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Freedom without Equality: Maine Civil War Soldiers' Attitudes about Slavery and African Americans

ANDREW J. DEROCHE

CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS from Maine brought preconceived notions about African Americans into the army, and these attitudes fell across a broad spectrum. Some empathized with African Americans, some disdained them, and many held ambivalent views somewhere in between. Among the majority of soldiers, Republican free labor ideology resonated much more strongly than radical abolitionist sentiments. Wartime experiences convinced Maine soldiers to advocate emancipation, but often for reasons unrelated to the welfare of African Americans. By the end of the war, most Maine soldiers favored emancipation for military reasons but not racial equality. Private John Haley of the Seventeenth Maine Regiment wrote of African Americans in 1864: "I desire that their freedom should be established but don't consider that freedom involves social equality."¹

Why examine the attitudes of common Maine Civil War soldiers? What makes these Mainers historically significant, or makes their views unique? These soldiers deserve attention because of Maine's inordinately large contribution to the Northern war effort. Over seventy thousand Maine men served during the war, which represented over sixty percent of the eligible military population—the highest figure for any Northern state.² During the Civil War millions of African Americans gained freedom—some with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the rest with the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. Documents drafted in Congress or by President Abraham Lincoln were important, but the most instrumental factor in ending slavery was Northern armies.³ While African American soldiers played a key role, the vast majority of Northern soldiers were white, as were all Maine regiments.⁴ The words and actions of Maine soldiers regarding African Americans reveal much about the meaning of the

Civil War to whites who fought. This study examines the letters and diaries of Maine soldiers to investigate the meaning of the war for them and to focus on their views regarding African Americans.⁵

Maine soldiers gradually accepted emancipation during the war, as years of fighting and traveling in the South convinced them that it would benefit the Northern effort. Lincoln justified it as a military necessity to save the Union, as he explained in a letter to James Conkling: "I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union."⁶ This reasoning was agreeable to most soldiers. They advocated emancipation as a tool to help save the Union, but did not necessarily think it should lead to social equality for the freedmen.

Contact with African Americans during the war had a wide assortment of effects on Maine soldiers, but those who came out calling for racial equality were very few. To convince Mainers to advocate equality, interaction with African Americans often had to overcome negative attitudes that the soldiers had brought into the army. Most soldiers viewed African Americans as peculiar at best, and many considered them inferior. Attitudes of respect and concern for African Americans were rare among Mainers. Indeed, few Maine soldiers joined the army with a strong sense that African Americans were equal human beings. Not many had black friends or had belonged to abolitionist societies. Since the antislavery movement in Maine produced few abolitionists in the population in general, however, it is not surprising that few soldiers were abolitionists. By 1855, the antislavery movement in Maine had virtually disappeared. The Maine Antislavery Society had disbanded in the 1840s, as did the abolitionist Liberty Party. The Free Soil party, a weaker opponent of slavery, folded in 1854.⁷

The Republican Party emerged in 1855 from the cloud of dust caused by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The attitudes of the vast majority of Maine soldiers reflected the influence of Republican ideology, rather than that of radical abolitionism. Republicans espoused a system of free labor, which offered any white man the opportunity to improve his condition through hard work. They judged it an infinitely better system than slavery, which they believed degraded labor, retarded education, destroyed the soil's productivity, and was inefficient.⁸ The leading spokesman for the Republicans' free labor ideology in the late 1850s was William Seward of New York, who later served as Secretary of State during the Lincoln Administration.

By the late 1850s, abolitionism and other components of evangelical reform had lost saliency among the masses of Maine. The leading party, the Republicans, downplayed both slavery and temperance. Yet both issues had stamped an indelible mark on a vocal minority of Mainers, many of whom would become

influential leaders during and after the Civil War. The prohibitionists, led by Neal Dow, had gained their greatest triumph with the prohibitory Maine Law of 1851. Dow became a general during the war, but his fight against liquor had lost much of its support by then, and prohibition would not achieve national success until 1920.⁹

Abolitionists triumphed during the Civil War and in the early years of Reconstruction. Two Maine men, Hannibal Hamlin and Oliver Otis Howard, occupied pivotal positions in these events. Hamlin, Lincoln's first vice president, advocated emancipation from the early days of the war.¹⁰ After serving as a Union general at many battles including Gettysburg, Howard accepted leadership of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865. Howard strove to succor some four million former slaves as best he could and founded Howard University in Washington to provide them with the opportunity for higher education.¹¹

Hamlin and Howard were exceptional individuals, however, and did not exemplify the attitudes of the majority of Maine soldiers, very few of whom were abolitionists. While antebellum antislavery did not produce large numbers of abolitionist soldiers, the movement may well have contributed to the empathy for African Americans expressed by a small number of common Maine soldiers. Some Mainers did come into the war feeling compassion and respect for African Americans, as manifested by the letters of Chandler Perry. A farmer from South Thomaston, Perry died in a Southern prison early in the war. Few of his letters survive today, but they make clear his concern for blacks.

On 30 June 1861, Chandler Perry described the newly freed slaves around camp as "a happy set of fellows." About two weeks later he informed his wife that "we had five good looking runaway slaves come to us yesterday for protection and they were cared for you may depend."¹² This statement sheds light on the attitude not only of Chandler Perry, but also on that of his wife. "They were cared for you may depend" suggests that she was also concerned about the treatment of African Americans, and that her attitude may have shaped his. In any case, Perry was concerned about the welfare of African Americans very early in the war. He expressed this attitude without extensive contact with African Americans and long before the Emancipation Proclamation.

Henry McIntire's attitude early in the war was also sympathetic towards African Americans. Regarding former slaves streaming into camp in April 1862, he wrote, "God knows I pity them poor little children hurrying they hardly know where but to suffer in our citys."¹³ McIntire's words predicted the later hardships of African Americans in Northern cities with uncanny accuracy, and his compassion indicates possible sympathies with antebellum abolitionism.¹⁴

Like Perry and McIntire, Mark Waterman voiced concern for African Americans shortly after enlisting. Letters to his wife written four months into his service express concern and respect for former slaves. Although Waterman was writing after Lincoln's Proclamation, his words go beyond Lincoln's military necessity justification. During February 1863 African Americans came to his quarters near Arlington every day looking for food, and he would "never send them away emty." He added that "some of them are quite intelegent and speak of how hard there Masters used them." In another letter he told his wife that "the white people here don't know as much as the Nigroes."¹⁵

Waterman, McIntire, and Perry expressed similar attitudes concerning African Americans. Although they did not write a great deal about the subject, what they did write was basically positive. They praised the intelligence of African Americans or showed concern for their welfare—stronger sentiments than Lincoln officially uttered. Such attitudes of respect and compassion early in the soldiers' tour hint at the influence of antislavery movements in prewar Maine or a general empathy encouraged by the strong religion of the times. In addition to abolitionism and evangelical Protestantism, however, antebellum Maine was the home to significant prejudice. The primary component of the prejudice in Maine was a strong belief in white superiority, and many soldiers brought such feelings into the army.

Danville Chadbourne of isolated Macwahoc Plantation served along the Georgia coast and then in Louisiana. From Baton Rouge he informed his father that he was helping to guard the quarters of a large number of African Americans. "They are a black nasty looking set any way one can fix it," he wrote. Peleg Bradford of Carmel echoed this opinion. He explained to his father that "I am a grate friend to a dam negro... I love a negro so well that when I meat one I make them go out side of the fence and give me all of the road." In another letter Bradford bemoaned his chances of finding a wife while in the South: "there is nothing but negro girls out here and they are too dam black to suit my eye."¹⁶

Meshack Larry had also been influenced by the prejudice common in prewar Maine. A blacksmith from South Windham, Larry served in Virginia. In three separate letters to his sister he indicated that a higher level of output was expected from whites than from African Americans. He rejoiced at the opportunity to "breath the fresh air and see people working like white men." Later he wrote, "I hope to be able to do my duty as becomes a white man." Finally, he added, "What ever turns up we will try and meet like white men."¹⁷ Larry's view reflected the growing sense among white workers from 1800 to 1865 that their

“whiteness” was a key factor differentiating free laborers from slaves.¹⁸ Larry not only considered African Americans inferior workers, but also agreed with Bradford that African American women were less attractive than white women. To his sister he wrote: “Some say they have ben so long with out seeing a white woman that the feet of these Ebony images look hansome but I can’t see them in that light yet.”¹⁹

The negative attitudes of Larry, Bradford, and Chadbourne towards African Americans reflect the prejudice of the mid-nineteenth century. These soldiers believed in white superiority. Other soldiers felt that while African Americans might not necessarily be inferior, they were certainly peculiar. Such views were probably due in part to the scarcity of African Americans in Maine. According to the 1860 census, of the 628,274 people in Maine, only 1,327 were black.²⁰ Most of this small number lived in the larger coastal towns, so soldiers who had grown up on inland farms or in smaller villages may not have ever seen an African American person before the war. For many of them, the blacks they saw in the South were strange and exotic. Maine soldiers often portrayed African Americans as peculiar and perhaps even of a different species.

Marching by a group of roadside slaves after a battle, Abner Small of Readfield observed: “The crazy contortions of their bodies and the grimaces of astonishment that spread over their faces... would have driven a circus crowd wild.” Daniel Brown never mentioned contacting African Americans, but did attend a minstrel show. According to Brown, “the Battery boys Black up and act out the nigger. It is quite a show.”²¹ Minstrelsy amused men who had not had personal contact with blacks, but it went beyond fun by perpetuating stereotypes and fueling prejudice. Union soldiers enjoyed the Zip Coon and Jim Crow characters in blackface because they identified them as an inferior other. In the words of one scholar, minstrelsy was “empty of positive content.”²²

Minstrel shows featured a blending of humor and prejudice, which also took the form of kidding about bringing an African American child home to Maine. Levi Perry jokingly promised to reward his sister Hattie for good behavior. To their mother he wrote: “Tell Hattie to be a good girl and I will send her a little Nig if I can find one that I can get into a letter.” Albert Manson made a similar promise for his son Charley, in two letters to his wife. First he wrote: “Tell Charley I will bring him home a little Nigger.” A few weeks later he added: “Tell Charley I will try to get his Nigger.”²³ The tone of these suggests that Manson and Perry viewed young African Americans more as pets for white children than as friends.

The promises of Perry and Manson were not serious, and neither brought a

black child home. They both felt that African Americans were peculiar and had brought these attitudes with them to the South. Other Mainers, as seen above, brought attitudes ranging from respect for African Americans to notions of white superiority. During the war, however, attitudes could be influenced by actual contact with African Americans. Men who interacted with many African Americans became convinced to take actions that they may not have considered before the war. Some Mainers, for example, did unofficially adopt African Americans from the South. In fact, Colonel Wentworth of Manson's own regiment brought home an African American boy.²⁴ At least one other Maine soldier, Elisha Goddard, returned to his home with a young African American. Goddard had hired the boy to be his servant while stationed in New Orleans.²⁵

Though perhaps motivated somewhat by paternalism, Goddard and Wentworth did open their homes to African Americans. In the case of another Maine soldier, Hannibal Johnson, the roles were reversed. He and a few other soldiers escaped from a prison camp in Georgia in late November 1864. In order to escape to the North, they turned to blacks for assistance. As Johnson put it: "At night we approached a negro cabin for the first time; we did it with fear and trembling, but we must have food and help." The African Americans supplied Johnson's group with food and a hiding place. The next night a black guide led them on the first leg of their journey. About a week later, Johnson and the others reached Union lines in Tennessee. As they were passed from one guide to another along the way, they were treated kindly and fed well. In his diary Johnson observed: "If such kindness will not make one an abolitionist, then his heart must be of stone."²⁶

Johnson owed his personal freedom to the compassion of slaves who had bravely and skillfully led him to safety. To him, African Americans were caring and able people who merited freedom—but this attitude was rare. His war experiences had convinced him of the need for emancipation because African Americans deserved it, but most Mainers came to advocate emancipation for different reasons. Most Maine soldiers became supporters of emancipation during the war for reasons having little to do with the welfare of African Americans, and were at best ambivalent about the effects of freedom on former slaves.

After ascending to the presidency in 1861, Abraham Lincoln emerged as the dominant influence on Republicans throughout the United States. Personally, Lincoln was a lifelong opponent of slavery. He believed its spread must be prevented in order to allow the spread of free labor. When it came to formulating a policy by which to erase it, however, he struggled. As early as 1852 he began to publicly advocate voluntary colonization of slaves in Africa or South America.

He believed such a policy would gain the support of whites in the North and South for the emancipation of slavery, whereas they might otherwise oppose it. Indeed, colonization would eradicate two of whites' central concerns about blacks: competition for jobs and interracial sex and marriage. He also believed it would give African Americans a chance to prove themselves in an independent state of their own. He never seemed to have grasped the simple fact that colonization could not succeed because virtually no African Americans wanted to move to Africa. Lincoln still talked about colonization as late as 1863.²⁷

The majority of Maine soldiers embraced the tenets of Republican free labor ideology, and traveling in the South served to reinforce their views. Some felt ending slavery would help Southern whites financially, and others believed it would improve Southern whites' morality. A crucial benefit from emancipation understood by all was its strong contribution to the military effort to save the Union. Most Mainers, then, supported emancipation as a military necessity but did not support racial equality, echoing Lincoln's public pronouncements from before the war.

Henry McIntire was one of the Maine soldiers convinced of the economic benefits of emancipation. McIntire, a farmer from the western Maine town of Peru, explained the results of slavery to a friend at home. The farmland in Virginia was as fertile as that in Maine, but "slavery curses everything." The effects had been evident since entering the South, and "the line of demarkation is as perceptible as in passing from light to darkness."²⁸ White southern farmers, he concluded, would reap much better harvests without slavery. While historians still debate the actual productivity of slavery, McIntire accepted the Republican view that free labor was more efficient.²⁹ Frank Dickerson also thought that southern whites would benefit from the abolition of slavery. Of slave owners in Maryland he observed, "It will be two years before they can recover from the ruin which slavery has brought upon them, but eventually they will be much better off for its abolishment."³⁰ The view that contact with African Americans and association with the degrading institution of slavery had harmed southern whites reflected the aspect of Republican ideology that supported colonization and feared racial mixing.

Charles Barnard of Bucksport, a captain in a regiment stationed in Louisiana, was in continuous contact with African Americans. He reported to his wife, "Officers and men are having an easy time. We have Negroes to do all fatigue work." Exploiting blacks did not seem to bother him and ordering them punished did not either. With no expression of remorse he wrote: "I was obliged to order four Negroes whipped 25 stripes each." Nonetheless, Barnard supported

emancipation as a wartime expedient. He explained: "I would emancipate the slaves so long as the war lasts... No measure could injure the South more... The fact is freeing the negro will starve the South into submission."³¹ Mark Waterman concurred with Barnard that emancipation was a strategic move to help save the Union. He doubted that the efforts of men like himself would be enough to preserve the Union, but felt the Emancipation Proclamation would turn the tide. On 3 January 1863 he wrote that as far as saving the Union "the President's Message will do it sure."³² The views towards emancipation of Barnard and Waterman revolved around its military benefits to the Union army, and their views were shared by the leader of the heroic Twentieth Maine Regiment, Joshua Chamberlain.³³ Chamberlain advocated emancipation for the damage it would do to the Confederate cause, but he never called for racial equality. That Maine's most famous soldier, and later its Republican governor, would hold views similar to Lincoln and the majority of soldiers is not surprising and helps explain his political success.³⁴

Leander Cram supported emancipation for many reasons beyond military necessity, perhaps because his interactions with African Americans were extensive and rewarding. A teacher and farmer from Baldwin, Cram took part in the occupation of an island off the South Carolina coast. While there, Cram started a school for former slaves. He believed they deserved freedom and were capable of helping achieve it. "There is talk of raising negro troops on this Island. I find that the negro can learn about the same as any other people."³⁵ Cram's war experiences thus led him to cautiously advocate racial equality.

Cram's attitude was an exception. Meshack Larry's attitude was more typical, as he considered blacks to be inferior to whites and expected better conduct and performance by whites. A disappointment of his war experience was that white soldiers and politicians did not always live up to these expectations. As a result, African Americans looked better in comparison. To his sister he explained the following: "What I believed to be the curses of slavery has become knowledge and instead of thinking les of a negroe I have sadly learned to think them beter than many white men that hold responsible positions." In another letter he expressed a similar sentiment: "I am no Negro wosheper nor never was but when I think of some men that have acted imporent parts in this show he appears to me like a herow and a Saint."³⁶ Disappointment with the conduct of white officers and politicians, rather than respect for African Americans, seems to have made Larry a supporter of emancipation.

While Larry felt blacks performed better than certain leading whites, John Sheahan felt African Americans were superior to poor Southern whites. A teacher

from Dennysville, Sheahan was stationed around Washington, D.C. He wanted to free the slaves but did not think that they could fend for themselves in the United States. "They talk about sending them to Africa and I think that they will have to for certainly they cant always keep guard round them and feed them as they do now." Thus Sheahan's vision of emancipation included colonization.³⁷ Support for colonization by Mainers like Sheahan revealed their uncertainty about the future of African Americans in the United States, considering the reality of white prejudice.

Lincoln's plans for colonization during the war failed. A late addition to his evolving plan for blacks—using them as soldiers—was very successful. African Americans, most notably Frederick Douglass, sought permission for their people to fight from the first days of the war.³⁸ As early as July 1861, Mainer Chandler Perry observed that runaway slaves wanted to "take the musket and fight for their liberty they say if their massa would only come in sight they would rap him." These men finally got their chance in 1863 when Lincoln officially sanctioned African American troops.³⁹ Maine's Hannibal Hamlin, then vice president, evidently convinced Lincoln to arm African Americans by bringing several whites who were willing to be officers to the White House shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect.⁴⁰

Maine soldiers supported the arming of African Americans for a number of reasons. As seen above, Leander Cram believed they "learn about the same as any other people" and deserved to help win their freedom.⁴¹ Others saw it as a chance for personal advancement, and many Maine soldiers became officers of African American regiments.⁴² Such men included John Appleton and Josiah Sturtevant, who rejoiced at his chance to be a lieutenant of the Eightieth U.S. Colored Regiment. Appleton was the son of a powerful Bangor judge who actively opposed slavery before and during the war.⁴³ The primary factor behind most Mainers' support for arming African Americans, however, remained military necessity.

Black soldiers would significantly aid the cause of saving the Union, as Abial Edwards concluded while serving in Louisiana and after observing African American troops. Regarding them he wrote, "I think they make a very good soldier. But still we have got that dislike which can not be overcome at once." In a letter a few days later Edwards expressed a similar attitude. He described how black troops had cheered the passing white troops, but that the whites could not bring themselves to cheer in return. He explained, "The negroes make a neat looking soldier and our Reg has come to the conclusion that they can and ought to fight as well as white folks but as for cheering them they can't do it."⁴⁴

White soldiers appreciated African Americans' contribution to the cause as soldiers but were not ready to treat them as equal people.

After the war, Edward's regiment occupied Charleston for a year, where he became especially friendly with a freed slave named Jim. Edwards did not believe, however, that African Americans should be granted voting rights immediately. He feared Southern whites would manipulate them and seize control: "Still I don't believe in the Negroes voting right away. They aint as yet capable of it... now they are too easily influenced."⁴⁵ Lincoln was killed before his stance on African American suffrage was clear, but Maine Governor Joshua Chamberlain shared Edward's hesitancy. Veterans, who made up a huge part of the Republican party, would quickly lose interest in helping southern African Americans during Reconstruction.

How comparable were the views of Maine soldiers regarding African Americans to those of white Union soldiers from other Northern states? Historians have concluded that in general white Union soldiers were similarly influenced by abolitionism, prejudice, scarcity of African Americans, and their war experiences.⁴⁶ A closer examination of this conclusion reveals how and why Mainers were typical.

Very few white Union soldiers volunteered in order to abolish slavery, so the lack of abolitionists among Mainers was not unusual. Some soldiers praised blacks who had helped them, and some taught them to read—demonstrating that Mainers who praised or aided African Americans had counterparts from other states.⁴⁷ Such men, however, were rare in the white regiments of all Union states. They were not particularly numerous among Mainers, either. The anti-slavery movement did not enjoy exceptional success in Maine, so the influence of abolitionism was not profoundly greater on Mainers than on other Union soldiers. New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts all featured stronger anti-slavery forces than those in Maine. Although the antislavery movement resulted in few abolitionist volunteers in Maine or anywhere, it did contribute to the respect for African Americans that some soldiers expressed.

More commonly Mainers and soldiers from other Union states shared ambivalent attitudes towards African Americans. Northern soldiers who considered African Americans to be a different species harassed and abused former slaves. According to one scholar, "Many soldiers were deeply prejudiced before entering the service. . . . Initial prejudices sometimes were softened by army experience, but usually the reverse was true."⁴⁸ So the prejudice that existed among Mainers was characteristic of many Union regiments. The negative opinions about African Americans expressed by Mainers were echoed by their counterparts from New Hampshire to Minnesota.

Whether or not they were prejudiced, most Mainers looked upon African Americans as too strange to understand. The idea that blacks were exotic or ludicrous was shared by white soldiers from throughout the North. The scarcity of African Americans in Maine (about one black per six hundred whites) contributed to the Mainers' attitude, but several Northern states actually contained a lower percentage of African Americans than Maine.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Northern states with relatively high African American populations like New York or Pennsylvania consisted of a few cities with high numbers of African Americans and predominantly white rural farmlands. The fact that many Maine soldiers may have never seen a black person before the war also applied to soldiers from the rest of the rural North. Understandably, then, the view of many Mainers that African Americans were exotic was typical of white Union soldiers. Ignorance, abolitionism, prejudice, and the scarcity of African Americans influenced Mainers and other Union soldiers similarly. The wartime experiences of Mainers were also typical of other white Union soldiers, few of whom cared about the fate of the slaves, but who supported emancipation as a military measure.⁵⁰

The complex attitude of one John Haley regarding African Americans contains the military necessity component but it also reveals more blatant prejudice and exemplifies the views of the majority of Maine soldiers, and by extension, Union soldiers. While serving in Virginia, Haley encountered blacks in a variety of circumstances, some of which brought out his negative biases. On one such occasion he ventured onto a plantation. The owner had fled, "leaving his estate in charge of a lot of niggers, who chattered and grinned like so many monkeys." This description resembles those of other Mainers who considered African Americans as peculiar—even subhuman. Another time, several young blacks came into camp and evidently became bothersome. Haley described the result as follows: "We bounced them up in blankets and made them butt against each other - also against some pork barrels. . . one young nigger had an arm broke, and several others were more or less maltreated."⁵¹

Though tolerant of such brutality toward African Americans, Haley did not approve of slavery. He made this clear when discussing a Southern minister: "A theology that sanctions slavery savors too strongly of Satan to be tolerated. The religion of Jesus Christ has nothing in common with the auction block or the lash." Like several of the other Mainers in this study, Haley's major criticism of slavery was not its effect on blacks. He believed that the overly close relations between the races, evident in the range of skin colors in the South, served to lower the superior whites to the level of the slaves. The South and her white people had great potential, "but too much dependence on the darkey and too

much intimacy with them has lowered the standards of decency and morality." The system of slavery had "destroyed much of the finer sensibilities of the Southern people, even of the better class."⁵²

Like most of the Maine soldiers in this study, John Haley empathized much more readily with Southern whites than with African Americans. He wanted to end slavery but at the same time held prejudiced views. He encountered blacks in a wide range of circumstances, but did not completely overcome his conviction that they were in some way inferior. In October 1864, Haley approximated a synthesis of the complex attitudes of Maine soldiers regarding slaves when he wrote, "I desire that their freedom should be established but don't consider that freedom involves social equality... They might be just as good, clean, just as intelligent, and possess all the qualities of gentlemen, but they are a different species of bird."⁵³

Thus the typical Maine soldier did not volunteer to abolish slavery, but by 1864 supported emancipation as military necessity, even if indifferent to the welfare of the freedmen. Indeed, many supporters of emancipation held views that African Americans were inferior or too different to be understood. Some Mainers believed southern whites would benefit economically from ending slavery, while others felt they would benefit morally. Maine soldiers' attitudes made it clear that preserving the Union was the primary goal of the war, so they accepted the emancipation of the slaves, but very few ever supported racial equality.⁵⁴

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NOTES

1. Ruth Silliker, ed., *The Rebel Yell and the Yankee Hurray: The Civil War Journal of a Maine Volunteer, Private John W. Haley, 17th Maine Regiment* (Camden: Down East Books, 1985), 204.
2. William B. Jordan, Jr., *Maine in the Civil War: A Bibliographical Guide* (Portland: The Maine Historical Society, 1976), 72.
3. For a one-volume narrative of the events of the Civil War see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). McPherson sparked the author's interest in Maine soldiers by assigning Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine, 1974) back in 1986 at Princeton, and later directing his initial investigation of the topic.
4. All Maine soldiers were officially white, but there is some evidence of African American men "passing" for white to enlist.
5. This article is based on a chapter of the author's M.A. thesis, "Maine Civil War Soldiers:

- Their Attitudes about Alcohol, Combat, Blacks, and Politics," (University of Maine, 1993). Both the Maine Historical Society in Portland (hereafter MHS) and the Fogler Library at the University of Maine in Orono (hereafter FL) listed Civil War soldiers' collections in their indexes. The author methodically examined them all, and found that letters are generally much richer than diaries. Of the thirty-seven soldiers studied, thirteen either made no mention of blacks or slavery or did not clearly indicate their attitudes.
6. Lincoln to Conkling, August 26, 1863 in *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1989), 498. George Fredrickson argues that the very nature of Lincoln's emancipation policy allowed for the denial of social equality. In his words, "Abolition from military necessity would not guarantee a national commitment to racial equality." George Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 122.
 7. See Edward O. Schriver's *Go Free: The Antislavery Impulse in Maine 1833–1855* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1970), especially 109–110. Schriver concluded that antislavery in Maine basically failed, but he made clear that the abolitionist message was heard throughout Maine, though not often acted upon.
 8. See Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York, 1970), 19, 41 and 51. For the importance of "whiteness" to Northern workers see David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 80–87.
 9. For the story of Dow see Frank L. Byrne, *Prophet of Prohibition: Neal Dow and His Crusade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961). On alcohol and temperance movements in general see W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) and Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States 1800–1865* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960).
 10. H. Draper Hunt, *Hannibal Hamlin of Maine: Lincoln's First Vice-President* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969).
 11. John A. Carpenter, *Sword and Olive Branch: Oliver Otis Howard* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969), 82.
 12. Chandler Perry Sr. to his wife, June 30 and July 12, 1861, Perry Papers, MHS.
 13. Henry McIntire to Lyman Bolster, Apr. 30, 1862, McIntire Papers, University of Maine.
 14. McIntire was a farmer in the small western Maine farming community of Peru, which did have a female antislavery society. See Schriver, *Go Free*, 141.
 15. Mark Waterman to his wife, Feb. 28 and May 2, 1863, Waterman Papers, MHS.
 16. Danville Chadbourne to his father, Jan. 13, 1863, Chadbourne Papers, FL; Peleg Bradford to his mother, Sept. 26, 1863, Bradford Papers, FL; Peleg Bradford to Eliza McPherson, May 14, 1863, Bean Collection, FL. Bradford later married Eliza. Ironically and perhaps unbeknownst to Bradford, four black men served in his very regiment. Described in a regimental history as being "of African descent," these four Maine men may have had light-enough colored skin to be accepted into the all-white regiment. See Charles J. House, *The First Maine Heavy Artillery: 1862–1865* (Portland, 1903), 210. The names and hometowns of the four blacks are all listed.
 17. Meshack Larry to his sister, Nov. 30, 1862, Apr. 12 and Sept. 25, 1863, Larry Papers, MHS.
 18. For discussion of the growing importance of a sense of "whiteness" among Northern labor from 1800 to 1865 see Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 14 and 87.
 19. Meshack Larry to his sister, Sept. 28, 1862.
 20. James McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), appendix A. For each African American person in Maine, there were about six hundred whites.
 21. Harold A. Small, ed., *The Road to Richmond* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1939), 95; Daniel Brown to his brother, Sept. 18, 1863, Letters of D. Brown, MHS.

22. Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 116.
23. Levi Perry to his mother, Sept. 2, 1863, Perry Papers, MHS; Albert Manson to his wife, Oct.31 and Dec.3, 1862, Manson Papers, FL.
24. Albert Manson to his wife, April 23, 1863; John J. Pullen, *A Shower of Stars* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966), 26–27. The colonel of Manson's regiment, Mark Wentworth, sent an African American boy home with his wife during the war. The youth's name was Tom Murray. Before becoming a porter, he attended school in Kittery where he was the only African American student.
25. Stuart Martin, *New Pennacook Folks* (Rumford: Martin, 1980), 97–99. The servant, William Thomas, was 13 when he came to Maine in 1865. He worked on Goddard's farm in Andover until he was 25, then bought a small farm nearby. He married a local widow and raised a family. Locals still refer to the area where Goddard lived as "nigger field."
26. From Johnson's published diary, *The Sword of Honor* (Worcester: Blanchard Press, 1906), 27–33. Quotes from 27 and 30.
27. David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 166–167, 221, 234–235, 343–345, and 430.
28. Henry McIntire to Lyman Bolster, Apr. 30, 1862, McIntire Papers, FL.
29. For one example of the view that slavery was less productive see Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (New York: Random House, 1967), 43–51. For view that it may have been at least as productive as free labor see Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Random House, 1956), 399–401.
30. H. Draper Hunt, ed., *Dearest Father: The Civil War Letters of Lt. Frank Dickerson, A Son Of Belfast, Maine* (Unity: North Country Press, 1992), 96. This volume is reviewed by Elwood Watson in *Maine History* (Winter-Spring 1995), 219–220.
31. Charles Barnard to his wife, Aug. 30, Oct.2, and Nov. 23, 1862, Barnard Papers, MHS.
32. Mark Waterman to his wife, Jan. 3, 1863, Waterman Papers.
33. For a detailed and thoroughly researched military history of Chamberlain's 20th Maine and their exploits at Gettysburg see Thomas A. Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine: The 20th Maine and the Gettysburg Campaign* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995.)
34. Alice Trulock, *In the Hands of Providence: Joshua Chamberlain and the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 59, 60, 83, 315, and 352–3. While Michael Shaara's novel *Killer Angels* and the movie *Gettysburg* attribute abolitionist motives to Chamberlain, Trulock's extensive research turned up no such evidence.
35. Diary of Leander Cram, Oct. 3 and Nov. 13, 1861, July 15–20, July 29, and Aug.27, 1862. Cram Papers, MHS.
36. Meshack Larry to his sister, Feb. 16 and Aug. 7, 1863.
37. John Sheahan to his father, Oct.14, 1862, and to his father and sister, Sept.22, 1862, Sheahan Papers, MHS.
38. For Douglass' actions after Lincoln sanctioned African American soldiers see William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Norton, 1991), 217–37.
39. Chandler Perry to his wife, July 19, 1861, Perry Papers. Approximately 186,000 black troops fought for the Union. For discussion of their exploits see James McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), or Dudley Cornish, *The Sable Arm* (New York: Norton, 1966). The story of the 54th Massachusetts and their assault on Fort Wagner is portrayed superbly in the 1989 film *Glory*.
40. Hunt, *Hamlin*, 163; Donald, *Lincoln*, 430. Hamlin's son Cyrus was among the whites who told Lincoln they would gladly lead African American troops, and he subsequently did.
41. Diary of Leander Cram, Nov. 9, 1862.
42. No figure is readily available for how many white Maine soldiers became officers of black regiments. From a sample included in Joseph T. Glatthar's *Forged in Battle: The Civil War*

- Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 265–66, it can be estimated that approximately four hundred white Maine soldiers served as officers of black regiments.
43. Arnold H. Sturtevant, ed., *Josiah Volunteered* (Farmington: Knowlton and McLeary, 1977), 85; David M. Gold, "Frustrated Glory: John Francis Appleton and Black Soldiers in the Civil War," *Maine History* (Summer 1991), 174–204.
 44. Beverly Kallgren, ed., *"Dear Friend Anna": The Civil War Letters of a Common Soldier From Maine* (Orono: UMaine Press, 1992), 79–80.
 45. *"Dear Friend Anna"*, 135.
 46. Bell Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952); Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Viking, 1988). In researching his classic study, Wiley visited the Maine Historical Society and read the letters of three soldiers featured in this study—Sheahan, Barnard, and Larry.
 47. Mitchell, *Soldiers*, 14; Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 40, 115–117.
 48. Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 109, 113–115.
 49. Mitchell, *Soldiers*, 91, 119; McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, appendix A. According to the census of 1860, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa all had lower African American percentages of population than Maine, and Vermont had about the same percentage. Maine's percentage was about one-fifth of one percent. For an interesting discussion of African American culture in New England, see William Pierson's *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: UMass Press, 1988).
 50. Mitchell, *Soldiers*, 131, 101–2, 127. James Robertson also concludes that most white Union soldiers accepted emancipation as a war measure, in *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia: USC Press, 1988), 11.
 51. Ruth Silliker, ed., *The Rebel Yell and the Yankee Hurrah* (Camden: Down East Books, 1985), 45, 273. Reid Mitchell argues that brutality towards blacks by Union soldiers was not only due to prejudice or racism. It was to some extent an outlet for hostilities common during an experience as violent as war. It was also reflective of the white soldiers' sense that blacks were the root cause of the war. See Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 123.
 52. *The Rebel Yell*, 163, 180–1, 60.
 53. *The Rebel Yell*, 204.
 54. Northern soldiers attitudes about the Union included strong feelings about how their families benefitted from its preservation. See the author's "Blending Loyalties: Maine Soldiers Respond to the Civil War," *Maine History* 35 (Winter-Spring 1996), 124–139. For Northern soldiers' relations with their families in general see Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).