for the great good that you have conferred upon your country, your race, and all mankind."[29] Hartson's emancipationist-centered unionism sustained racial hierarchies by identifying loyal white men as the chief standard-bearers of unionism and ignoring the contributions of the formerly enslaved as peripheral.

In a similar explication of unionism that condemned slavery without discussing the role of freedpeople, former Union colonel Smith D. Atkins argued that the Civil War was the only way to improve a "flawed nation." "The debate between these antagonistic sections of the continent," Adkins intoned, "could only be settled through a war for mastery between Freedom and Slavery. Rivers of blood washed the stain of slavery away, and the civilization of the North triumphed. The United States blazed in the light of universal liberty."[30] In this telling of unionism, Adkins praised

[29] Hartson, "Address," 26. 27.
[30] Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 102–3.

the restoration of union and the destruction of slavery as noble endeavors, but in deference to white racial hierarchy, omitted inclusion of the contributions of Black veterans and enslaved people to Union victory or freedpeople as part of the postwar American future. Given white Union veterans' support of federal Reconstruction and personal stake in keeping pension-supporting Republicans in the White House, the question before historians is why their opposition to southern-sympathizing war narratives lessened over time. Part of the answer is that unionism as an ideology gave way to, or was usurped by, white nationalism, where race and nationality trumped provincial affiliation. The separation of emancipation from unionism under the guise of white supremacy prompted white and Black Union veterans—with good reason—to suspect sectional reconciliation would raise false equivalences between the rectitude of fighting for union and freedom and the moral reprobation of fighting for rebellion and slavery.[31]

Another explanation for white Union veterans' declining support for Black Americans was a renewed respect for white southern manhood following Reconstruction. In Robert Cook's formulation, the connection between unionism and support for Black rights was always tenuous. Cook argues that white Union veterans by the 1880s accepted a form of uncritical white nationalism that replaced the unionist narrative of a wicked proslavery rebellion—and the corollary responsibility to support Black Americans—with a more palatable story about both sections having

[31] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 217.

equally valid reasons for taking the field.[32] These trends reflected the reconciliation between white Civil War veterans increasing as the Republican Party's interest in supporting Black rights in the South declined. Without the Republican Party and union veterans' voting influence, Black Americans—the leading voices of unionism in the South—lost two primary allies during Reconstruction. When Republicans failed to pass Henry Cabot Lodge's federal elections bill in 1891, the GOP's efforts to connect remembrance of Black Americans' wartime loyalty with protected voting rights ended abruptly.[33]

William Rosecrans' California Rehabilitation

Although the Republican Party received a majority of Union veterans' votes during Reconstruction, Union veterans never formed a politically monolithic constituency. Regional variations remained, and notable exceptions like William Rosecrans in California showed how the Democratic Party successfully ran Union veterans as viable candidates.[34] Whereas most elite Union veteran politicians aligned with the Republican Party, Rosecrans never veered from his antebellum loyalty to the Democratic Party. His repudiation of slavery, championing of reunion reconciliation, American empire, and advocacy for California's veterans constituted Rosecrans'

[32] Robert Cook, "A War for Principle? Shifting Memories of the Union Cause in Iowa, 1865-1916," *The Annals of Iowa* 74 (2015): 5, 16, 21. Cook argues Unionists' efforts to refute the Lost Cause and sustain their own account of the rebellion were stymied by two developments conducive to white sectional reconciliation: a generational change that revealed younger Northerners' attachment to a "consensual interpretation" of the Civil War, and the newfound willingness of Union veterans to see loyal southern whites (like ex-Confederate cavalry commander Joseph Wheeler) again as compatriots during the Spanish-American War.
[33] Cook, "A War for Principle?", 21.
[34] See Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*: *The Story of the G.A.R.* (1952) and Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (1992).

understanding of unionism. While some of his politics may have irked fellow Democrats, the party was always willing to embrace Union Army generals since most of them gravitated toward the Republican Party during and after the war. Rosecrans consciously strove to lead an honorable life, as reflected by his words and actions, according to the virtues of nineteenth-century American manhood.[35]

Following Rosecrans' death, his West Point classmates eulogized that few graduates "have reflected more honor on the Academy or rendered more important services to their country than he."[36] In Rosecrans' necrology, the authors declared that any attempt to capture in words all of the former generals' accomplishments and virtues would "require a volume."[37] At West Point, Rosecrans converted to Catholicism and learned how to command armies, which shaped how he understood the importance of his specific role in advancing the Union cause. Rosecrans' obituary in the *New York Times* suggested his reputation among non-veterans and Republicans remained mixed: "Gen. Rosecrans is one of the most prominent men of history whose merits will be in dispute among historians, as they already are among his contemporaries."[38]

An examination of Rosecrans as a veteran provides historians a richly sourced

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[35] Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor, and Manhood in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 3. Foote argues that manhood in the mid-nineteenth century indicated an achievement rather than an innate characteristic all men possessed. Northern men, Foote asserts, to a greater extent than southern men, did not conform to a singular understanding of manhood or uniform ideal of what constituted manly behavior.
[36] United States Military Academy, "William S. Rosecrans," *Twenty-Ninth Annual Reunion of the Association of the Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York* (Saginaw, Michigan: Seemann & Peters, 1898), 52.
[37] Rosecrans," *Twenty-Ninth Annual Reunion*, 53.
[38] "Gen. W. S. Rosecrans Dead: A Career of Activity and Strife Ended in Retirement on a California Ranch," *New York Times*, 21 March 1898.

access point toward better understanding disputes over the meaning of unionism in postwar California. This flexibility of unionism reflected how Rosecrans (and other Union veterans) invoked their wartime service and Union victory when navigating California's post-emancipation society.[39] As a Democrat, Rosecrans represented the leading thinking in Reconstruction-era California concerning the state's trajectories of capitalism and empire. At the same time, he stubbornly held onto a wildly unpopular view supporting the fundamental political rights of all Americans, most visibly in his defense of Chinese immigration on the floor of the House of Representatives in 1881.

To Rosecrans, victory over the Confederacy enabled the U.S. to return to its pursuit of land, resources, and markets under the blessings of God. Rosecrans imagined California as prime, fertile ground to advance his stakes in railroad development, mining interests, and real estate. The federal government's aggressive expansion in the West before and during the Civil War enticed Rosecrans in 1865 to relocate to San Francisco with his family only weeks after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. According to contemporary reports, an estimated 10,000 San Francisco residents converged to welcome Rosecrans, underscoring his standing as a war hero despite his schism with the Union brass. The scale of the gathering suggests the continued resonance of unionism among Californians following the Confederate defeat. The *San Francisco Bulletin* observed that Rosecrans' tribute "was the more significant and doubtless the more acceptable from the fact that it originated, as all

[39] Cimbala, *Veterans North and South*, 113. Cimbala argues that the Republican Party cultivated the idea among Union veterans that political contests were extensions of wartime battles between patriots and traitors.

such demonstrations should originate, with the people themselves, instead of being the mere formal act of city authorities."[40] Although thousands of miles away from the primary fronts of the Civil War, the war cast its shadow deep into California.

In his speech before this multitude, Rosecrans commended California's "devotion to the cause of the Great Republic."[41] Foreshadowing his later promotion of sectional reconciliation, Rosecrans told the crowd that "the cloud of misgivings that hung over our political fabric before it was tried in this war, is dispelled, and I, for one, have an abiding confidence in its stability."[42] Rosecrans argued that the fundamental question over slavery had been sufficiently resolved by Union victory even before Congress had passed the Reconstruction Amendments. In his new identity as a civilian businessman, it was not sectional reconciliation but the "iron horse" that occupied the general's thoughts as Rosecrans promised the crowd that railroads would bind the postwar nation together in prosperous harmony. Left unspoken was the return Rosecrans expected for his investment in railroads. Rosecrans invited the crowd to imagine:

> One or more iron bands extending across the continent, connecting the great metropolis of the Pacific with the distant shores of Maine. I want to hear the shrill whistle of the locomotive wake up the echoes of the Rocky Mountains and the solitude of the great interior desert. Let the East and West, already attached to each other by so many bonds of sympathy, interest, and affection, be still more firmly bound together by the speedy completion of our Pacific railroads.[43]

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[40] "Gen. Rosecrans in San Francisco: A Public Welcome Speech from the General," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 31 July 1865.
[41] "Rosecrans in San Francisco," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 31 July 1865.
[42] "Rosecrans in San Francisco," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 31 July 1865.
[43] "Rosecrans in San Francisco," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 31 July 1865.

The ubiquitous Mark Twain was among the San Francisco crowd that welcomed Rosecrans in 1865. After the speech, Twain muttered in his diary, "off goes Rosecrans, without ever doing anything to give a newspaper a chance to abuse him. He has behaved himself."[44] Twain did not know that Rosecrans' immediate reason for being in San Francisco was establishing capital to acquire thousands of acres of contested land (*Rancho Sausal Redondo*) in western Los Angeles County.[45]

William Rosecrans drew on his credentials as a Union general to advance his financial status. After a six-year legal battle between speculators, squatters, government agents, attorneys, and judges, Rosecrans' political connections with former Union officers helped him secure the *Rancho Sausal* title and a lifetime of financial stability for his family.[46] In this instance, Rosecrans pursued economic improvement as a direct benefit of shared wartime loyalties among fellow veterans of power in postwar California. Union victory ensured that slaveholders made way for new captains of industry, and Rosecrans imagined himself as a leading railroad force in California.[47] For former officers like Rosecrans (and Ambrose Bierce), the ability to leverage relationships with veterans in power (or those sympathetic to Union veterans) to attain elite jobs and attendant social cachet reflected what unionist loyalty

[44] Mark Twain, Early *Tales and Sketches, Volume II: 1864-1865*, eds. Edgar Marquess Branch and Robert B. Hirst (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 322.
[45] Donn B. Tatum Jr., "General William S. Rosecrans and the Rancho Sausal Redondo," *Southern California Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1969): 284.
[46] Tatum Jr., "General William S. Rosecrans," 308.
[47] Lamers, *Edge of Glory*, 441. Rosecrans' first years in Reconstruction-era California got off to a rocky start when unscrupulous Southern Pacific board members froze him out of his initial investment via a discrete levy on his holdings.

could achieve for veterans of some social standing.

Although Rosecrans technically remained on active duty after moving to California, he finally resigned from his commission in 1867 and became a veteran. As a veteran, Rosecrans did not "retreat" into private life but instead maintained a public presence taking on leadership roles with Union veteran fraternal organizations in California, managing various investments and related business affairs, and later serving in various political offices.[48] At a San Francisco meeting of Union veterans in 1867, Rosecrans' arrival met with salutes and cheers, and he thanked the men for the rousing ovation as a "token of their faith in the Union cause."[49] Citing the unfolding drama of President Andrew Johnson's antagonistic relationship with Congress over the direction of Reconstruction, Rosecrans prioritized the restoration of the Union as the preeminent objective of all patriotic politicians, leaving aside the issue of how the government ought to reintegrate the conquered South. "Whatever the hopes, wishes, or desires in other respects of the Union men, including good Democrats," Rosecrans explained, "see that nothing obstructs the restoration of the Union."[50] Rosecrans did not clarify to the gathered veterans what qualified as "obstruction" despite the immediate problem of southern white terrorist violence, which strove to overturn the results of the war in the South.

Rosecrans' political and business career arcs consistently followed the fortunes of the Democratic Party in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. When

[48] McConnel, *Glorious Contentment, xv*.
[49] "General Rosecrans Speaks at Union Meeting," *New York Times*, 2 October 1867.
[50] "Rosecrans," *New York Times*, 2 October 1867.

Democrats controlled the White House, Congress, or the California governor's office, Rosecrans could expect plum appointments as one of the preeminent Union veterans in the state. During Republican control of the federal or state government, the odds of Rosecrans' political fortunes waned until the 1880s. Rosecrans' first political appointment came by way of besieged President Andrew Johnson. During Johnson's last days in the White House following his near-removal by impeachment in 1868, he appointed Rosecrans as Minister to Mexico due to Rosecrans' steadfast loyalty to the Democratic Party. This appointment represented a fateful opportunity for Rosecrans to pursue his dream of spearheading western railroad development with potential financial backing from the U.S. and Mexican governments.

In his diplomatic mission to Mexico, Rosecrans prioritized establishing transcontinental railroad lines connecting Mexican lines to Texas and California.[51] Although the Civil War had interrupted the American momentum of expanding its political and economic reach across the continent, Union victory decisively ensured that Northern and Western businessmen guided the postwar U.S. over the Southern planters. Just as providence once placed Rosecrans in a conspicuous position to effect emancipation as a Union general, Rosecrans found himself in a prominent role to advance his financial standing and helped guide U.S. imperial ambitions in the American West.

With capitalist designs on the resources and markets in Mexico, Rosecrans led

[51] John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 58.

efforts to improve partnerships between financiers in California and Mexico. Cognizant of the unease among white Americans regarding the incorporation of non-white populations through conquest, Rosecrans artfully proposed improved business relations and investment opportunities with Mexico rather than the formal annexation of additional portions of its territory and population.[52] Rosecrans' politics at this time suggest embracing racial exclusion and white homogeneity as desirable, echoing his wartime correspondence heralding the improved postwar status of Tennessee's working-class white population following the destruction of slavery.

The Civil War was partly a dispute over whether Southern planters or Northern businessmen would control the resources and labor system in the newly conquered West and beyond. Union victory established the dominance of free-labor capitalism as the foundation for colonizing the American West. Union victory enabled the federal government to shift resources from the costly battlefields of the South to financing the highly profitable colonization of the West in the service of an augmented American Union. As a diplomat, Rosecrans spearheaded the spread of "informal" imperial capital into the West and from there to points around the world.[53] As Minister to Mexico, Rosecrans articulated a brand of Western neocolonialism clothed in the language of hemispheric fraternity, the Monroe Doctrine, and Manifest Destiny, all consistent with his understanding of unionism.[54] However, Rosecrans'

[52] Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, 59.
[53] Jessica M. Kim, *Imperial Metropolis: Los Angeles, Mexico, and the Borderlands of American Empire, 1865–1941* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 23.
[54] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*, 35.

long and winding political career proves that being an elite Union veteran did not automatically confer postwar political advantages. Rosecrans' ability to guide the colonization of the West remained tied to elected officeholders in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. As a result, Rosecrans' career as a railroad magnate ended less than a year later when voters elected his old nemesis Ulysses S. Grant to the White House in 1868. Almost five years after Grant removed Rosecrans from command of the Army of the Cumberland, he recalled Rosecrans from Mexico and replaced him with Republican diplomat Thomas H. Nelson.[55]

Leaving Mexico behind, Rosecrans returned to managing his investments in California and engaging with Union veteran fraternal organizations. During a veterans' reunion in 1869, Rosecrans regaled the veterans with a story—periodically interrupted by general applause and praiseworthy interjections from former Gen. Philip Sheridan—regarding how General George Thomas came to command the Army of the Cumberland. This speech spoke to why reunions and memorialization remained critical to the union cause for which veterans had so dearly fought. "My comrades," he began:

> I have not had the pleasure of meeting so many of you since I rode the lines in front of Chattanooga. And now, when I look upon your faces and receive from you so many kindly manifestations of regard; and when I remember that I may never see many of you again, I remember too that there is much unwritten history connected with our struggles when together in the field, which may never be told.[56]

[55] Lamers, *Edge of Glory*, 441
[56] "William Rosecrans' Speech," *Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland*: *Third Annual Reunion of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1870), 73.

Rosecrans worried that without active memorialization, the cause of the Union might be "lost to history" and insisted the Grand Army of the Republic and other Union veteran organizations played an indispensable role as the public repository for the exploits and sacrifices of the Union armies.[57] Emphasizing the GAR's aspirational mission, Rosecrans underscored the bonds of "fraternity, charity, and loyalty, which bring into kinship the heroes of all ages and lands, are stronger and greater and nobler than all the selfish instincts which mankind shares in common with animals."[58] The union cause brought men together, Rosecrans exclaimed, from "all parties, all stations, and occupations [who] offered their lives for the preservation of equal rights and equal liberty for themselves and the very citizens against whom they were contending."[59] This deferential position to southern whites is consistent with Rosecrans' wartime letter to his father, which declared how the destruction of slavery would improve the lives of ordinary white southerners like those he encountered in Union-occupied Tennessee.

Rosecrans does not make clear, in this instance, the fate of Black unionists and how they specifically benefited from the Union victory. I think this was because Rosecrans was more comfortable condemning slavery than condemning a white supremacist interpretation of the war, which typically excluded Black soldiers. Without the GAR, Rosecrans argued, "in thirty or forty years hence these events would pass into the domain of romance and furnish exaggerated pictures to the

[57] "Letter from Gen. Rosecrans," 30 June 1884, *New York Times*.
[58] Rosecrans," 30 June 1884, *New York Times.*
[59] Rosecrans," 30 June 1884, *New York Times.*

imaginations of the coming generations."[60] In this prediction, Rosecrans proved accurate.

In response to the rampant political corruption committed during Reconstruction, Rosecrans advocated for a proto-progressive vision of good governance by condemning the American government's shortcomings, inefficiencies, and ineffectiveness at the state and local levels. He articulated these ideas in the accessible *Popular Government*: *A New and Simple Plan* (1877), a concise treatise on improving the efficiency and responsiveness of government. In *Popular Government*, Rosecrans briefly addressed broad questions about nationhood, governance, and citizenship but spent most of the work offering recommendations on improving government functions from census taking to voter registration.[61]

We know nineteenth-century election days were raucous events featuring food and beverage inducements, bribes, and sometimes beatings. Reconstruction-era politicians and party officials regularly engaged in various forms of election-day cheating, manipulating voter rolls, and outright stealing elections as accepted practices. The rigging of elections was so ingrained in nineteenth-century politics that rival parties assumed the voter manipulation process as one of the privileges of incumbency.[62] Rosecrans' reform impetus in this work could also have been

[60] Rosecrans," 30 June 1884, *New York Times.*
[61] William S. Rosecrans and Josiah Riley, *Popular Government: A New and Simple Plan for Making Ours Effectively a Government 'of the People, by the People, and for the People;' Practical Improvement for Holding Constantly Determined who are the People and Effective Means for Obtaining Legal Expressions of their best intelligence, Judgement, and Will, in all Public Matters* (San Francisco: Skelton and Company, 1878), *i*.
[62] Mark Wahlgren Summers, "Party Games: The Art of Stealing Elections in the Late-Nineteenth-Century United States," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 2 (2001): 424.

influenced by the Panic of 1873, the nationwide railroad strikes of 1877, and racialized political violence in the South, all of which Rosecrans attributed to a dangerous "national malaise" that threatened the health of the republic. This vision contrasted with Rosecrans' previous and more hopeful vision of the postwar era, connected by railroads and unified behind the national expansion.

Although aligned with the Democratic Party, Rosecrans' political vision to appeal to a broader audience influenced his shrewd ability to discuss politically sensitive or controversial topics without a transparently partisan stance. In his attempt to convey neutrality in *Popular Government*, Rosecrans avoided talk of political parties or platforms, contemporary disputes over rights and citizenship, or the merits of federal Reconstruction. Rosecrans left those concerns aside to critique the organizational practices of government, not its legislative platforms. Rosecrans warned government officials that "a vague uneasiness about the future of our country is creeping over the minds of our sturdiest patriots. It affects all classes throughout the Republic."[63] The form of government itself was a potential threat to the republic. "There is the growing conviction of an unexpected discrepancy between the boldness of our political platforms," Rosecrans wrote, "and the feebleness of our practical results. The Tree of Liberty is still magnificent, but its fruit is a little too sour."[64] In the wake of the notorious presidential election of 1876, *Popular Government*

[63] Rosecrans, *Popular Government*, *i*.
[64] Rosecrans, *Popular Government*, *i*.

represented a vital call for election reform.[65] Rosecrans argued that the American system of government failed to provide an honest and transparent registration of voters or the capacity to clear polling places of political intimidation.

In 1880, for reasons that are not clear, Rosecrans decided to run for Congress after spending the previous fifteen years rejecting Democratic party offers to run for offices in Ohio and California. Rosecrans ran as a Democratic candidate for Congress as the representative from California's 5th District, which at that time included San Francisco. Rosecrans' political campaign began just as his former army subordinate, Republican James A. Garfield, won in the White House over Democrat Winfield Scott Hancock, a decorated former Union general lauded for bravery at the battle of Gettysburg.[66] California's political landscape dynamics in the 1860s and 1870s are central to understanding Rosecrans' career as a politician. In California, the Republican Party continuously wrestled the Democratic Party—and briefly, the Workingmen's Party of California—over state political control. The first governor

[65] In the presidential election of 1876, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden ran against Union veteran Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in one of the most controversial elections in American history. As the electoral vote remained disputed and with no clear winner, the real possibility existed of violence and renewed civil war. The resolution of the presidential crisis brought about the end of Reconstruction, the death of the Republican Party in the South, and the reestablishment of southern white Democratic ascendancy. In 1877, Congress agreed to the appointment of a special commission to investigate the claims of all sides and determine the recipient of the disputed electoral votes. The commission consisted of eight Republicans and seven Democrats who voted 8–7 to award the White House to Hayes under the agreement that the Republican Party would withdraw federal troops in the South. This led to a retreat of the federal government in protecting Black Americans' civil rights in the South.
[66] John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 277-278. Democrat Winfield Scott Hancock, a former Union general acclaimed for his bravery at the battle of Gettysburg, opposed Garfield in the election. Hancock oversaw federal Reconstruction in the South and his professed sympathy for white southerners rankled Republicans and won praise from Democrats. One of the busiest and most traveled army officers during Reconstruction, Hancock supervised the execution of Lincoln's assassins, commanded U.S. forces on the Plains in the 1870s, and served as president of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS), a fraternal Union veteran organization of which Rosecrans was a leading member.

California voters elected after the Civil War was Democrat Henry Huntly Haight (1867–1871), an attorney with no previous political experience who ran on an explicitly white supremacist and anti-Reconstruction platform. In Haight's inaugural address, he insisted that "the late war was waged on our part to enforce the authority of the Federal Government in the Southern States and prevent the disruption of the union. It was not waged to destroy the liberties of any portion of the people or create a negro empire on our southern border."[67] Although California ratified the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, the Fourteenth Amendment drew vociferous opposition from California lawmakers over granting citizenship to non-whites and limiting state power of controlling who could vote. Hence, the California legislature chose not to ratify it.[68] True to his word, Haight's persuaded the state legislature to reject the Fifteenth Amendment giving Black men the right to vote. However, the state reluctantly ratified it after twenty-eight other states had ratified it, the minimum required to amend the Constitution.[69]

Indicative of the state's fractious politics from 1867 to 1880, no political party controlled the California governor's office consecutively for more than one term. Further complicating California's volatile political landscape was a radical third party, the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), which rode a populist wave in 1877 and 1878 to briefly seize key local offices across the state. The WPC had its vision of unionism tied explicitly to white supremacy and labor markets protected

[67] Michael Bottoms, D., *An Aristocracy of Color: Race and Reconstruction in California and the West, 1850-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 56.
[68] It was only in 1959 that the California legislature symbolically ratified the Fourteenth Amendment.
[69] Bottoms, *An Aristocracy of Color*, 57.

from non-white competition. The WPC's rapid rise and fall resulted in the party's practical disappearance when Rosecrans ran for Congress in 1880. The state's political pendulum swung back to the Republican Party through the election of George Perkins as state governor.

On the eve of the 1880 congressional election, Union veterans aligned with the Democratic Party created the "National Association of Hancock Voters" with former Army of the Potomac commander George B. McClellan as its president and retired army officers to staff state-level associations. The Democratic Party appointed Rosecrans to supervise the California branch of the Hancock Voters, where he promised to add 5,000 Union veterans and 10,000 civilian voters to Hancock's count.[70] During the election, Republicans associated the Democratic Party with the Confederacy and the terrorist violence against Black Americans during Reconstruction. Southern whites decried this tactic as "waving the bloody shirt," a pejorative phrase deriding Republicans' appeals to avenge fallen soldiers or investigate terrorist abuses against Black Americans in the South. The GOP's rhetoric painted Hancock and his known sympathies to white supremacy in the South as "ill-deserving of the Union veteran vote" and, therefore, unrepresentative of the union cause.[71]

As evidence of postwar California's divided political loyalties, the popular

[70] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 255.
[71] Stephen Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt: Terror after the Civil War* (New York: Plume, 2009), 3-5. Budiansky explains how "waving the bloody shirt" was a common refrain found in editorials by Southern whites who protested "no people had suffered more, been humiliated more, been punished more" than white southerners. It was they, not Black Americans, who were the true victims of federal Reconstruction.

vote for Hancock and Garfield in California was identical. The state's five electoral votes went to Hancock, aligning California politically with the South only two years after the rebellious southern states were the recognized enemy. As expected, Garfield won the 1880 presidential election by securing the North and Midwest electoral votes.[72] Although California voters supported Lincoln and the Republican Party during the Civil War, it struggled to maintain power over time during Reconstruction. The popularity of California's Democratic Party, and its insistence on white supremacy, reconciliation, and states' rights, reflected the challenges to unionism and the GOP in Reconstruction-era California.

Since the Civil War, San Francisco and most of northern California voted consistently for Republican presidential candidates, while in southern California, Los Angeles represented the most substantial Democrat-supporting region in the state. Newspaper editorials following the 1880 presidential election mainly adhere to these regional distinctions. Following the announcement of Garfield's victory, the *Sacramento Record Union* crowed: "The Country Safe for Another Four Years: Garfield Elected President." The sub-headline added: "Immense Republican Gains: Elation Upon One Side, Depression Upon the Other."[73] The Democrat-leaning *Los Angeles Herald* lamented the loss of the White House but declared Hancock's reputation as having only increased in the minds of the Democratic Party following his defeat in the election. Before launching into a harangue about the incompetence of

[72] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 266.
[73] "The Election," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 3 Nov. 1880, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014381/1880-11-03/ed-1/seq-1/.

New York's Democratic Party, which allegedly cost Hancock victory, the *Herald* beamed: "To all Democrats, it must be pleasing to note the universal recognition of the worth and manliness of Hancock now that the election has passed."[74] San Francisco's *Daily Alta California* was exultant at the presidential election results. "Hurrah for Garfield!" the front-page headline of November 3, 1880, proclaimed. With a thinly veiled reference to the Civil War, the *Daily Alta* wrote, "the great battle of the ballots has been fought and again the Republican Party is victorious. More than four million men on each side took part in the struggle, and though it touched their passions and prejudices most intensely and involved great pecuniary interests, [election day] was, with significant exceptions, a peaceful and quiet day."[75]

In support of Rosecrans' quest for election to the 47th United States Congress, the Democratic Party highlighted his unionist credentials, leadership, patriotism, and personal virtues to prospective voters. Leading his election effort was Democratic strategist William F. Frost, who published "William Starke Rosecrans: His Life and Public Services, Reasons Why he Should be Elected to Congress." According to Frost, the Republican Party disingenuously laid exclusive claim to the glory of Union victory. By nominating Hancock for president and Rosecrans for Congress, Frost argued, the Democratic Party demonstrated to voters its legitimate claims to heroism and unionism. Frost reasoned that:

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[74] "Special Notice," *Daily Los Angeles Herald*, 30 Nov. 1880, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Lib. of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042459/1880-11-30/ed-1/seq-2/>.

[75] "Hurrah for Garfield!," *Daily Alta California*, 3 November 1880, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18801103.2.18&srpos=2&e=------188-en--20-DAC-1--txt-txIN-James+Garfield+election----1880---.

> Even if [Rosecrans] were deficient in the qualities of a national legislator, his skill and valor in defense of the Union ought to entitle him to consideration far more favorable than has been accorded to many who have in recent years enjoyed exalted civic honors. But when there is discovered in him qualities of ripe statesmanship which challenge the admiration of every patriotic mind, he becomes doubly entitled to support for the high office the nomination to which came to him entirely unsolicited.[76]

Running on the Democratic Party platform promoting national progress over sectionalism, Frost argued that Rosecrans' nomination "touched a chord in the hearts" of the people of California. Rosecrans, Frost insisted, "showed himself free from all intrigue, bitterness, and selfishness, even when he saw his career of usefulness cut short by malevolence and envy," an apparent jab at Grant and Stanton. "No American heart beats truer cadence to its best interest than [Rosecrans]," Frost argued, "and there is no soldier who has suffered deeper ingratitude at the hands of those who had the power to reward the deeds of a great officer."[77] Electing Rosecrans to office, Frost reasoned, would demonstrate gratitude for his service after the leaders of the Republican Party had failed to do so. Indicative of postwar California's ongoing contested political landscape, Rosecrans won his seat with 51% of the vote.[78]

Rosecrans took advantage of his platform as a congressman to advocate for California's veterans. Rosecrans' understanding of unionism elevated those who sacrificed their safety to ensure the union's survival, especially those who struggled

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[76] William Prescott Frost, *William Starke Rosecrans: His Life and Public Services: Reasons why he should be elected to Congress* (San Francisco: Democratic Congressional Committee, 1880), 16.
[77] Frost, *William Starke Rosecrans*, 12.
[78] "California General Election Results, 2 November 1880," Join California: Election History for the State of California, http://www.joincalifornia.com/election/1880-11-02.

most in their conversion back to citizens. As Executive Chairman of the Veterans' Home Association, Rosecrans circulated a letter to donors in 1881 identifying at least one hundred disabled California Union veterans languishing in decrepit alms-houses and needing medical care and financial support. Some more significant unknown number of Union veterans remained unhoused.[79] Rosecrans purchased an advertisement in the *San Jose Post* appealing to civilians' affinity for the union cause to support a government home for veterans. "Every veteran," Rosecrans announced, "and everybody who beneath our flag enjoys on this coast what their valor aided to win or preserve is bound to help."[80] In this way, Rosecrans drew on his resources, platform, and status to advocate for Union veterans in California with the greatest needs. Rosecrans clarified that each community that enjoyed the benefits of a restored union should carry some of the burdens of supporting the neediest veterans, as federal pensions alone did not address all their specific and immediate needs.

Rosecrans envisioned a self-sustaining home for veterans to work and live in, explaining to donors that funds would help purchase farmland whose proceeds from agriculture and cattle-raising, in addition to state funding, would keep the home self-sufficient and provide veterans with a dignified life. Rosecrans argued that donations acknowledged and honored the cause of the union, as did state government support. "Every dollar given us by the public," Rosecrans' advertisement read, "will buy its

[79] "Veterans' Home Association [circular]," 16 November 1881, William S. Rosecrans Papers, Box 61, folder 84, Special Collections Library, University of California at Los Angeles.
[80] William Rosecrans, "The Veterans' Home," *San Jose Post*, 16 November 1881, William S. Rosecrans Papers, Box 61, folder 84, Special Collections Library, University of California at Los Angeles.

fraction of an acre to belong forever to a noble and living charity."[81] Rosecrans specified that the Veterans' Home would be available to Union Army and U.S.-Mexican War veterans whose ongoing housing problems remained "scandalously ignored" by the public. Rosecrans' articulation contrasted that of the GAR, who was always careful to sequester Union veterans from those who served in all other conflicts. "There are many Mexican war veterans in our State," Rosecrans pleaded, "whose disabilities date back thirty-five years, and men who received wounds in the war for the Union have suffered twenty years without an organized charity in California to relieve their wants."[82] Implied in Rosecrans' plea was the shared ideologies of loyalty and nationalism between veterans of the Civil War and the U.S.-Mexico War. Rosecrans' advertisement suggested that the Democratic and Republican administrations in California going back to 1865 had failed to provide resources to the state's neediest veterans. Individual citizens, communities, and the state government, Rosecrans believed, shared an obligation to support veterans. Rosecrans ominously asked if California's uncared-for veterans would "sink into graves" as "victims of neglect of a busy but not ungenerous or unpatriotic people?"[83]

Through Rosecrans' lobbying efforts in 1882, the Veterans' Home Association purchased 910 acres of bucolic farmland in Napa Valley (Yountville). On April 1, 1884, the first Veterans Home of California opened, with the state accepting title to the property and agreeing to supply maintenance and governance of the

[81] "The Veterans' Home," *San Jose Post*, 16 November 1881.
[82] "The Veterans' Home," *San Jose Post*, 16 November 1881.
[83] "The Veterans' Home," *San Jose Post*, 16 November 1881.

institution. The Veterans Home of California-Yountville operates today as the largest veterans' home in the United States.[84] The Veterans' Home in California's achievement is partly due to Rosecrans' fundraising efforts and his steadfast belief that Union veterans earned special public dispensation through their wartime service. There is no indication that the Yountville Veterans' Home ever accepted Confederate veterans, and Rosecrans does not mention them in his correspondence.

In the previous year, President Garfield vetoed a congressional bill restricting Chinese immigration, but the issue remained unresolved, and an updated restrictive immigration bill went before Congress in 1882. [85] California's Union veteran politicians led the debate in Congress. Former Union general John Franklin Miller, who served under Rosecrans in the Army of the Cumberland, represented California as a Republican Senator from 1880 until he died in 1886. In Franklin, we get something of an inversion of Rosecrans. Franklin's understanding of unionism was much closer to the average white Californian in that the Civil War restored the union but did not force racial egalitarianism onto white Californians. Especially in the case

[84] "History of California Department of Veterans Affairs," California Department of Veterans Affairs, http://www.allgov.com/usa/ca/departments/independent agencies/california_department_of_veterans_affairs?agencyid=215. The state of California created the California Department of Veterans Affairs in 1946. Today CalVet provides services to the state's 1.6 million veterans.

[85] Selected works on the Chinese experience in nineteenth-century America includes: Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese struggle against discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (1994), Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (1998), Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (2003), Estelle Lau, *Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration, and Chinese Exclusion* (2006), Diana Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion laws in the Nineteenth-century American West* (2007), Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans* (2008), Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (2013), and Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion and the Making of the Alien in America* (2018).

of Senator Franklin, the Republican Party in California appeared ideologically closer to the Democratic Party of the Reconstruction South than the GOP of the North or Midwest.

Franklin represented the white supremacist opposition to Chinese immigration on the same economic, cultural, and racial grounds that the Workingman's Party of California employed to pronounced effect only three years prior.[86] Franklin's understanding of race precluded him from accepting Chinese people into the American body politic and labor force, whatever minimal protections the Reconstruction Amendments offered them. Franklin also accused corporate leaders of being complicit in the exploitation of Chinese laborers:

> Cheap labor is not the cause of national wealth, but of national poverty. We are confronted by the fact that the introduction into our country of an alien race of men who performs the cheap labor, operates as a displacement of the natives of the soil, man for man, and substitutes a non-assimilative, heterogeneous people, utterly unfit for and incapable of self-government. The question [of Chinese immigration] assumes proportions which are not to be measured by the application of mere economic theories.[87]

Franklin's attacks on Chinese immigration in California placed the question before Congress of who could claim protection as a citizen following the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Republican-supporting *Daily Alta California*, a vocal opponent of Chinese immigration, lauded Franklin's speech as an "eloquent, logical and incontrovertible argument [which] cannot fail to carry conviction to all intelligent

[86] "California Senator Miller's Speech: Synopsis of an Earnest Appeal to Congress," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 28 February 1882.
[87] "Miller's Speech," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 28 February 1882.

minds."[88] Unlike working-class European laborers, Franklin reasoned that Chinese people could not assimilate into the "civilizational standard" of white Americans. Franklin argued, "an eternity of years cannot make [a Chinese man] such a man as the Anglo-Saxon. It is as impossible to bring the Chinaman up to the American standard as it is cruel and wicked to risk, by any experiment, the degradation of the American laborer to the Chinese standard."[89] Franklin's argument over the "degradation of white labor" in California would have been familiar to California voters experienced with the politics of the erstwhile Workingmen's Party of California. In Franklin's view, the Civil War did not create the postwar conditions where Chinese labor was coequal to white labor. In this reading, Unionism meant restoring the union as it was and white supremacy as it was.

In response, Massachusetts Senator George Frisbee Hoar asked how the degradation of white labor was possible when white Californians engaged in the same industries as the Chinese and consistently earned higher wages.[90] Franklin brusquely replied that wages "have been constantly going down [for white men] and are still on the downward grade."[91] The intractable problem with Chinese immigration was ultimately racial, Franklin insisted, as evidenced by the "impossibility" of Chinese assimilation into American culture. "In California," Franklin explained to the

[88] "Senator Miller: His Eloquent and Convincing Speech upon the Chinese bill, *Daily Alta California*, 1 March 1882, California Digital Newspaper Collection, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=DAC18820301.2.34&e=-------en--20--1--txt-txIN--------.
[89] Senator John Franklin Miller, *Proceedings of Congress and General Congressional Publications*, 13 Cong. Rec. (Bound) - Volume 13, Part 2 (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882).
[90] Miller, *Proceedings of Congress*, (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882).
[91] Miller, *Proceedings of Congress*, (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882).

members of Congress, "Chinese civilization in its purest essence appears as a rival to American civilization. It is the product of a people alien in every characteristic to our people." Franklin pleaded with Congress that the voters of California demanded the government to secure "American Anglo-Saxon civilization without contamination or adulteration with any other."[92] Given the increasingly bipartisan congressional support of Chinese exclusion dating to the early 1870s, and Rosecrans' remarks acknowledging racial hierarchy, we would expect him to vote in favor of Chinese restriction. Still, he surprised Congress, and indeed some fellow Democrats and Republicans, by defending Chinese immigration.

Based on his understanding of Christianity, unionism, and the jurisprudence of the postwar United States, Rosecrans offered Congress a defense of Chinese immigration and fundamental rights for Chinese labor in America. At the same time, Rosecrans appeared before Congress as a Western capitalist with investments in California's railroads built partly by the cheap labor provided by Chinese immigrants. First, Rosecrans reminded Congress of their legal obligations to "enforce treaty stipulations relating to the Chinese" before beseeching members to oppose the Exclusion Bill on humanistic grounds: "That what I may say may have the weight and consideration which is due," Rosecrans stated, "I declare at the outset that I love justice and hate iniquity. I believe that the Chinese, and the men of all other lands, have the same Creator, and that their souls have been bought at the same price as my

[92] Miller, *Proceedings of Congress*, (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882).

own."[93] Appealing to members of Congress's attachments to Christian principles of mercy appeared more likely to sway the legislative body than arguing for Chinese American political equality.

Conceding the unpopularity of opposing exclusion and gesturing to his mixed reputation, Rosecrans told Congress: "I appeal to my past life to attest that neither fear of popular odium, nor love of popularity, has hitherto sufficed to prevent the avowal of my convictions, or the acceptance of the duties they involved."[94] The religious principles that motivated Rosecrans' emancipationist unionism in the 1860s reinforced his opposition to Chinese exclusion and set Rosecrans at odds with most white Californians who considered themselves Christian but shared no belief about spiritual or political equality with Chinese people. For Rosecrans, the principles of unionism and Christianity were inextricably tied together and worked in tandem as the ideological basis of unionism.

To Rosecrans' disappointment, Congress overwhelmingly voted for Chinese exclusion, and President Arthur signed the bill into law in 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Act, an abrogation of the Burlingame Treaty to which Rosecrans alluded, prohibited Chinese manual laborers from entering the U.S. (violations led to fines and deportation), prevented Chinese immigrants from obtaining U.S. citizenship, and required those Chinese lawfully in the U.S. to carry paperwork attesting to their legal residency. The causes of union and emancipation that drove a younger Rosecrans to

[93] Congressman William Rosecrans, "Proceedings of Congress and General Congressional Publications," 13 Congressional Record (Bound) - Volume 13, Part 2 (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882), govinfo.gov.
[94] Rosecrans, *Proceedings of Congress*, (February 9, 1882, to March 17, 1882).

lead armies in the 1860s compelled him to defend Chinese immigration in the 1880s. In step with the hardening racial attitudes among white Americans during the late nineteenth century, Congress rejected such humanistic arguments out of hand. The example of Rosecrans' defense of Chinese immigration reflected the flexibility of unionism as an ideology in the postwar era.

Following Rosecrans' two terms in Congress (1881–1883 and 1883-1885), the aging Rosecrans chose not to seek a third and returned to California permanently. Rosecrans' political connections ensured prestigious appointments followed his run in Congress as Democratic governor George Stoneman appointed Rosecrans to Regent of the University of California in 1884 and 1885. After this brief tenure, Democratic President Grover Cleveland appointed Rosecrans Register of the Treasury, a largely symbolic position from 1885 to 1893, where his signature affixed U.S. currency. With his financial affairs in order and his family's finances secured, the elder Rosecrans spent much of his final years revisiting the Civil War.[95]

Unionism and Honor: Chickamauga Revisited

The growth of print culture in the 1880s presented a recently expanded platform for Rosecrans to absolve himself from his alleged dishonor at the battle of Chickamauga (1863). In the 1880s, the last, best conditions for Rosecrans to publicly defend his command of the Army of the Cumberland arrived as a powerful wave of nostalgia for the Civil War and the antebellum South swept across the nation,

[95] Ambrose Bierce also spent much of the last decade of his life reflecting on his experiences in the Civil War in his fiction and through visits of old battlefields.

beckoning Union and Confederate veterans back on the national stage. Veterans' voices reappeared in the 1880s with a flourish as they debated strategies, tactics, and tales of (white) bravery in speeches, books, newspapers, and magazines. As the public discourse on the Civil War expanded, journalists, planters, freedpeople, veterans, ministers, members of Congress, and even presidents debated the war in print.[96] This cultural output has been a core component of Civil War research for scholars since the turn of the twentieth century. These sources offer an essential way to gauge how veterans determined what was worth remembering about the war and their participation in it.[97] Moreover, this expansion of print culture of the 1880s enabled veterans to communicate their reflections to a broadly receptive American reading public.

The initial contest for establishing the "true" narrative of the Civil War began soon after the war ended. Pro-Confederate journalist Virginian Edward A. Pollard was among the earliest war historians, publishing *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (1866) and *The Lost Cause Regained* (1868). However, it was only in the 1880s that the war became a cultural staple in everything from military histories to children's books and romance novels.[98] This nostalgia-

[96] David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 32.
[97] A short list includes Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic* (1998), Anne Marshall, *Creating A Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause And Civil War Memory In A Border State* (2010), Kirk Savage, *The Civil War in Art and Memory* (2016), Robert J. Cook, *Civil War Memories: Contesting the Past in the United States since 1865* (2017), and James Alan Marten and Caroline E. Janney, *Buying and Selling Civil War Memory in Gilded Age America* (2021).
[98] See Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, *Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

driven interest in the war eschewed treatises on the conflict's political causes and consequences in preference for stately memoirs and sentimental treacle. Most white authors deprioritized the issues of slavery, emancipation, and Black citizenship in favor of narratives that championed white men's valor and sacrifices for white women on the home front. Battle reminiscences of generals ranked as the most widely read accounts of the war, exemplified by Ulysses S. Grant's famous two-volume *Personal Memoirs* (1885–86).[99]

In recognition of the public's increasing appetite for eyewitness Civil War accounts in 1884, *Century Magazine* began publishing its "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" series by subscription.[100] *Century* editor Richard Watson Gilder announced the new series would feature essays "written by officers who wore either the blue or the gray, in most cases by generals who, on one side or the other, held either the chief command in the battles described or commands so important as to clothe them with special authority to speak of events of which they were a part."[101] For Rosecrans and the controversy surrounding his ill-fated Chattanooga Campaign, the "Battles and Leaders" series presented a chance to exonerate himself from the odium of cowardice associated with his leadership by Republican opponents.

The thirty-fourth issue of "Battles and Leaders" in 1887 featured Rosecrans'

[99] Stuart, *Glorious Contentment*, 168. Grant did not think himself a great writer but decided to publish the memoirs to pay off massive loans he incurred from a series of poor business investments.
[100] Timothy P. Caron, "'How Changeable Are the Events of War': National Reconciliation in the '*Century Magazine*'s 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,'" *American Periodicals* 16, no. 2 (2006): 151. "Battles and Leaders" ran for three years and drove *Century Magazine*'s circulation from 127,000 to over 250,000, making it among the most popular magazine in the U.S. during the 1880s.
[101] Stuart, *Glorious Contentment*, 168.

article, "The Campaign for Chattanooga," which primarily argued that the Army of the Cumberland was too ill-equipped and outmanned to take on, much less destroy, Bragg's army at Chickamauga. Rosecrans implored readers to cross-reference the federal government's official war records to corroborate the tallied cost of his victories at Stones River and the expulsion of Confederate forces from central Tennessee. He contended that the Army of the Cumberland displayed unmatched bravery but bore the grievous cost of Grant and Stanton's hasty plans to attack Bragg at Chickamauga. "In the presence of the facts I have just stated," Rosecrans asked, "and in view of all the marching, combat, and bloody battles to get possession of [previously Confederate-held] Chattanooga, can the reader be made to believe that the Army of the Cumberland and its commander were likely to abandon or hold it?"[102] Grant had been dead two years by publication, and Stanton nearly eighteen, but Rosecrans finally made his case to the American public. Such rehabilitation was wholly unnecessary for the men who served under Rosecrans.

Surrounded by family, William Starke Rosecrans died aged seventy-eight, on March 11, 1898, at his Los Angeles-area ranch, *Rancho Sausal Redondo*. At his memorial service, the family distributed a biography reflecting Rosecrans' bravery, loyalty, patriotism, leadership, and personal honor. Union veteran William McKinley, inaugurated as U.S. President only weeks before Rosecrans' death, recalled Rosecrans as the "ideal" of a great soldier. His high soldierly qualities, McKinley

[102] William S. Rosecrans, "The Campaign for Chattanooga," "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War Series," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 34 (1887): 135.

stated, "earned him the gratitude of [Ohio] for his magnificent service to the Union cause."[103] Medal of Honor, recipient and former Union army colonel Byron Cutcheon, reflected on Rosecrans' patriotism this way: "When the tocsin of war was sounded, Gen. Rosecrans did not hesitate or falter, but he left everything behind him and laid all that he had upon the altar of his country."[104] Former Union general David B. Henderson praised Rosecrans' bravery when he "dashed" in front of our lines:

> In that great battle [Corinth, 1862], when the flower of Price's army was pouring death and destruction into our ranks. The bullets had carried off his hat, his hair was floating in the wind, and protected by the God of battle, he passed along the line and shouted, 'Soldiers, stand by your flag and country!' We obeyed his orders. We crushed Price's army…and Gen. Rosecrans was the central, leading, victorious spirit.[105]

By contrast, there is only a brief reference to Rosecrans' commitment to emancipation: "Upon the subject of slavery, [Rosecrans] held the faith that had been proclaimed immemorially by his Church and by all nations which have pretended to civilization."[106] Rosecrans' claims regarding his providential selection by God to lead Union armies in crushing slavery went unreferenced, as did his defense of Chinese immigration while in Congress. In death, mourners neglected to mention Rosecrans' emancipationist views.

In 1899, the Grand Army of the Republic in California organized a Post in

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[103] L. W. Mulhane, *Memorial of Major-General William Stark Rosecrans* (Columbus: The Columbian Printing Co., 1898), 55.
[104] Mulhane, *Memorial of Rosecrans*, 56.
[105] Mulhane, *Memorial of Rosecrans*, 57.
[106] Mulhane, *Memorial of Rosecrans*, 59.

Rosecrans' honor, the W. S. Rosecrans GAR Post# 82 in Whittier. The Rosecrans Post remained an active meeting place for Union veterans during the next four decades. In a telling example of how white valor and patriotism eclipsed emancipation in unionist discourse by the end of the century, Union veteran Lt. Col. Gilbert C. Kniffin delivered a memorial speech at the Rosecrans Post on the tenth anniversary of his passing. In a conclusion that would have pleased the imperialist in Rosecrans, Kniffin argued that the most visible result of Union victory was the nation's arrival as a world power. The Union, Kniffin argued, was "purer and stronger by the baptism of blood through which it has passed, better for the work which the great Ruler of Nations has for it to accomplish, stands today the peer of any upon the earth."[107] In this telling, the sacrifices of the Union armies helped lay the groundwork for the nation's world-power status, not to overthrow established racial hierarchies.

Reconciliation, Reunion, and the Decline of the Union Cause

In 1886 at the GAR's 1886 national encampment in San Francisco, William Tecumseh Sherman, the retired commanding General of the U.S. Army, delivered a notable address regarding unionism entitled, "Linking the Chain of National History." In his speech, Sherman appealed to Union veterans "to demonstrate our love for the whole country and to manifest our interest in everything which can strengthen the Union."[108] Distancing his narrative from slavery and emancipation, Sherman

[107] Gilbert C. Kniffin, *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States War Papers: Major-General William Starke Rosecrans* (District of Columbia: Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, 1908), 22.
[108] "General Sherman's Address to the Grand Army of the Republic, San Francisco 1886," *Records of members of the Grand Army of the Republic, with a complete account of the Twentieth National*

explained that the Civil War was part of a more extensive process of national expansion that began with the U.S-Mexico War, "a necessary and natural precursor to, if not the actual cause of, our civil war, [forming] an important link in the chain of our national history."[109] In 1886, Sherman championed the compatibility of empire and unionism, which Rosecrans previously observed from Mexico in 1868: the restoration of the union made the American empire possible.

The subject of California as the leading edge of the empire was at the forefront of Sherman's speech. After news of California's mineral and agricultural wealth became known to white Americans, Sherman explained to the gathered veterans that it was *fait accompli* Americans would seize and colonize the region. Sherman explained that "long anterior to the Mexican War, our Government and most of our leading American statesmen had resolved to acquire California, cost what it might, as an essential step in our national progress as a tide which swept us on to the Pacific Coast with a force that was irresistible."[110] Unionism encouraged Americans to "go forth, increase, multiply, and replenish the earth" where Spain and Mexico had previously failed, leaving the state "uncultivated."[111] In this telling, the conquest of California benefitted the whole world, and the Union victory permitted the federal

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Encampment: A History of the growth, usefulness, and important events of the Grand Army of the Republic, from its origin to the present time, edited by William H. Ward. (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker & Co., 1886), 112.

[109] "Sherman's Address to the GAR," 112.

[110] "Sherman's Address to the GAR," 120. Having won California by conquest, Sherman boasted the state in the 1880s was a "busy, thriving population of more than a million people, deriving from the soil and mines enough for their own use, with an annual surplus of a hundred million dollars' worth of produce for the rest of mankind."

[111] "Sherman's Address to the GAR," 120.

government to refocus its energy on developing the newly acquired West. Unionism for Sherman meant casting aside lingering sectional enmity and embracing nationalism. “Let us forget,” he implored:

> The old North and the old South and devote our lives to the development of a grander Union which you, my fellow soldiers, have had so large a share in creating. Though it was hard for us to realize the truth, we now believe the civil war was worth all it cost in precious life and treasure, and that the South received the larger share of benefit. We cherish the memories of that war and may profit by its lessons. We are a grander people than before the civil war, and far better able to cope with the mighty issues the future may have in store for us.[112]

Sherman’s speech revealed how far elite union veterans could separate unionism from the GAR’s official position on emancipation and Black freedom. By the time of Sherman’s speech in 1886, the emancipationist component of unionism was in decline. In reconfiguring the memory of the Union cause as a crucible by which valorous white Union soldiers restored the nation and set the stage for the American empire, future generations of white Americans would increasingly discount emancipation and Black Americans’ contributions to Union victory. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the sacrifices of Black Union veterans to the Union cause lay nearly forgotten by white Americans.

During Reconstruction, Union veterans and loyal women in the GAR and WRC officially identified with a unionist ideology that championed the Union's restoration and emancipation as vital contributions to gaining victory over the Confederacy. However, I have shown that Union veterans reconfigured unionism in

[112] “Sherman’s Address to the GAR,” 120.

California to serve diverse political ends. As time moved on from the immediacy of the war, unionism amongst California's veterans became less about condemning slavery or supporting Black freedom as it was championing nationalism and the continuation of white supremacy in California. In this view, most white Union veterans in California shared similar racial beliefs as white civilians (and voters) regarding Chinese immigration.

In this chapter, I have discussed how former Union Army general and prominent California politician William Rosecrans articulated a complex form of unionism that sometimes ran counter to members of his Democratic Party and most Union veterans in the state. At the same time, Rosecrans' unionism ran parallel to leading imperialists in the American West. As a businessman, politician, and public figure, Rosecrans combined the religious intensity of his abolitionist views, support for capitalism, and sectional reconciliation in his theory of unionism and the world the Civil War had made in California. Analyzing Rosecrans' political career, I have shown how a once deeply emancipationist unionism could later be compatible with empire and a public defense of Chinese immigration. Unionism remained an unstable but useful and influential political idealogy for millions of Union Army veterans.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation argued that California's Union Army veterans invoked an ideology of unionism to fashion communities, reshape state politics, and promote their specific war narratives through the end of the nineteenth century. This dissertation analyzed Union veterans' correspondences, fraternal organizational records, newspaper accounts, government records, and other contemporary print sources. Based on an analysis of Union veterans' fraternal and sororal organizations, acts of memorialization, lobbying for pensions, and prominence in the popular culture and state politics, it can be concluded that Union veterans—and the ideology of unionism they promoted—played a distinctively influential role in postwar California society both in the. Most broadly, this dissertation asserted that a Western-oriented narrative of California's Union veterans illuminates the history of Reconstruction by incorporating national struggles over the war's legacies through the experiences and actions of the American Civil War's most direct participants.

While this dissertation's focus on California's Union veterans restricts the generalizability of these insights, this approach provided critical new insights into the little-known story of the Union veterans' communities in California and their connections to Reconstruction in the American West. In chapter one, I examined California's political culture at the end of the Civil War and showed that white Californians were already disputing the potential consequences of the war as threats to white supremacy and the stability of the state's racial hierarchy. In chapter

two, I traced the origins of the most significant postwar Union veterans' fraternal organization, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), and its women-led auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC), operating in California. This chapter investigated how Union veterans and "loyal women" organized and promoted the ideological pillars of their respective organizations, "fraternity, charity, and loyalty." My discussion of the California GAR and WRC examined the circumstances that brought Union veterans, loyal women, and the widows and orphans of deceased Union soldiers together as part of a broader and active Union veterans' community across the state. I showed how both groups claimed a responsibility to keep the Civil War alive in American culture to honor the fallen and insist on the differentiation between unionism and loyalty and secession and treason. Part of the historical distinctiveness of Reconstructin-era California is that it was populated with Northerners, Southerners, and Midwesterners, reflecting a roughly national portrait in one location.

While scholarship on Union veterans has focused chiefly on fixed homosocial narratives of men, a primary finding of this dissertation is women's contributions to the Union veterans' communities of postwar California. I first encountered the archival records of the WRC filed as "miscellaneous" GAR records, a documentary process that continues to reinscribe these loyal women's civic standing in history through their relation to men. I argued for integrating the histories of the WRC with the GAR to account for women's distinct contributions to the ideology of unionism and support provided to the state's neediest Union veterans. Overlooked by historians but not by Union veterans, I detailed how the

WRC played a vital role in sustaining the GAR in California, promoting unionism through Memorial Day events, and advocating for school curricula that taught children a unionist narrative of the Civil War. Moreover, I showed how the WRC proved adept at fundraising and establishing an organizational future beyond the GAR.

In chapter three, I examined the volatile disputes over race, class, labor, and citizenship in 1870s San Francisco through Union veteran, journalist Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914). In analyzing Bierce's journalism, I showed that Bierce's unorthodox sense of unionism contrasts the state's general white population. In this chapter, Bierce's journalism frames the rise and fall of radical labor leader Denis Kearney and the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC) and the challenges Reconstruction-era Californians faced in the context of anti-Chinese vigilante violence, rising economic inequality, and labor unrest. Bierce, and his reflections on fundamental racial equality, emerged as an unlikely public defender of Chinese labor and immigration. The actual threat to law and order and civic peace, Bierce alleged, were the labor agitators who used the Chinese as a scapegoat to blame for their unemployment. A close reading of Bierce's journalism provides a valuable entry point to investigate how postwar Californians struggled to determine who could claim to be a free, rights-bearing person with full access to the job market.

This dissertation also considered how elite Union veterans drew on their wartime service to acquire political power in Reconstruction-era California. In chapter four, I investigated the career of former Union Army general and California politician William Starke Rosecrans (1819-1898), with particular attention to his

understudied life as a veteran. Rosecrans' articulations of unionism provide another significant contrast with those of the GAR and Bierce. As an elite businessman, politician, and public figure, Rosecrans' unionism, over time, combined the religious intensity of his abolitionist views with an impassioned support of capitalism, sectional reconciliation, and imperialism, underscoring unionism's flexibility and political usefulness. Analysis of Rosecrans' speeches, publications, and other correspondence indicated that he invoked unionism to support emancipation and political equality, uphold racial hierarchy, and rationalize capitalism and empire.

Opportunities for Future Research

There are multiple potential opportunities for further research on Civil War veterans and the women who supported them and advocated on their behalf. There is no comprehensive history of the Woman's Relief Corps, and the last complete account of the Grand Army of the Republic was in 1992. Chronologically and geographically, a single-volume treatment of either subject may not be practical, but additional, detailed, regional studies may better portray an indeed national narrative of veterans. Since most scholarship on Union veterans tends to be located along the east coast or in the Midwest, studies of Black Union veterans in the South and Union veterans across the American West are of the highest importance. Questions to ask: 1) How did Black Union veterans' definitions of unionism differ from white Union veterans? 2) What political variations existed among Black Union veterans? and 3) How did Black Union veterans characterize their experiences with the GAR? In the area of California studies, one potential study could focus on California's Black Union veterans and ask how they appealed to their service to demand

equality, the rights of citizenship, and the respect and acknowledgment of wartime service enjoyed by white Union veterans.

Another research opportunity could focus on the state's Confederate veterans. Far fewer in number than their Union counterparts, Confederate veterans took on leading roles in founding many California cities, especially in southern California, where the support of the Old South had been strong since the days of the state's admission to the Union. Future researchers could investigate how Confederate veterans organized, whether they promoted or concealed their wartime service, and if and how they voiced opposition to Reconstruction. In the postwar South, Confederate veterans organized the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), a rough equivalent of the GAR. Did California's Confederate veterans have connections to the UCV, and did they challenge the Union cause with the "Lost Cause"? Examining the phenomenon of reconciliation from the view of Confederate veterans could provide more insight into how the emancipationist components of unionism declined.

Finally, there is much more to learn about California's Woman's Relief Corps in California and nationally. As a reformist and memorial organization that continues to operate, a future study could ask how the principles of unionism informed organizational commitments into the twentieth century. As with the men of the GAR, it would also be instructive to compare the WRC in California to WRC Orders in other regions, particularly the South, to analyze points of commonality and difference.

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