

The War Was You and Me

CIVILIANS IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR



Joan E. Cashin, Editor

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON AND OXFORD

Chapter 13

On the Border: White Children and the Politics of War in Maryland

PETER W. BARDAGLIO

❖ HISTORIANS in recent years have explored the ideological awareness of Civil War soldiers, challenging the older view that they cared little about political and constitutional questions. Many of the combatants, according to this new scholarship, were very conscious of the issues at stake and interested in them. Whether fighting to preserve the Union created by the founders of the republic or fighting for freedom from what they considered to be a tyrannical and intrusive central government, these soldiers knew what they were struggling for.¹

What about the children of the Civil War? Historians have just begun to examine the extent to which boys and girls in the North and South knew what this conflict was all about and whether they felt they had a stake in the outcome. These new studies explore how children participated in the struggle, not just as victims or spectators but as political actors who joined in the mobilization of the home fronts and who fought in the military. This pathbreaking work, however, has paid little attention to the distinctive experience of youngsters in the border states.²

The following essay will investigate how the fractious character of public life in wartime Maryland shaped the experiences of boys and girls who lived in divided families and communities. In particular, it will examine how white children, mostly from literate middle- and upper-class families, responded to the question of loyalty to the Union.

As a border state, Maryland experienced unique pressures during the Civil War era. Most Northern states took up the cause of Unionism with enthusiasm. But ambiguity characterized the border states, and their citizens debated and ultimately fought out issues of loyalty. Slave states like Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky felt the secession crisis and the outbreak of war with particular force. Sharing a stake in the peculiar institution with seceding states in the South, but possessing industrial and commercial interests that linked them to the North, the border states dreaded the prospect of a civil war being fought on their soil. What was the best course to take?³

The perilous choices of loyalty that confronted white Marylanders focused attention on the constitutional and political issues at the heart of the secession crisis and the war that followed. Children experienced the fluidity and intensity of the fierce debates as well as adults, and we need to better understand how these youngsters connected to and participated in these disputes.⁴ Families, especially parents, played an important role in shaping the political attitudes and behavior of these boys and girls, but this does not mean that children were politicized against their wills. On the contrary, many youngsters in Maryland demonstrated a striking eagerness to enter the political fray and act on their convictions in ways that ranged from the trivial to the profound. Their lived experience contradicted the sentimental ideal of childhood as protected and dependent, an ideal that dominated middle-class culture in the United States by the mid-nineteenth century.⁵

Freud was undoubtedly right to stress the decisive impact of childhood on an individual's sexual development, but these early years also have a critical influence on one's political outlook and behavior. Conflict has an especially strong impact on the political socialization of children. Because youngsters tend to view issues in dualistic terms, when they live in what one scholar calls "contested regimes," they tend to see their own group as "all good" and the opposition as "all bad." Growing up in a world of conflict leads both boys and girls to believe that conflict is normal and acceptable, and thus creates the conditions for its reproduction.⁶ How did white children who lived in a border state split by political polarization respond to the debates over secession and war? To what extent did the political struggles of these years perpetuate themselves as these youngsters came of age and took on positions of leadership?

The tumultuous political events of the mid-nineteenth century exposed and exacerbated fault lines in Maryland that lay just below the surface. Secession and the formation of the Confederacy compelled this mid-Atlantic society as well as Kentucky and Missouri to recognize that there was no more room for compromise on the pressing questions of the day, such as slavery, that they had worked so hard to finesse. While many politicians tried to cling to a fast disappearing Unionist center, secessionist slaveholders, slaves, and other residents of the border states took up increasingly polarized positions, obliterating any middle ground. In Maryland mob violence led federal troops to occupy Baltimore and Annapolis and to take control of the railroads. Political debate after 1861 became increasingly shrill as Unionists accused Democrats of treason and Democrats attacked Unionists for trampling on their constitutional liberties. By May 1862, Marylanders had joined regiments in the opposing armies and had faced each other in combat.⁷

Caught in a tightening vise between North and South when the war broke out, white elites reacted with resentment and anger, sensing that they had lost control of their destiny. As Allen Bowie Davis of Montgomery County wrote his fifteen-year-old son at school on April 16, 1861, "Our beloved Country is now involved in Civil War—the most horrible of all national contests, and God only knows where it will end." Portraying Marylanders as "innocent victims of the wicked and insane slavery agitation between the North and the South," Davis lamented what he perceived to be the state's dilemma: "We have not provoked the contest and cannot rightfully be made parties to it—but I fear we cannot escape its consequences." Urging his son to avoid embroilment in the conflict, Davis pleaded with him not "to become too much excited upon the subject so as to let [sic] it interfere with your studies and the advantages you *now* have."⁸ Of course, by issuing such a caution Davis recognized the potential that his son might become—in fact, probably would become—caught up in the political controversies erupting throughout the state.

That Davis had good reason to worry about the possibility of his son becoming politically entangled in the debate over Maryland's relationship to the Union became clear three days later when the Sixth Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment sought to pass through Baltimore on its way to defend Washington. A crowd attacked the soldiers, who opened fire, and in the riot that followed four soldiers and at least a dozen civilians died in the first bloodshed of the Civil War. Mob violence was nothing new in Baltimore; throughout the 1850s young gang members who called themselves Plug Uglies, Rip Raps, and Butt Enders indulged in hard drinking and attacks on political rivals at polling places. Although such conflict between the Know-Nothings and German and Irish immigrants had become a staple of the urban scene, never before had the violence involved federal troops. Besides the sixteen deaths that April, many more were wounded before the confrontation ended.⁹ Among the rioters, at least initially, was another fifteen-year-old boy, Ernest Wardwell.

Wardwell recalled years later how the war transformed his life. On the streets the morning of April 19 newsboys hawked their papers, shouting "all about the Yankee invaders" who were coming to pillage our city." According to Wardwell, as he walked to school, "Everybody seemed full of patriotic fire, and warlike sentiment ran high. Knots of men, some of them carrying guns and pistols, hurried through the streets, and gave vent to loud expressions of vengeance against the 'Northern Scum.'" Wardwell and his schoolmates worked themselves into such a fevered state of excitement in the classrooms that the principal dismissed the students and ordered them to proceed home immediately.

Despite this command, Wardwell and his friend Henry Cook took matters into their own hands; leaving the school, they raced off to investigate the crowd gathering at the President Street depot. Arriving on the scene, Wardwell admitted that "at first I was paralyzed with fear, but only momentarily as I caught the frenzy and became as noisy as the others." Although his father was from Massachusetts, Wardwell had grown up in Maryland, spending much of his childhood in the mountains of the western part of the state before being sent to school in Baltimore. He and Cook became part of a mob that chased the soldiers through the city "like a vociferous army of howling wolves." Impressed by the restrained response of the Sixth Massachusetts in the face of the violent crowd, however, and perhaps feeling the influence of his father's political heritage, Wardwell underwent a change of heart. Grabbing a fallen soldier's rifle, he fell in with the ranks of the Union army making their way to Camden Station, where he joined the troops boarding a train for Washington. "I could in reality no longer claim to be a school-boy," Wardwell observed, "for I was armed with a gun and had been in a battle in which I had espoused both sides, and was now travelling at railroad speed to defend the National Capitol."¹⁰

Each of the two armies had recruitment policies that prohibited boys from joining and fighting. At the start of the war, for example, the Union stipulated that a recruit had to be at least eighteen years old. But a tall and older looking fifteen-year-old like Wardwell could easily pass in the rush to form a unit, bluffing his way past the recruiting sergeant.¹¹ Rash as his behavior may have seemed, Wardwell was not simply fulfilling a childhood dream to enter the military. Although obviously attracted by the pomp and circumstance of martial rituals, his experience in the Baltimore riot convinced him of the necessity of fighting on the Union side. Determined to overcome any objections to his enlistment on account of his age, Wardwell insisted, "If I was not old enough to march in the ranks I would begin as a 'drummer boy' — but soldier of some kind I would be, and that too for the 'star spangled flag' and the preservation of the Union." Wardwell completed his three-month enlistment with the Sixth Massachusetts and then signed on with the Twenty-Sixth Massachusetts, reaching the rank of captain by the end of the war in 1865.¹²

Although other boys besides Wardwell signed up with the Northern army, pro-Confederate sentiment remained widespread among Baltimore youth during the early years of the war. As the spring of 1861 unfolded into summer, the federal government tightened its control over Maryland in general and Baltimore in particular. Union soldiers set up camp in Patterson Park and along the railroads into the city. Other military preparations in the city included strengthening the defenses at

Fort McHenry as well as digging fortifications and installing cannon on Federal Hill. The Federals also seized weapons and ammunition destined for the Confederacy, prohibited meetings of men carrying arms without proper permission, and banned the display of secessionist flags and banners.¹³

The activities of pro-Confederate youngsters, who stepped up their harassment of Union soldiers and other demonstrations of their political loyalties, attracted the attention of authorities in Baltimore. On June 26, the day before General Nathaniel P. Banks declared martial law in the city, Dr. Samuel Harrison noted in his diary that secessionist parents had been encouraging their children to taunt the Northern troops; he "strongly suspect [ed]" that this constant show of disrespect, among other signs of continuing support for the Confederacy, would lead to a government crackdown.¹⁴

Of course, Harrison was right. The imposition of martial law in Baltimore, however, did not stop parents and their children — both girls and boys — from taking to the streets and voicing their pro-Confederate sympathies. Traveling through Baltimore at the beginning of July, William H. Russell, a British journalist, observed that displays of dissent could be viewed throughout the city despite the vigorous show of arms by the Union forces. "At the corners of the streets strong guards of soldiers were posted," Russell wrote, "and patrols moved up and down the thoroughfares." The police appointed by the federal authorities, in particular, waged "a small war" against women and children who exhibited "much ingenuity in expressing their animosity to the Stars and Stripes." According to Russell, for example, not only the girls but also their dolls were dressed in the Confederate colors, and women wore ribbons and bows to match.¹⁵

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the Fourth of July celebrations in Baltimore that year were muted. As the *Baltimore Republican* put it, "Instead of the happy smiling faces, we have been accustomed to meet at every step, heretofore upon this memorable day, gloom and sadness was depicted upon almost every countenance." Although the civilians left the city streets nearly deserted, the newspaper informed its readers that a contingent of about seventy or eighty boys "clad in red shirts and caps," bearing a crepe-paper Confederate flag, paraded into a Union encampment at Beecham's Hill. According to the *Republican*, "The little fellows marched around and about the camp with impunity, giving free expression to their preference for 'Jeff.'"¹⁶ The newspaper account may well have reflected a more general ambivalence on the part of adults in Baltimore to such actions by children. The condescension implicit in the term "little fellows" seemed to suggest that their political demonstration should not be taken seriously. The

editors, however, obviously took the protest seriously enough to report on it. Why not ignore the matter entirely if these children could have no political impact whatsoever?

Like the Confederate soldiers they sought to emulate, the Baltimore youths who marched on Beecham's Hill expressed their conviction that the war involved a struggle between liberty and tyranny. Harrison, for one, dismissed the political actions of children and women alike, arguing that they were "not considered responsible" for their behavior.¹⁷ By the end of the summer, however, the political agitation of these two groups had become such a source of irritation to authorities in Baltimore that General John A. Dix, Banks's replacement, not only prohibited the display of the Confederate flag, but also banned women and children from wearing red and white ribbons or flowers, symbols of the Confederacy.¹⁸ On September 4, Dix reported to General George B. McClellan that his campaign against public expressions of support for the Confederacy had been successful. "No secession flag has to the knowledge of police been exhibited in Baltimore for many weeks, except a small paper flag displayed by a child from an upper window," he wrote McClellan, assuring him that even in this case the offensive object was immediately confiscated. Outraged by these latest actions, Harrison declared that "no sensible man can defend this petty tyranny."¹⁹

On the Unionist side, parents, teachers, and other adults actively tried to politicize children, enlisting them in the effort to win the minds and hearts of other Marylanders. A number of boys and girls, for example, participated in flag presentations to federal troops. These rituals occurred frequently in 1861 as Unionist women organized patriotic activities in the city that included children.²⁰ On September 28, thirty-four "young misses," all dressed in white and decked out in red, white, and blue sashes, participated in such a ceremony, representing the number of states in the Union before the Civil War. Also present were thirty-four boys outfitted in Zouave costumes.²¹ The nationalist symbolism adopted by these young Marylanders could hardly have been more blatant.

Children also took part in one of Baltimore's most dramatic displays of Unionist loyalty: the 1864 Maryland State Fair for U.S. Soldier Relief. Organized by women primarily from the Baltimore area, the fair sought to raise funds for the U.S. Sanitary and the U.S. Christian Commissions, the two most prominent national relief organizations for the Northern armed forces. Other cities such as Chicago, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia successfully mounted similar events. These cities, however, did not have to produce a fair in the midst of a population divided into Unionist and Confederate factions.

The memory of the 1861 riot was still raw, and the female organizers of the Baltimore Sanitary Fair, as it was commonly known, were intent

on using the occasion not only to solicit donations but also to bolster the city's image by giving Unionists in the state an opportunity to express their patriotism. On the eve of the third anniversary of the April 19 violence, and in the middle of an election year, President Lincoln came to Baltimore to speak at the fair's opening. His presence had particular symbolic significance for Maryland Unionists, sending as it did a strong message about his confidence in the city's national loyalty.²²

Among the many exhibits at the Maryland Institute, site of the fair, was the Children's Table. This display, which involved the sale of children's clothing as well as dolls and toys, raised over \$700. According to the fair's privately printed souvenir newspaper, *The New Era*, residents of Plymouth, Massachusetts, provided many of the toys for the Children's Table, a much appreciated gesture of reconciliation in light of the attack on the Sixth Massachusetts during the 1861 riot. Youngsters from the Baltimore area helped out at the exhibit, gaining recognition from the fair's newspaper for their work. "The children have been uniting in their efforts," declared *The New Era*, adding that "the success of the table has been greatly owing to them."²³

Besides assisting at the Children's Table, boys and girls exhibited drawings in the hall outside the fee-for-admission fine arts gallery on the third floor of the Maryland Institute. On April 29, seven hundred children attended the fair, accompanied by twelve of their teachers. As an expression of their patriotism, about sixty of the pupils came dressed in West Point uniforms. The Unionist demonstration made a vivid impression on those who witnessed it. "It was a glorious sight to see these little ones lending a helping hand to the Union cause," commented *The New Era*. If Lincoln had been present for this display, he surely would have thought of his own sons Tad and Willie, who paraded around the White House trying to issue orders to the guards.²⁴

Working alongside their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and older sisters, children who participated in the Baltimore Sanitary Fair must have derived a genuine sense of satisfaction from their contributions to the fundraising event. Attendance at the fair was undoubtedly a welcome change of pace for youngsters in Civil War Baltimore. The anxiety about fathers and brothers who had gone off to fight, the daily sight of ambulances packed with wounded soldiers making their way through the streets, the stress of living in an inflationary wartime economy: these were troubles that could be temporarily forgotten amidst the bustle and entertainment of the fair.²⁵ The event, in short, offered Baltimore children a way to enjoy themselves and contribute to the Unionist effort at the same time.

As the example of the Sanitary Fair demonstrates, women as well as men played a significant role in the politicization of children. Although

prohibited from voting or holding office, women participated in the politics of the Civil War, attending rallies, circulating petitions, joining voluntary associations, writing letters, and engaging in other activities to express their views.²⁶ Their actions, whether they were parents, teachers, or neighbors, had a deep impact on the growing political consciousness of the children around them. Lizette Woodworth Reese, whose family moved to Baltimore towards the end of the war, recalled years later the stories that two of her teachers told her when she was a high school student in the city. One of them, an instructor in mathematics, had refused to take a required loyalty oath during the war and had been barred from teaching in the city schools. Military authorities had arrested another teacher, according to Reese, "for using high-spirited language—officially treasonable—to a Union soldier whom she considered impertinent." "With what awe I looked upon these women!" Reese exclaimed, seeing in them models of strong-minded individuals who insisted on holding their own opinions and speaking their minds.²⁷

The correspondence between Madge Preston and her thirteen-year-old daughter May reveals another way in which women shaped the political outlook of children. The Prestons, a well-off Baltimore family, divided their time between a townhouse in the city and a farm southeast of Towson town. When Madge and her husband William decided in 1862 to send May to St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, the mother and daughter began a correspondence that continued for the next five years. Besides news from home, Madge's letters included discussions of the latest political controversies and the progress of the war. The Prestons supported the Confederate cause, and Madge's account of events plainly reflected this viewpoint. Angered by the federal crackdown on political dissent in Maryland, she attacked "the tyranny of the present government." When a squad of Union cavalry came through the Prestons' Baltimore County property looking for draftees who refused to report for duty, Madge wrote May a detailed account of her efforts to provide the soldiers with as little helpful information as possible. "Is it not shameful that the quiet of one's home should be thus disturbed," she asked, "and men in the peaceful pursuit of their daily avocations ruthlessly carried off to fight the battles of a cause in which they have no sympathy and indeed are altogether opposed to?" Madge put a Confederate flag in one of the packages she sent off to school, a symbol of the shared political sentiments that bound mother and daughter together during this uneasy time. In contrast to the outspoken tone of her letters, however, Madge warned May to "be cautious in the use" she made of the flag and advised her not to "let it be the cause of unpleasantness between you and any of your young companions, or of disobedience and punishment between you and your teachers."²⁸

By and large, the Civil War did not dramatically alter the Prestons' daily routine. Certainly, they had to endure the squeeze of wartime inflation and the scarcity of goods, but these difficulties constituted the bulk of the hardships they faced. Other Maryland families, less fortunate, found themselves directly in the path of combat. For the children caught between opposing military forces, the sense of uncertainty and vulnerability created enormous anxiety. Lizette Reese, whose teachers made such an impression on her when she moved to Baltimore, lived out on York Road north of the city for most of the war. She retained stark memories of the times when she and her younger sisters were so frightened that they did not want to go to bed at night. "Down the pike-road was quartered a company of blue-coated soldiers, within sound of a call from our front gate," she remembered. Further up the highway were the Confederate raiders who regularly dashed down to harass the Union troops and then melted away into the surrounding countryside. As Reese put it, "Between the blue forces and the gray we were ground between two millstones of terror."²⁹

The descent of troops on a town or village could inflict fear and hardship enough, but children in a border state like Maryland had to deal with the added burden of mixed allegiances among their neighbors and relatives. The stress and confusion that girls and boys experienced as they tried to sort out their place in this treacherous political landscape could be psychologically and emotionally draining. One false step and disaster could result. Reese's experiences of growing up in a politically divided community illustrated the predicaments that faced many Maryland children during these years. "Neighbor looked askance at neighbor," she recounted. "Politics, which had been fearlessly public, became an entirely private affair, to be discussed behind drawn curtains and well-locked doors." The young girl's parents hid a portrait of General Beauregard in a walnut wardrobe, and her cousin made small, red and white flags to be pinned on women's underwear. The caution was well advised, as her family learned the hard way. Reese's grandfather, a fervent supporter of states' rights and secession, became the target of an arrest warrant for his outspoken views. The Union soldiers who set out to find him, however, ended up at the wrong house, that of a son-in-law who was, in Reese's words, "an obstinate abolitionist." When he assured the troops that the suspected father-in-law had a son in the Union army, which was true, they left without a prisoner.³⁰

Like their urban counterparts, youngsters in the Maryland countryside found effective ways to declare their political sympathies. When General Stonewall Jackson led his men through the western part of the state in September 1862, they met a very mixed response from the local populace, who displayed both Confederate and Union colors. As the

Southern troops passed through Middletown, "two very pretty girls" rushed up to Jackson's men wearing red, white, and blue ribbons in their hair and carrying Union flags. According to one of Jackson's staff officers, Henry Kyd Douglas, the girls laughed and "waved their colors defiantly in the face of the general. He bowed and lifted his cap and with a quiet smile said to his staff, 'We evidently have no friends in this town.'³¹ When Confederate cavalry rode into Hagerstown just before the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, they encountered a similar reaction from one of the children. "A little boy stood at the corner waving a U.S. flag while the confederates were there," noted Joseph H. Coit, an Episcopal clergyman.³² Such bold and even dangerous gestures revealed the extent to which the war in Maryland politicized even its youngest residents by 1863.

Thirteen-year-old Margaret Mehring also experienced a surge of Unionism when the Confederate army marched through Maryland. Mehring, who attended a boarding school at a church in New Windsor, kept a diary during the days leading up to and including the battle at Gettysburg, which erupted on July 1, just across the Pennsylvania border. Although the diary may have been a school assignment, it allowed Mehring to exercise at least some control over her situation by providing her with a way to express her opinions about the momentous military and political events taking place.

The girl's writings reveal the apprehension she felt as news of the approaching Confederate troops reached the small town in north-central Maryland. On June 15, hearing that the Southern forces were near Frederick, Mehring sounded the first note of anxiety. "I do not want to be away from home when the rebels are in Maryland," she wrote. Noticeably relieved four days later when it became apparent that the invading soldiers were confining themselves to stealing horses as they made their way through the state, Mehring recovered her caustic sense of humor, a resource that she frequently drew upon to keep her wits about her. She observed that horse theft was "a piece of art which they [the Confederates] appear to be very near perfect in and one that I think is a pretty occupation for the much boasted Southern Chivalry to be engaged in but then I suppose that they entertain the very good idea that exercise is necessary to health."³³

The presence of the Confederate army in Maryland and Pennsylvania dispelled whatever doubts Mehring might have had about the Unionist cause. Reacting to a rumor on June 23 that fifty thousand "Rebels" had arrived at Gettysburg, she announced, "I hope they will meet a warm reception from Pennsylvania in the shape of balls for *taking the trouble and liberty of calling on them without an invitation*." In contrast, when the Union cavalry rode into New Windsor a week later, Mehring wel-

comed the troops with open arms. "They were dressed very nicely and rode handsome horses," she recalled. "It was a beautiful sight, for the moon shone so brilliantly that one could almost imagine it was day and the horseman riding six and eight abreast with their swords clattering while cheer after cheer rent the air." Clearly relieved at the arrival of Union soldiers, the teenaged girl insisted that the feeling was mutual: "They all said that they never felt happier than when they set foot on Maryland soil."

By the time the Battle of Gettysburg actually began, Mehring had grown used to the constant reports that "the rebels are coming." In her words, such rumors had "almost ceased to cause an extr pulsation of the heart." Almost casually, she remarked, "We heard the cannon booming very distinctly last night and it is supposed that there is a battle going on between Littlestown and Gettysburg." There was one aspect of war, however, that Mehring could not get accustomed to: the killing. "There was another soldier buried in the Presbyterian graveyard beside of the first one," she wrote on July 6, shortly after the Gettysburg conflagration had ended and Lee's army had been forced to retreat back across the Potomac River. "It seemed hard to see him buried among strangers an by strange hands no friend to follow him to the grave or weep over his untimely end." Expressing the feelings of many Marylanders in the summer of 1863, both adults and children, Mehring cried out, in the words of a popular song, "*Oh when will this cruel war be over*." Many children in the nineteenth century witnessed the deaths of family members in the home, but the mass slaughter of these years had a deep emotional impact on Mehring and other youngsters.³⁴

The Civil War in Maryland disrupted not only Mehring's school but also institutions of learning throughout the state. Scrambling to adjust to the rapidly shifting conditions, those schools that could not meet the challenge were forced to close their doors. Although economic and military factors proved most critical, political dynamics also affected their operation as they became battlegrounds for clashing opinions among students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Political differences between young Unionists and secessionists at St. Anthony's Orphanage in Baltimore sparked constant quarrels and scuffles at recess. The sisters at St. Joseph's Academy, the Catholic girls' school that May Preston attended, banned the singing of political songs in an attempt to preserve order among the students.³⁵

Perhaps the most remarkable example of how the politics of war disrupted Maryland schools can be found at the College of St. James, an Episcopal preparatory school for teenaged boys near Hagerstown. A series of stunning incidents took place there during the war that ulti-

mately split the community beyond repair. During the public declamation exercises in January 1861, several of the students gave speeches in support of the Union, leading Rev. John B. Kerfoot, the head of the school, to issue a ban on discussions of "any political topics" in their essays and orations. The highly charged climate at St. James, which attracted many students from Southern states, also convinced the rector to postpone a series of fund-raising trips. Kerfoot, who opposed secession, remarked to his close friend William G. Harrison that he decided to remain on campus because "[a]ny day's news might stir the young blood bitterly."³⁶

Despite attempts to clamp down on political expression at St. James, the headstrong boys continued to make their views known, engaging in what clearly constituted acts of civil disobedience. In April 1862, Kerfoot read a series of prayers at Sunday service composed by Bishop William R. Whittingham in accordance with President Lincoln's proclamation for a day of thanksgiving. About twenty students "rose and left the chapel in a body" before the rector had finished. Distressed by the protest, Kerfoot asked the bishop not to require such prayers in the future. When Lincoln declared a National Fast Day the following April, the rector sought to avoid another incident at St. James. He announced that those boys "who had 'conscientious' scruples about attending chapel on that day, might remain away and spend their time, if they so preferred, in the study of Latin, Greek and mathematics."³⁷ Kerfoot's gesture reflected his recognition that the students had become deeply immersed in Civil War politics and that their feelings had to be respected.

The invasion of Confederate troops in the days leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863 marked a turning point in the life of St. James. During the first invasion of Maryland in September 1862, students had not arrived on campus yet. As bloody as it was, the Battle of Antietam had little impact on the school beyond postponing the opening from September 24 to November 12.³⁸ In 1863, however, the school was in session and the effect of Confederate soldiers passing through the grounds of St. James was electrifying. A cavalry unit dashed across the campus just after tea on June 15 and, according to one of the teachers, "[t]he boys rushed to meet them—cheering and waving their hats." Until now, the students had confined the expression of their political beliefs to words and acts of protest. The arrival of Southern troops, however, inspired a more radical response among those who supported secession; next morning eight of the boys went off to join the Confederates. "We felt then," Kerfoot said, "that the crisis was on us." Determined to put a stop to the efforts at enlistment, in his words, the rector "plainly, strongly, reproved" in the chapel that same morning those who had cheered the appearance of the cavalry and those who had left

the school to join them. Most of the boys who ran off returned to the school within a few days, but the damage had been done: the military conflict was no longer a distant, abstract event. The war created a rupture in the community that could never be patched up, despite Kerfoot's contention in a letter to Bishop Whittingham that "[w]ork went on pretty well; no disorder." During General Jubal Early's raid in the following summer, the Confederates arrested Kerfoot and Joseph Coit, one of the instructors at St. James, in retaliation for the capture of Rev. Hunter Boyd of Winchester, Virginia, by Union troops. Kerfoot's arrest and the increasing financial difficulties of the school led to its closing in September 1864.³⁹

The struggle between the North and South, then, marked a crucial baptism by fire for Maryland children. The hothouse atmosphere of wartime politics fueled antagonisms in the state that had a profound influence on the white boys and girls within its borders, and their political activities reflected and reinforced the deep rifts that developed. Secessionist youths marched in gangs around Baltimore, displaying their pro-Confederate sympathies and hurling insults at Union troops. Other children participated in Unionist causes such as soldier relief and flag presentations, throwing their support behind a very different set of political beliefs. Some teenagers, like Frank Wardwell and the boys at St. James, took up arms and joined the military struggle. Of those youngsters who lived through the war, few remained unaffected by the experience.

What lessons did children who grew up in Maryland during the 1860s learn as a result of their participation in the politics of war? To what extent did the political polarization of these years extend past the war's end? The story of Henry White suggests one possibility. White was three years old when his father died in 1853. The boy spent much of his childhood at Hampton, a plantation estate outside of Baltimore where his mother's family, the Ridgelys, had lived since the 1780s. According to White, intense arguments constantly erupted at Hampton about secession and the war. As he observed, "[H]ardly a day passed that I did not hear one or more such discussions, during which the parties thereto frequently lost their tempers, and ended, some of them, by not speaking to each other." Friends of his grandparents would come to Hampton and "describe the Southern Army as though they were all a band of saints; mostly on their knees at prayer when they were not fighting." Others would tell White a very different story: "[T]he Northern Army were the patriots, and the Southerners were drunkards, and young aristocrats, who for want of something better to do, took to fighting."⁴⁰

Feelings ran high not just among neighbors but among White's family. His grandmother Ridgely believed so fervently in the Confederacy

that she would not let his mother attend the wedding of old friends because of their Northern sympathies. The stress of the war, White contended, had led to a stroke that took his grandmother's life in 1867. The political conflicts of these years left White, who went on to a distinguished career as a diplomat under five American presidents, with "painful recollections" and "a horror of war in general throughout my life." "It brings out all that is worst in human nature, causes friends of a lifetime to become enemies, to be suspicious of each other's patriotism," he contended. "I have never been able to see its advantages from any point of view." White's experience of living on the border during the Civil War, in short, underscored for him the importance of compromise, of finding a middle way. Indeed, his commitment to this approach brought him to the Paris Conference at the end of World War I, where he participated in one of the greatest negotiations of modern times.⁴¹

We have no way of knowing for certain how many Marylanders in White's generation shared his faith in what a leading historian of the state calls the "middle temperament."⁴² If the findings of contemporary political sociologists can serve as a guide, a significant number of youngsters in the border state probably adopted a dualistic view of the world during the Civil War, one that sharply divided the political terrain between supporters and enemies and that demonstrated little tolerance for the legitimacy of opposing opinions. For these children, borders meant a line drawn in the sand rather than a place to meet and engage in a productive exchange of views. The extent to which this vision of politics persisted after the war, however, is open to question.

Certainly, politics remained contentious as Republican Unionists and Democrats debated issues such as Reconstruction policies, registration procedures and requirements for voting, black civil and political rights, and public education. African Americans in Baltimore and in southern Maryland voted in large numbers for the party of Lincoln. Although in the northern and western counties white Republicans continued to support the cause of civil rights for blacks, racial fears and memories of the war in other parts of the state compelled the majority of white Maryland voters to back the Democratic party. Especially during close political contests Democrats resorted to race-baiting to secure victory. Fraud and violence marked the election of 1875 in Baltimore, where observers reported widespread ballot stuffing, shooting incidents, and near riots. Police arrested 209 people that day, divided about equally between whites and blacks.⁴³

Besides political and racial conflict, industrial strife marked the post-war years. The Great Railway Strike of 1877, which began at Camden Junction outside Baltimore and quickly spread along the rail lines of the Baltimore and Ohio, resulted in a week of violence in the city until

federal troops marched in to reestablish order. The bloody confrontation of labor and management during this insurrection must have reminded many citizens of the divisions that had split them into two camps during the Civil War. Democratic Governor John Lee Carroll, who invited the federal troops in to quell the labor protests, insisted that the workers' actions threatened "subversion of all government" and, if left unchecked, would have led to "national insurrection."⁴⁴

Following the turmoil of the Reconstruction era that culminated with the 1877 strike, white Marylanders moved to heal old wounds in the body politic. In the wake of the chaos that they had witnessed growing up, the predominant impulse of those who took over political leadership after Reconstruction was to establish stability and order in the state, not to perpetuate conflict. This new harmony came at a high cost, leading to both a segregated society and "a segregated historical memory." By the 1880s, however, national reconciliation among whites was well under way and "a culture of healing and unity" had emerged.⁴⁵ The Maryland legislature in 1888 contributed to the effort at reconciliation with two measures recognizing the sacrifices of soldiers on both sides of the Civil War: it handed over a former federal arsenal to a group that planned to transform the building and grounds into a home for elderly Confederate veterans, and it approved funding for Union monuments at Gettysburg. "The suspicions, the bitterness, the animosities necessarily engendered by a protracted Civil War," proclaimed Colonel James C. Mullikin at one of the dedication ceremonies that October, "have departed our state never to return."⁴⁶

The product of wishful thinking more than careful observation, Mullikin's remarks about the end of sectional bitterness reflected the desire of Maryland whites to put the conflicts of the past behind them. For the generation that had come of age during the war itself, though, doing so was no easy matter. Henry White, in his urgent need to pursue a career dedicated to negotiation and diplomacy, embodied the extent to which the violence and political hostilities of these years in Maryland had left an indelible mark on his generation. However different the paths they followed after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, White and the other children of the Civil War always measured their lives by the standard of what they experienced during this searing event.

Notes

I want to express my appreciation to Robert Schoeberlein of the Maryland Historical Society, who proved a patient and accomplished guide to the society's library and archives as well as to the complexities of Maryland's experience in the Civil War. I would also like to thank Jean Baker for her careful critique of an

early version of this paper and Jane Turner Censer for her astute comments at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in Chicago in March 1996, where I first presented my findings. A fellowship at the National Humanities Center during the academic year 1999–2000, supported by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, allowed me to carry out further research and to expand and revise the essay. Finally, I am grateful to James Marten and Joan Cashin, whose thoughtful readings of the revamped paper improved it even further.

1. Recent studies of Civil War soldiers include Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York, 1987); Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Their Experiences* (New York, 1988); Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York, 1993); James McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge, 1994); James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, 1997); Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence, Kans., 1997); Joseph Allan Frank, *With Ballot and Bayonet: The Political Socialization of American Civil War Soldiers* (Athens, Ga., 1998). For older views, see Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis, 1943; reprint, Baton Rouge, 1970); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis, 1952; reprint, Baton Rouge, 1971).

2. Important studies of children's lives during the Civil War include James Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill, 1998); Emmy E. Werner, *Reluctant Witnesses: Children's Voices from the Civil War* (Boulder, Colo., 1998); Peter W. Bardaglio, "The Children of Jubilee: African-American Childhood in Wartime," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York, 1992), 213–29; Elizabeth Daniels, "The Children of Gettysburg," *American Heritage* 40 (May–June 1989): 97–107. Marten has also published a valuable collection of material from children's magazines published during the Civil War: *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children's Magazines* (Wilmington, Del., 1999).

3. Phillip Shaw Paludan, "A People's Contest": *The Union and the Civil War, 1861–1865*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 25–26.

4. Elliott West, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque, 1989) has inspired the recent effort among scholars to understand how children have exercised historical agency in the American past. Following West's lead, Marten (*Children's Civil War*, 5) insists that children in the American Civil War should be viewed "not merely as appendages to their parents' experiences" but as individuals who participated in and helped to shape the history of their time.

5. Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London, 1995), 74–78. Review essays on the history of childhood and children include Hugh Cunningham, "Histories of Childhood," *American Historical Review* 103 (October 1998): 1195–1208; Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, "Looking for Waldo: Reflections on the History of Children and Childhood in the Postmodern Era," unpublished paper delivered at the History of Childhood Conference, Washington, D.C., August 2000.

6. Robert Coles, *The Political Life of Children* (Boston, 1987); and Richard M. Metelman, "The Role of Conflict in Children's Political Learning," in *Political Socialization, Citizenship in Education, and Democracy*, ed. Orit Ichilov (New York, 1990), 52–53, 57–58. According to social psychologists and political scientists, the experiences of girls and boys between six and thirteen shape their political values for the rest of their lives. By the age of ten, the political perceptions of most children have developed to the point that they discern disagreements over issues and, in many cases, begin to adopt their own positions on these issues. Besides the studies by Coles and Metelman, significant studies of political socialization among children include Fred I. Greenstein, *Children and Politics*, rev. ed. (New Haven, 1969); David Easton and Jack Dennis, *Children in the Political System: Origins of Political Legitimacy* (New York, 1969); Norman Adler and Charles Harrington, eds., *The Learning of Political Behavior* (Glenview, Ill., 1970); R. W. Connell, *The Child's Construction of Politics* (Melbourne, 1971).

7. Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, 1985), 90–98; Jean H. Baker, *The Politics of Continuity: Maryland Political Parties from 1838 to 1870* (Baltimore, 1973), 47–63; Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore, 1988), 284–87.

8. Allen Bowie Davis to W. Wilkins Davis, April 16, 1861, Allen Bowie Davis Letters, MS. 1511, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland (hereafter MHS). On the age of the Davis boy, see Hester Davis to W. Wilkins Davis, March 30, 1864, Allen Bowie Davis Letters, MS. 1511, MHS.

9. For recent accounts of the Baltimore riot, see Frank Towers, "A Vociferous Army of Howling Wolves: Baltimore's Civil War Riot of April 19, 1861," *Maryland Historian* 23 (Fall/Winter 1992): 1–27; Brugger, *Maryland*, 274–76; and Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 93–94. On political violence before the Civil War, see *ibid.*, 45–47; Jean Baker, *Ambivalent Americans: The Know-Nothing Party in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1977), 121–22.

10. Frank Towers, ed., "A Military Waif: A Sidelight on the Baltimore Riot of 19 April 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 89 (Winter 1994): 429–30, 435.

11. Jim Murphy, *The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk about the Civil War* (New York, 1990), 8; Werner, *Reluctant Witnesses*, 8. As James Marten points out, getting an accurate estimate of underage boys in the Union and Confederate armies is difficult. Murphy and Werner both claim that between 10 and 20 percent of all soldiers in the North and South were underage when they signed up, but neither cites any sources for this statistic. Bell Wiley's sampling of 11,000 Confederate soldiers suggests that about 5 percent were under eighteen. See Marten, *Children's Civil War*, 244n6; Murphy, *Boys' War*, 2; Werner, *Reluctant Witnesses*, 9; and Wiley, *Life of Johnny Reb*, 331.

12. Towers, "A Military Waif," 428, 437–38.

13. Brugger, *Maryland*, 279; Harold R. Manake, *Maryland in the Civil War* (Baltimore, 1961), 50–55.

14. Harrison Journal, June 26, 1861, MHS.

15. William H. Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, 1863), 376.

16. *Baltimore Republican*, July 5, 1861, 2.

17. McPherson, *What They Fought For*, 9-25; and Harrison Journal, June 16, 1861, MHS.
18. Mancke, *Maryland in the Civil War*, 55; Brugger, *Maryland*, 280.
19. Dix to McClellan, September 4, 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), ser. 2, vol. 1, 591; Harrison Journal, September 16, 1861 MHS.
20. Robert W. Schoeberlein, "A Fair to Remember: Maryland Women in Aid of the Union," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 90 (Winter 1995): 470.
21. *Baltimore American*, September 28, 1861.
22. Schoeberlein, "A Fair to Remember," 471, 474-76, 479-80; Brugger, *Maryland*, 290-91; Marten, *Children's Civil War*, 19-20, 180-83.
23. *The New Era*, April 25, 1864.
24. *The New Era*, April 28, 1864, April 29, 1864; James Marten, "Tad and Willie Go to War: Northern Children and the Fight for the Union" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Birmingham, Ala., November 1998).
25. Judith A. Bailey and Robert I. Cotton, eds., *After Chancellorsville: Letters from the Heart: The Civil War Letters of Private Walter G. Dunn and Emma Randolph* (Baltimore, 1998); Richard Ray Duncan, "The Social and Economic Impact of the Civil War on Maryland," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1963), 70-71; Suzanne Ellery Greene Chapelle et al., *Maryland: A History of Its People* (Baltimore, 1986), 167.
26. Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore, 1990), 141-52; George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana, 1989), 39-49, 144-51; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 10-12, 193-94, 210-14; Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1998), 137-77.
27. Lizette Woodworth Reese, *A Victorian Village: Reminiscences of Other Days* (New York, 1929), 83. The Baltimore city council in August 1862 required a loyalty oath of all city officials, employees, and teachers (see Brugger, *Maryland*, 293).
28. Virginia Walcott Beauchamp, "Research Notes and Maryland Miscellany: Madge Preston's Private War," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 82 (Spring 1987): 69; Virginia Walcott Beauchamp, ed., *A Private War: Letters and Diaries of Madge Preston, 1862-1867* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1987), 15, 26, 48. For other examples, see 23, 35.
29. Beauchamp, *A Private War*, xxxii; Reese, *A Victorian Village*, 68.
30. Reese, *A Victorian Village*, 69-71.
31. Quoted in Brugger, *Maryland*, 295.
32. James McLachlan, ed., "The Civil War Diary of Joseph H. Coit," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 60 (September 1965): 259.
33. Margaret Mehring Diary, June 15, June 18, 1863, MHS.
34. Mehring Diary, June 30, July 2, July 6, 1863, MHS; Werner, *Reluctant Witnesses*, 151-52.

35. Richard R. Duncan, "The Impact of the Civil War on Education in Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 61 (March 1966): 37-52; Marten, *Children's Civil War*, 153; Beauchamp, *A Private War*, 75.
36. Hall Harrison, *The Life of the Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot*, 2 vols. (New York, 1886), 1:199-200.
37. *Ibid.*, 1:227-28, 259.
38. *Ibid.*, 1:233-35, 239; Duncan, "Impact of the Civil War," 38.
39. McLachlan, "Civil War Diary," 249-51; Harrison, *Kerfoot*, 1:260, 292-301.
40. Allen Nevins, *Henry White: Thirty Years of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1930), 3-4; "Reminiscences of Henry White," 23, 30, file 2920.002, Hampton National Historic Site, Towson, Maryland. Many thanks to Kent Lancaster for bringing Nevins's book and White's unpublished memoirs to my attention.
41. "Reminiscences of Henry White," 30, 26, 29; Nevins, *Henry White*, 2.
42. Brugger, *Maryland*, x.
43. Baker, *Politics of Continuity*, 164, 173, 181-82, 184; Brugger, *Maryland*, 387; Margaret Law Callcott, *The Negro in Maryland Politics, 1870-1912* (Baltimore, 1969), 44-45.
44. Clifton K. Yearly, "The Baltimore and Ohio Strike of 1877," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 51 (September 1956): 188-211; Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 194-200 (Carroll quoted on 194). The Maryland Unionist organization adopted the name and principles of the national Republican Party in April 1867 (see Baker, *Politics of Continuity*, 177).
45. David W. Blight, "What Will Peace Among Whites Bring?: Reunion and Race in the Struggle Over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 34 (Autumn 1993): 406; and Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1993), 95. Marten makes the point about the search for order among Americans who grew up during the struggle between North and South in *Children's Civil War*, 239-40.
46. Mullikin, quoted in Brugger, *Maryland*, 393.

Chapter 15

Union Father, Rebel Son: Families and the Question of Civil War Loyalty

AMY E. MURRELL

➤ WHEN nineteen-year-old Henry Stone joined the Confederate army, he did not just turn against the Union, or what he called the "cursed dominion of Yankedom." He also rebelled against his family and especially his father. Stone's parents were natives of Kentucky, but by 1861 were living in southern Indiana with Henry and his brothers. They were staunch Unionists, and at least one of Henry's four brothers volunteered for the Union army. But in August 1862 Henry, a middle child, felt drawn to fight for the Southern cause. He kept his decision secret, since he knew that his family would try to stop him, and he ran away without leaving even a note behind. He disguised himself as a poor farmer to make his way past Union pickets and arrived in Kentucky to join the cavalry of John Hunt Morgan. After a month he revealed his whereabouts to his father: "Pap, I do not regret one practical my leaving home and every day convinces me I did right," he explained, yet the personal cost of departing was not lost on him. "I can imagine how your feelings are, one son in the Northern and another in the Southern Army," he acknowledged, "But so it is. . . . Good times will come again." He signed his letter, "your rebelling son, Henry."¹

Families such as the Stones were not supposed to divide when the Civil War came. Nineteenth-century Americans idealized the family as the bedrock of society, a private haven from the rancorous public world of politics and war. Mothers, fathers, and children found security and formed their identities within the family; it even provided a model of social relations for the society at large. But when the war came, the border between North and South cut right through families' households. As the *Columbia Missouri Statesman* observed in 1861, "Secession has broken up the dearest social relations in every community of the border slave States, turning son against father, brother against brother, daughter against mother, friend against friend."² Newspaper columns lamented the division of families. Few professed to understand how this basic social unit could give way to such destructive conflict.

Countless Americans witnessed the division of their households during the Civil War, but nowhere was this more pronounced than in the border states. In Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, and Missouri, the slaveholding states of the upper South, decades of political conflicts had splintered the population and rendered national loyalties unpredictable. This was a region that put forth some of the most significant compromises to stave off sectional conflict in the 1850s, and where voters in 1860 supported moderate candidates over the more radical Republicans or Southern Democrats. Yet it was also where consensus was elusive once the Civil War came, as these states either seceded reluctantly after months of debate, as in the cases of Tennessee and Virginia, which eventually splintered in two, or remained in the Union despite vocal secessionist minorities. Kentucky's own governor, for example, supported efforts to establish an alternative Confederate government in his Union state, while in Missouri guerilla warfare continually drew the state's citizens into violent confrontation. In this region where, as one Kentuckian put it, "treason & loyalty overlap," and where reluctant Confederates and latent Unionists lived side by side during the Civil War, the line between North and South fell in unexpected places, dividing friends, neighbors, and families.³

This essay examines the divided loyalties of fifty-two border state families who shared the specific division experienced by the Stone family: the enlistment of a son in the Confederate army despite the Union sympathies of his father. In each of these families, and in many others like them, wartime political allegiances settled along generational fault lines, creating an explosive situation that mirrored the greater conflict between the Union and the Confederacy. Why these families experienced such division is not easily answered. These families were, like so many families in the upper South, landowners who made their living by raising livestock and wheat. They generally lived in the low-lying areas rather than in the mountains, and most were slaveowners with holdings of under twenty slaves. They did not engage in the sort of large-scale plantation agriculture of the lower South, but were still fairly wealthy, educated, and prominent in their communities. In most cases their nuclear families were intact, with mothers, stepmothers, sisters, and brothers sharing their households and generally working together on the family land. Yet when war came the sons, who averaged twenty-two years of age, enthusiastically left home to volunteer for the Confederate service, while their fathers remained Union spokesmen for compromise and moderation.⁴

Fortunately these Union fathers and their rebel sons did a lot of arguing on paper during the war, explaining in vivid detail why they believed their loyalties were divided. Even though rebel sons that split

from their fathers in most cases departed from brothers, sisters, or a mother too, it was the conflict between father and son that inspired the most introspection. Male kin disagreed in particular about how personal their conflict was and to what extent their national loyalties were linked to or contingent upon their personal, family loyalty. Together their letters offer a collective rumination on the interconnection of politics and family, of public and private life, in mid-century America. And out of this dialogue emerges a paradox of divided families: the same personal, family loyalties that gave way to and even fed the turmoil of war also provided the strongest basis for reconciliation. The divided border state family proved remarkably resilient even as it was most tested, and perhaps for that reason became a cultural resource for a nation also trying to come to terms with the meaning of rebellion.

The brewing rebellion of the sons became apparent to border state observers even before the fall of Fort Sumter. As early as February 1861, twenty-year-old Josie Underwood noticed that in her hometown of Bowling Green, Kentucky, "all the men . . . of any position or prominence whatever are Union men—and yet many of these men have wild reckless unthinking inexperienced sons who make so much noise about secession as to almost drown their fathers wiser council." Border state newspaper editors also took note of this family dynamic, including the *Louisville Daily Journal*, which months later declared father and son conflict an "epidemic" and began writing lengthy essays ruminating on its pervasiveness.⁵

What these observers noticed was the climax of a generational conflict that had been emerging throughout border state society in the decade prior to 1861. During the secession crisis some of the most vigorous proponents of slavery and states' rights were young men born in the 1830s and 1840s. These were men who had never known a time without sectional conflict, who had witnessed tenuous political compromises in Missouri as well as violent threats to slavery in "Bleeding Kansas" and in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. What they saw all around them was the elusiveness of a national consensus on slavery and sectionalism, and a political landscape in which division was the norm. This created a situation in which it was nearly impossible not to take a vigorous stance on the political issues of the day. These young men, while not unique in their support of slavery or Southern rights, developed a passionate enthusiasm for secession that set them apart from older generations, and, in some cases, their own fathers.⁶

Their fathers, meanwhile, were fixtures of the border state political establishment: among them were a Maryland governor, two Kentucky senators, and several congressmen. Most were either Whigs, or as the

war approached, Constitutional Unionists and Democrats intent on forging compromises to stave off civil war. Their political affiliations generally reflected the ideological and geographic middle ground in which they lived, and it appears that most tried to impart that same sense of moderation to their sons. "I would caution you against imbibing all the notions put forth by your advocates for slavery," was how one such father responded in 1857 to his son's blustery anti-abolitionist rant. To make a case for his views this father sent the son what he called a "sensible tract" written by a Kentucky minister. Fathers such as this one detected their sons' radicalism early, but rather than demanding conformity outright they generally permitted an open exchange on matters of sectional politics. Their letters reveal an energetic but tolerant exchange of ideas throughout the 1850s, as the fathers apparently believed that beneath their sons' political vigor was a deeper agreement on partisan loyalty.⁷

By 1861, however, the political letters of these fathers and sons had taken on a starkly different tone. Any degree of political difference was no longer something as benign as words on a page; in wartime it could translate into opposing allegiances across a deadly battle. As war seemed imminent, fathers grew less tolerant of their son's independent political expression and began demanding a greater degree of conformity—sometimes enlisting the help of other male kin to do so. These fathers did not demand that their sons think exactly like them, but they did draw a line at allowing their sons to act on their ideas. Service in the Confederate army was unacceptable. "Do not resign under any circumstances without consultation with me," one Kentucky father demanded of his son who he feared would leave the U.S. army for the South. Other fathers struck compromises, even promising to support their sons economically if they stayed out of the Confederate service. Still others, hopeful that the war would last only a few months, made their sons promise to stay at home for a year before enlisting in the Confederacy.⁸

Union newspaper writers challenged fathers to keep their sons away from the Confederacy and to get them into the Union army. "If the young men are slow to enlist in the cause of human freedom," one Kentucky paper wrote, "let the old men step forward, and by their patriotic example shame their degenerate sons and grandsons." The mechanism of fatherly authority was in this paper's view the most effective deterrent to a young man's Confederate service. After all, it was considered a father's duty in mid-nineteenth-century America to watch over and nurture his son's political allegiances. Mothers might instill in sons a more vague sense of civic duty and consciousness, but in matters of partisanship a father's example was to be paramount. This newspaper challenged fathers to live up to those expectations, and most fathers did

so when they demanded political obedience from their sons. Their sons generally complied at first with their requests but over time found their absence from the service difficult to tolerate. In the first year of the war these awkward promises set the stage for the "epidemic" that the *Louisville Daily Journal* lamented.⁹

To refrain from service in the Confederate army created a dilemma for these sons. Twenty-three-year-old Matthew Andrews of Shepherdstown, Virginia (later West Virginia), for example, promised his father, a pro-Union Episcopal minister, that he would not serve and would remain in law school in Virginia. But this became difficult when his classmates began to enlist. "My position is getting more and more embarrassing every day," Matthew wrote to his fiancée. "All the young men in the town have joined one of the three companies formed here," and they did not understand why he failed to join them. The pressures of his peers were severe, and indeed similar pressures resulted in the enlistments of many other young men in the South. Yet Matthew vowed to remain out of the service, he went on to explain, because he did not want to "offend" his father. The elder Andrews, meanwhile, took the opportunity in letters to his son to reinforce his political authority. "I am much more calm than you are, & have a much more intelligent & impartial survey of the whole question," he argued on one occasion, and suggested that Matthew would come around to share his opinions within weeks.¹⁰

Sons such as Matthew Andrews faced additional obstacles to obeying their fathers and remaining out of the service after the first year of the war. In 1862 and 1863 both the Union and Confederate governments passed conscription laws that made military service mandatory for men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. This made it impossible simply to remain home—almost every young man had to enlist in the army supported by his state. For sons in the Union states of Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri, the idea of being forcibly conscripted into the Union army became an additional inducement to act on their Confederate sympathies and leave home quickly. Henry Stone, who opened this essay, explained to his father that at home in a Union state he "was in great danger of being drafted where I could not have served," whereas now, after leaving to join the Confederate army, "I'm contented." Sons in the Confederate states of Virginia and Tennessee had the laws on their side, which, in many cases, did encourage a son's enlistment. But even in these regions some fathers stepped in to prevent the laws from affecting their sons. Matthew Andrews' Union father, for example, used his connections to preempt the laws and to find his son a job in the paymaster's office in Richmond, reasoning that a government job was less odious than having his son serve as a combatant against the Union.¹¹

Other sons resorted to sneaking away from their fathers when it became too difficult to resist the pressures of their peers or the law. Twenty-year-old Ezekiel (Zeke) Clay's story was typical. In the years leading up to the war he was schooled by several prominent spokesmen of compromise and Union: his father, Brutus, was a Whig leader and member of the Kentucky legislature; his uncle, Cassius Clay, was a vigorous abolitionist; and his distant cousin, Henry Clay, was the architect of several plans to save the Union from civil war. Zeke also had a significant circle of friends his age who frequented pro-secession speeches and rallies and who encouraged him to join them. Zeke's family knew of his dalliances with secession ideas but was openly tolerant of his views, even in the first months of the war. His stepmother, Ann, kept her own Union opinions quiet even while venting to her husband that Zeke talked "like some one crazy" about secession. His father simply kept his silence while apparently remaining confident that Zeke would uphold his agreement to manage the family property while he served in the legislature.¹²

Over a period of several weeks in September 1861, however, Zeke secretly plotted his departure for the Confederate army. He approached a Confederate officer about obtaining a commission, yet denied having done so when his stepmother heard rumors about the meeting. He also set about making gun cartridges to take with him—surprisingly working right under his stepmother's nose—but again denied his true motives by claiming to make them for his father. Then one night in September 1861, after telling his stepmother that he was going loon hunting, Zeke rode off on his mare, bringing with him the blanket from his bed, one of his father's rifles, and a small amount of clothing. He left behind this breezy note on the parlor table to explain his departure: "I leave for the army tonight. I do it for I believe I am doing right. I go of my own free will. If it turns out that I do wrong I beg forgiveness. Good bye. E."¹³

Brutus Clay, like other fathers in this position, could hardly contain his anger when he heard of his son's departure. Zeke had acted with the same hotheaded zeal as the South Carolinians that Clay and other border state Union men condemned. His son also had failed to show a moderation in politics that Clay expected of all his sons, and, more personally, had reneged on his promises to his father to remain at home. Zeke evidently preferred to follow the lead of "every scamp in the country" rather than his own father's, Brutus thundered to his wife, Ann, who sympathized. It was "disgraceful," she responded, and she vowed to find out what it was that had "induced a boy to take sides against a father." To the Clays this was no ordinary case of two individuals disagreeing about sectional politics: it was a very personal case of filial defiance.¹⁴

Other Union fathers shared Brutus Clay's angry reaction to the secretive departures of their rebel sons. These fathers may have given their sons latitude to develop independent political views, but few had known how seriously to take their sons' expressions of Southern loyalty, and fewer yet predicted that their worst fears of Confederate service would be realized. Union fathers therefore had difficulty knowing how to respond to their sons' actions. If they accepted a son's Confederate service as an independent act of political conscience, then they would be acknowledging the son's outright rejection of their own political views. But if they attributed the defection to reckless and defiant behavior, as Brutus Clay seemed to prefer, it would be much easier to remain secure in one's position as a father. Their son's action might remain a serious betrayal, but a much more familiar and manageable one. In this sense a son's rebellion could be seen as just another coming-of-age struggle set against the dramatic backdrop of war.¹⁵

Fathers of the Civil War generation were quite familiar with this kind of conflict. Little consensus existed in mid-century prescriptive literature about the ideal relationship between fathers and sons. A historic tradition of paternal authority in the household was gradually being eroded by an antebellum trend toward a less authoritarian and more affectionate model of child-rearing. This left fathers and sons caught between expectations of paternal dominance and the impulse toward companionship. Where a father's authority and a son's deference met was rarely clear, and this created what one historian has called an "inherent ambivalence" between fathers and sons. Conflicts with fathers thus became a ritual of growing up for nineteenth-century sons, and this is what Civil War fathers saw in their sons' defection to the Confederacy: a very familiar and personal challenge to their paternal authority.¹⁶

Newspaper observers encouraged Union fathers to view their sons' Confederate service as a deliberate act of filial defiance. In one of the first analyses of divided fathers and sons, the Union-leaning *Louisville Daily Journal* published an article entitled "Letters of a Father" in 1861 that elaborated on why the present rebellion of sons was part of a very natural stage in life. The American "political and social system" contained an inherent contradiction, the paper argued, one in which sons were required to defer to their fathers at the same time they were instilled with republican values of liberty. The most readily available expression of that liberty was in the rejection at home of "filial piety," the paper continued, and for that reason father-and-son conflicts were a natural creation of the republican system. The rebellion of sons from their fathers in wartime was simply a reflection of this greater flaw in the American "national character," but even worse, in this paper's view,

was the Confederacy's exploitation of this with "specious appeals to the natural love of liberty."¹⁷

Indeed, the Confederacy's call for independence meshed well with personal desires for autonomy among this younger generation of men. Historians of secession have found that younger generations felt a natural affinity to the Southern cause precisely because of the desire for liberty nurtured in their own homes. Fathers, the guardians of their inheritance and future livelihood as the owners of land and family businesses, at times posed a substantial obstacle to sons in their transition to adulthood. A father who was unwilling to give up land or otherwise assist his son in building an independent life for himself left his son in a dependent position. This aroused resentment in a son and a frustration that made the Confederate rhetoric of "independence" and "liberty" all the more resonant.¹⁸

The rebel sons considered here had reached this uncertain juncture in their lives. The majority were unmarried and between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five—the transition period between childhood and the independence of adulthood. Twenty-year-old Zeke Clay, for example, had recently dropped out of college from lack of interest and had returned home to work his father's land. Henry Stone, who opened this essay, also worked on his family's land and had not yet settled into the legal career that would occupy him later. Census returns from 1860 show that roughly two-thirds of these rebel sons likewise resided in their fathers' households, perhaps hoping to inherit land or eventually purchase acreage of their own. Their financial prospects ranged from being in debt, to working as apprentices, to relying on their fathers to put them through school, to striking out on their own for new land in the Texas southwest. Almost without exception these young men were unsettled in their lifelong careers and were self-conscious of their continued dependence on their fathers. Service in the Confederacy—acknowledged or not—therefore allowed them to embrace the reality of liberty, both financially and emotionally. As one son wrote to his father of his service, "[Y]our boy who left you six or seven months ago a mere child has now grown to manhood." In this euphemistic declaration of independence, the son suggested that his father accept his service as a defining moment in his emergence into adulthood.¹⁹

Personal "liberty" may have attracted sons to the Confederacy, but few fathers were willing to go so far as to translate this into a deep ideological commitment to the Confederacy. The notion that their sons instead possessed no ideas at all and were deluded or coerced into the Confederate service was a much more popular view. After hearing of his son's departure, Brutus Clay speculated that his son had been influenced

by a "scamp," while other Union fathers similarly directed their frustration toward an anonymous influence deluding their sons. One Union father complained that "older & more wicked men" had "seduced" his son into service. The *Louisville Daily Journal* likewise concluded that one Union man's son probably would not have fought for the South "had not poisonous sophistries been poured into his ears by older men who had a design to corrupt his mind and seduce him into the paths of treachery."²⁰

These "older men" who railed fathers for the sons' attention were no anomaly of war. Commonly known as "confidence men," "tricksters," or "seducers," they were a fixture of nineteenth-century fathers' anxieties. Fathers were fearful that once a son reached the age to strike out on his own, whether to purchase his own land or to begin a new career, strangers might take advantage of him, corrupt him, and destroy his character. Nothing, in a father's view, was more threatening to a son's republican liberty than the potential deception and corruption of an unscrupulous stranger. Young men eager to make their mark on the world were susceptible to the words of designing men, and the confusion of war, in a father's view, provided an ideal opportunity for such men to do their work.²¹

Sometimes these confidence men were familiar: a cousin, uncle, or longtime family friend who "talked secessh" and encouraged sons to accompany them to secession rallies.²² Other times they worked at a distance, as did the fire-eating secessionists of the lower South. But no one worked harder to win over their sons' attention, fathers became convinced, than Confederate cavalry leaders. These men—with reputations of being more daring and more talented than their Union counterparts—cut a dashing figure and appealed to a young man's desire for adventure. The most influential in the border region was thirty-six-year-old Confederate captain John Hunt Morgan of Kentucky. Already legendary among Southern partisans as an embodiment of "chivalry" and "bravery," Morgan and his men swept through Kentucky and Tennessee in July 1862 on a raid that resulted in the successful imprisonment of 1,200 Union soldiers—and only 95 Confederate casualties. Word of his victories drew crowds along his route to catch a glimpse of the man who would eventually become a folk hero of the Confederacy. His reputation awed young men. "You can't hurt a Morgan man," one Kentucky son boldly concluded after signing on to Morgan's cavalry. At least one hundred "sons of our best and strongest Union men" followed him, a Kentucky woman later recalled.²³

Morgan and his men, fathers believed, took advantage of their sons' desire for adventure and preyed on their sons to become followers. "My son," as one father described his departure with Morgan, "was seduced

into the Rebel service by designing men." Referred to also as "Morgan's gang," and "Morgan's guerrilla party," this band of rebel soldiers unnerved Union families. Fathers were convinced that their sons were too young and too impressionable to resist Morgan's overtures, despite the best efforts of the sons to convince them otherwise. One Kentucky son tried to reassure his family that Morgan's men were "gentlemen of the best families of Ky.," and therefore honorable comrades in battle. But few parents accepted this notion, preferring instead to believe, as one father explained, that their sons had been a "victim" of Morgan's "folly & delusion."²⁴

Other such influences, fathers believed, lurked within their own homes and were of a decidedly feminine cast. Indeed, some fathers discovered that the "scamp" luring their son in the wrong direction was no stranger but was instead a son's own mother. Who else had such close contact with and influence over sons than mothers? Union fathers had good reason to suspect a mother's influence. While one Virginia father tried to keep his son from volunteering for the Confederacy, his wife undermined him with letters to the son laced with pro-secession sentiment. "What is the benefit of plunging Ben into this certain destruction," this father asked of his wife, demanding that she protect, rather than endanger, their son. Another Tennessee mother chose to remain with her rebel son in the South rather than follow her Union husband north to escape the hardships of war. This mother remained in contact with her son throughout the war and effectively condoned his behavior despite his father's ardent Union stance.²⁵

These women occupied an uncomfortable position, caught between the conflicting roles of mother and wife. They were responsible for their sons' development into good, civic-minded, and patriotic individuals, according to the expectations of antebellum political culture, and many sons looked to their mothers for guidance in the sectional crisis. Yet at the same time mothers were expected to defer to their husbands on matters of public affairs. In these particular cases women emphasized the former over the latter and effectively competed with a father in influencing a son's political choices. But in other cases, the idea that a mother's influence might result in a father and son meeting on a battlefield was agonizing, and, as one mother put it, "pursued me like a ghost." Accordingly, some mothers chose to suppress even their own Confederate instincts and to seek family unity by asking that their sons uphold their fathers' patriotic legacies. "Your dear Father never took sides either way," wrote one Missouri mother to her son. "Try and follow the bright example your beloved Father has set you."²⁶

Whether it was a family member or a cavalryman who deterred a son from his father's example, however, Union fathers found in these out-

side influences a way of explaining their familial conflict. To blame someone else's influence was to place the blame on a society that produced unscrupulous men (or women), and on the youth and inexperience of otherwise good young men. A son's Confederate service was therefore not an expression of political conscience but instead symptomatic of a separate struggle over a father's own paternal authority. In this way fathers could define their conflict with their sons as something personal, and perhaps, more familiar and manageable.

This reading of the sons' behavior would seem to explain the common defection of the younger generation to the South, but to listen to the sons themselves is to hear an entirely different perspective on their Confederate service. They repeatedly and adamantly denied that their action was in any way a deliberate act of defiance against their father. As Henry Stone exclaimed when he heard of his father's anger over his rebellion: "Father, when you look over my career in the past eighteen months, do you feel that I am a traitor? Have I not done my duty, and have I not followed your teachings of right? Do you feel that I'm unworthy to be your son? God forbid!" While condemning what he called the "despotism" that his father supported, Stone still rejected the notion that he might be "unworthy" as a son. If anything, he believed his action to be entirely consistent with his father's teachings by following the dictates of his conscience.²⁷

Clearly a son would have every reason to deny a personally motivated rebellion against his father. But in his denial was a very real conflict between fathers and sons, a disagreement over the relationship between family and political loyalties. Where fathers saw the two as intertwined—politics as a mere reflection of their personal relationship—sons argued that the two were entirely separate. "I am a secessionist, but that shall not conflict with a duty I owe my father—that of being respectful, and kind," Virginian William Thomson explained to his father in February 1861. Thomson drew a sharp distinction between being a secessionist and being a son, or between acting politically and acting personally. Dividing his loyalties in this way allowed Thomson and other sons to view their Confederate service quite differently—and more innocently—than their fathers did.²⁸

Sons accordingly described their enlistment as a pure act of political conscience. Zeke Clay seemed to know his father would attribute his departure to youthful rebellion when he assured him in his departing note that "I do it for I believe I am doing right." "I know I'm right," wrote another son, but exactly how influential this sense of political "right" was in mobilizing sons is hard to determine. This same question has vexed most historians who study why soldiers fought in the Civil

War, and it is likely that a combination of both ideological convictions and personal considerations motivated most soldiers. But in letters to Union fathers, these rebel sons talk as if ideology was the only consideration that guided them in war. They wrote about fighting "tyranny," "Black Republicanism," and the "despotism of Lincoln," calling on popular rhetoric to emphasize that their military service was guided only by *politics*. Their division from their fathers could be explained simply as the divergent conclusions of two rational, thoughtful men.²⁹

Behind those words, however, the political first principles of the sons did not differ terribly from those of their fathers. On the most central and divisive issue of the war—slavery—Union fathers and rebel sons were, for the most part, in striking agreement. Roughly three-quarters of the fathers were slaveholders, and thus, the majority of sons grew up in households in which slavery was openly accepted and tolerated. Rebel sons therefore could associate slavery with their father's interests and could see in secession the protection of something upon which their fathers depended. Although their fathers, in contrast, may have seen in secession the "doom of slavery," as one Virginia father put it, or acknowledged its eventual collapse, the sons still could argue that wartime service supported their fathers' principles. The only question that divided them was: how could slavery be best protected, by the Union or by an independent Confederacy? Similarly, on the future of the Union, fathers and sons found common ground, as each considered how to best combat the sources of disunion. One Kentucky son explained that he decided to "oppose Abolition more than secession, for one is the cause of our national dissension, the other the effect." His father, on the other hand, felt that preserving the Union was best served by opposing secession. Such ideological congruence on the war's central issues undoubtedly encouraged rebel sons to downplay filial rebellion and to claim that their service instead realized their fathers' true ideals.³⁰

The sons may have been tempted to criticize their fathers' Union stance as a betrayal of their common ideals, but if they were thus tempted they restrained themselves in their letters home. They did not hold back, however, from objecting when their fathers attempted to punish them for their Confederate service. Indeed, Union fathers considered punishment a necessary response to the personal rebellion they detected in their sons' enlistment. "Just as he has acted, he will be dealt with," was how Brutus Clay furiously explained his decision to withdraw his son's inheritance after his departure. Since Zeke had denied Brutus his authority as a father, Brutus would reciprocate by refusing what he owed in return: protection. Disinheritance was rare among divided fathers and sons, but other fathers joined Brutus Clay in refusing to send money or clothing, even when it was possible to cross the lines

to do so, and in preventing their sons from visiting their homes. These and other punishments served the indirect purpose of restoring the paternal authority that Union fathers lost when their sons defied them to join the Confederacy. Zeke Clay did not take his father's declaration seriously, however. With humor, he wrote to his stepmother to ask if the disinherence meant he could still keep his wristwatch.³¹

Other sons took punishments more seriously. A father's disapproval was devastating enough, but many sons believed that their father's punishment was unwarranted. They saw little purpose in lessons on respect or obedience when they believed they still upheld these values in their support for the South. One punishment in particular was deemed especially unfair: a father's refusal to write letters. Certainly security measures taken by the Union and Confederate governments could make it more difficult to write frequently during the war, but it is clear that some fathers deliberately chose this as a form of punishment. After all, for most fathers and sons in peacetime, letter-writing was a basic means of sustaining a relationship. The failure to write regularly had always been a basis for chastisement, and not to write at all was an act of profound significance, a severing of emotional ties. In the insecurity of wartime, when soldiers found themselves lonely and threatened with death, this could be an especially devastating punishment.³²

One Virginia father stopped writing after finding his sons' letters "full of the lies [of] Rebel Genl. Bobby Lee." Warner Thomson, a farmer trying to maintain a living in the path of war, became fed up with his son's rebel allegiance after his own livelihood was threatened. Thomson suffered financial losses when advancing Confederate troops forced him to flee his Shenandoah Valley home temporarily in 1863, and to make matters worse, his secession neighbors—especially women—had grown increasingly hostile toward him. An outcast, Thomson found it impossible to extend pleasantries to a son who allied himself with the Confederates and opted for silence over false sentiments. His son William, an eighteen-year-old aspiring teacher and a soldier in a Tennessee regiment, recoiled at his father's silence. "Pa has ceased to think of me as his son," he cried to his stepmother, complaining that his father evidently cared more about Abraham Lincoln than his own son. This was especially traumatic for him when his brother Jonathan, who also joined the Confederate army, was imprisoned by Union authorities. Without his father to comfort him, William became dependent on the kindness of strangers to help him cope with his brother's imprisonment. For "all intents and purposes," William concluded of his situation, "I am a lone orphan."³³

In his father's silence William detected that he had been consigned to the most desperate position of unwanted child. He saw the worst in the absence of his father's letters, revealing the extent to which he relied on

his father's affection. His reaction was yet another reflection of the inherent ambivalence, or the tension between authority and affection, that characterized antebellum families. Whereas Warner Thomson, stunned by his son's Confederate service, chose to reemphasize his parental authority, William Thomson found his father's affection increasingly necessary and important once he endured the foul weather, loneliness, and tainted meat of his life in camp. In pleading letters William accused his father of violating an obligation to extend that affection toward his children: "No one is capable of more devotion to a parent than I am," he concluded, "but in order that this feeling should have *full* force, there must be a corresponding affection on the part of the parent."³⁴

Warner Thomson's silence was an inadequate measure of his true sentiments, however. He was in fact more conflicted than William believed and found it difficult to condemn his son outright, even if his cause was "entirely wrong." Warner frequently turned to his diary to wrestle with their relationship. "My natural affection for my sons & love for my country," he once wrote, "cause a struggle in my mind—it is a painful one." Warner had difficulty reconciling his son's act with his desire to maintain their family ties. "I feel as if I am committing wrong to allow an active enemy of my country to remain in my house," he wrote of the idea of allowing William to visit, but "than I am met with the feelings of affection natural to a parent—it is a trial—sore trial." His loyalty to the Union cause—as well as his own security—compelled him to react as a stern patriarch; but deep down Warner possessed more complicated feelings toward his son. He temporarily resolved this conflict by asking family members for frequent reports on his son.³⁵

Warner Thomson's reliance on other family members was not unusual. When relations between fathers and sons became strained, mothers and sisters—whether they wanted to or not—typically assumed a mediating position. In the Thomson family, Warner's wife (William's stepmother), Josephine, eventually became a surrogate correspondent. William believed that Josephine's intervention was essential for saving him from permanent orphan status: "I hope you will not fail to improve it," William wrote of his relationship to his father, asking that she encourage his father to communicate with him. Some women eagerly embraced this mediating position, writing letters, sending supplies, and even making appeals to fathers on their sons' behalf. Josephine Thomson, however, seemed only to resent being used as a surrogate. "You seem to wish me to write only that you may hear from him," she complained to William on one occasion, demanding that he carve out a separate place for her in his thoughts and feelings.³⁶

Fathers might have found it less painful to join their sons in separating their political and familial lives, but something else kept them from do-

ing so. A son's Confederate service was to their fathers even more than a private crisis of filial deference: it was a potential source of public embarrassment. In a region influenced by a Southern honor culture that forced people to think about how their friends and neighbors judged them, an errant son was a black mark to the family name. This was particularly true for men of military or political prominence, who contended daily with the scrutiny of both their allies and their pronounced enemies. Mid-nineteenth-century political culture revolved around establishing the reputations and character of men who became leaders. To what extent one's private or family life should affect or shape that public reputation, however, was not settled in the popular mind. So when wartime newspapermen floated rumors about the divided political loyalties of some of the nation's most prominent families, Union fathers were placed in an awkward position.³⁷

Nothing illustrated this more vividly than one episode in Kentucky. It involved John J. Crittenden, a U.S. senator famous nationally for trying to prevent the war through compromise. Crittenden was known and respected among his Whig colleagues for his integrity, eloquent speeches, and cautious political skills, frequently referred to as "noble" and as a "great statesman" in the border-state press. Yet Crittenden had not been successful in exercising these conciliatory skills within his own household, as his youngest son, Thomas, dutifully became a soldier for the Union, while his oldest son, George, joined a Confederate regiment. George had disappointed his father before, with his weakness for alcohol and his penchant for debt, but his defection to the Confederacy for the first time made George the subject of press attention. In May 1862, George D. Prentice, the Unionist editor of the *Louisville Daily Journal*, published a scathing attack on George Crittenden's Confederate career. Crittenden had joined the Union's "malignant enemies" and had become one of the "most malignant of those enemies," Prentice wrote. His "treachery" was "sad," and had brought unknowable pain to his friends in Kentucky. For this, Prentice concluded, the name Crittenden "can no more be dishonored." The *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat* picked up this story and went further to suggest that Crittenden's rebel son "may somewhat affect his patriotism."³⁸

John Crittenden was furious at these attacks. "My son is a rebel—I defend him not," he wrote three days later in a private letter to the *Journals* Prentice, "but what public good can such denunciations, as that article contains, do?" What angered Crittenden most was not the article's attack on George Crittenden's decision to go South—Crittenden himself had stopped writing to George for that very reason—but its suggestion that the Crittenden family honor had been damaged as a result. In keeping with his stature as an honorable statesman Crittenden

corrected Prentice's assessment of his family: "Geo. B. Crittenden, save his act of Rebellion, & the occasional habit of intemperance, is beloved by all his family as one of the best & noblest of their race." Even though his son was "deluded" into rebellion, and his behavior deserved condemnation, Crittenden acknowledged, his family had come to believe that George was serving his cause well and acted with "honorable" intentions. Family honor, he claimed, was not necessarily damaged by a wayward son if that son acted honorably in his new position. For this reason Crittenden pronounced the article "most cruel."³⁹

Equally galling to Crittenden was Prentice's apparent belief that there was some public benefit in revealing the Crittenden family problems to his readers. He urged Prentice, in a note at the bottom of his letter, to keep this matter "private" in the future. Crittenden thus claimed for himself and his family a right to privacy that some Americans believed was inherent in the growing division of middle-class life into separate spheres of home and world. Ideally, domestic life by mid-century was to stand distinct from the disruptions of work and politics, and this, Crittenden apparently believed, afforded him a wall of protection around his private life from the prying eyes of journalists. Of course such a demarcation, as numerous historians have documented, was never as neat as promised.⁴⁰

George Prentice continually exploited that murky distinction between public and private life. He remained vigorous in his exposes of rebel sons, once advocating the hanging of the U.S. assistant surgeon general's rebel son as a means of restoring that family's honor. His attention to family life appears on the surface to be nothing other than the zealous behavior of an extremely patriotic Union man. Indeed, Prentice was, in the words of the *Richmond Enquirer*, "one of the most decided enemies of the Southern cause," and one of Kentucky's loudest Democratic voices against secession. To police the loyalties of families was in Prentice's view to defend the interests of the Union. But even as he delved into the private lives of others, Prentice soon found himself in the same position as other Union fathers: he too was placed on the defensive regarding his own rebel sons, twenty-three-year-old Courtland and twenty-year-old Clarence.⁴¹

Months after his attack on George Crittenden, Prentice learned that the *Cincinnati Commercial*, his strongest Republican rival, published rumors that his older son, Courtland, had stolen his prized silver mounted rifle when he joined John Hunt Morgan's cavalry. The paper speculated that Prentice found his son's behavior "disgraceful." Taking a page out of John Crittenden's book, Prentice immediately fired off a note to the *Commercial*, which was subsequently published in other border-state papers, denying that his son was guilty of stealing the rifle.

He never owned such a rifle, he explained, and went on to say he was sorry to see his "lamented boy" slandered. Prentice jumped to his son's defense, his position as a protective father temporarily outweighing the demands of his own politics. Prentice was partly motivated by the fact that Courtland lay defenseless in a hospital bed, the victim of friendly fire in Augusta, Kentucky. Prentice and his wife went to visit their son days after George wrote the response and witnessed their son's eventual death. Prentice asked readers a few days later to spare his family from additional newspaper coverage. "The tears of weeping eyes," he explained, "are not for the public gaze."⁴²

Observers likely would have abided by his request, given that death and mourning were widely accepted as private and solitary matters. But Prentice undermined himself with a three-column eulogy of his son that first appeared in the *Journal* and later traveled in an abridged form to newspapers across Missouri and Ohio. In "William Courtland Prentice: A Brief Sketch," Prentice publicly mused on his son's virtues. Courtland was "manly" and possessed "the strength of a young Hercules." He was constantly in search of outdoor adventures and recognized as a skilled marksman after moving to Texas in 1860. He was also a "wild" and adventurous youth, who early on had grown impatient with school discipline. This, Prentice explained, made it difficult for Courtland to resist taking up arms when his loyalties directed him toward the South during the war. Although at first Courtland remained at home in deference to his father, he became miserable, "like an imprisoned lion." Prentice went on to explain that although he sympathized with him, he believed his son would have remained at home had it not been for those ubiquitous "bad men" who were able to lure his son away. Prentice concluded that his family would remember Courtland as a "brave and noble though misguided youth."⁴³

Prentice did not explain what compelled him to delve into a character study of his son in the pages of the newspaper. Perhaps he believed that such an explanation was necessary to blunt the stinging criticism of his son's service. His eulogy effectively established that Courtland's service was an aberration in an otherwise harmonious father-son relationship: Courtland had been a loyal son despite his misery, George was a watchful father, and only outside influences had pushed Courtland into the rebel army. Not unlike John Crittenden he went even further to prop up Courtland's reputation with details about his sense of adventure and many honor. Prentice might have hoped that his essay would silence the question of his family's honor once and for all, but instead his seemingly apologetic stance toward his son's Confederate service opened the floodgates for suspicion and innuendo.⁴⁴

In March 1863 Prentice became the target of rumors that his other rebel son, Clarence, was feeding him information about the movements of Confederate troops. The *New York Times* charged that Prentice was on his way to Europe to escape the path of rebel troops whom he had been warned were making their way into Kentucky. It accused him of withholding this information from other Union partisans and thus using his connection to the Confederacy for selfish purposes. Prentice hotly denied the accusation in a letter to the editor and condemned the paper for subjecting his family to such "malignant calumnies." Months later, a rival border state newspaperman, Unionist William G. Brownlow of Tennessee, published a withering attack on Prentice's loyalty based on the rebel service of his surviving son. "You are but one degree removed from a rebel and a traitor," Brownlow reminded him, and for that reason "your paper is no longer a Union authority." This time Prentice chose silence rather than openly respond to what undoubtedly wounded him as a proud Union man.⁴⁵

Prentice was only one target of a greater tendency among journalists to invoke family division as a way of questioning the reputations of public men. Most common were articles written by Union partisans to evaluate the position of Confederate leaders. Typical was a March 1862 article that originated in the *New York Tribune* and circulated through the border state press reporting that Confederate president Jefferson Davis and vice president Alexander H. Stephens were "of Yankee . . . paternity." The writer traced both men's parents to the town of North Killingly, Connecticut, where each supposedly had lived until finally settling in the South. Relatives of each man still lived in the town, the article noted, including an eighty-year-old man by the last name of Stephens who made the dubious claim of being a cousin of both men. "What could more forcibly exemplify the foolishness of the rebel cry of 'mudsills,' 'pedlers,' 'slaves,' 'cowards,' 'poltroons,' against Northern Society!" exclaimed the *Louisville Daily Journal*. Family ties made it impossible to draw sharp distinctions between the two societies upon which Southerners depended. It was hypocritical, this paper therefore charged, for these Southern leaders to distance themselves from a society to which they were so intimately related.⁴⁶

Rumors of political division in Southern leaders' families played very well into Northern critics' hands. After all, it was the veneration of lineage and kinship, so central to Southern conceptions of honor and gentility, that Confederate leaders and writers often identified to distinguish their new nation from the corrupt and degenerate Yankees. The Confederate nation was a perfected land of cavaliers, descended directly from English bloodlines both noble and pure. Yet, Northern critics charged, this revealed nothing more than a distorted genealogy. "The

parents of Jeff Davis and Alex Stephens were probably no better than the average of Yankee men and women," the *Louisville Daily Journal* put it succinctly. Although the paper actually was mistaken — Davis's parents were born and raised in South Carolina, while Stephens's were from Georgia — the deeper point underlying the attack was more credible. It was a fallacy for Confederates to suggest that their family identities were as distinct as their political ones.⁴⁷

Jefferson Davis's bloodlines continued to attract Union attention. Stories abounded of various Davis children born illegitimately and residing in different parts of the country. He was rumored to be the father of an Indian child in Wisconsin, as well as of a Minnesota boy turned "assassin." Such stories — however fictionalized — represented Davis to readers as a promiscuous man, one who actively blurred the genetic lines that supposedly existed between the North and South. A more widespread paternity rumor, however, portrayed Davis actively blurring racial lines by fathering a son with one of his slaves in Mississippi. This story, which first appeared in February 1864, reportedly originated with a *London Times* reporter who was tipped off by an anonymous source "occupying a high position in the United States." The reporter, accompanied by an officer in the Union navy, traveled to Mississippi, conducted an investigation, and declared the story confirmed by the child's mother. The story then took off, appearing in Union newspapers across the country, from the *Boston Journal* to the *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*.⁴⁸

The story changed from version to version. Sometimes it was the mother's name that was different, other times it was the circumstances of Davis's relationship with the enslaved woman that varied. But one detail was consistent in all accounts: that the son was now serving in the Union navy under the name "Purser Davis." "Jeff Davis's Son in the Federal Service," proclaimed one such story, which noted with glee the irony of the Confederate president facing his black son in battle. Another telling of the story entitled "Miscegenation by Jeff. Davis" was not so amused but made no secret of its usefulness. "This same Jeff. Davis flaunts abroad his professions of Christianity, and sneers at the Puritanical habits of New England," the *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat* pointed out, while "his own life is a fitting exemplification of the *Barbarism of Slavery*."⁴⁹

Different layers of this story served different purposes. To an abolitionist it was another example of the sexual exploitation of enslaved women, as the *St. Louis paper* suggested. To Republicans accused by fellow Northerners of embracing interracial sex in their calls for emancipation, it was proof that Southerners themselves were the worst practitioners of miscegenation. (One such newspaper even coined the term "Davissegregation.") And to patriotic Unionists the idea of a white Con-

federate leader sharing bloodlines with a black Union soldier again poked holes in Southern pretensions of racial and genetic purity. It did not matter whether this story was true or not, or that Davis apparently ignored it and did not publicly respond. Those who latched onto it were searching for something with which to undermine Davis's, and the Confederacy's, legitimacy as a separate nation apart from the Union. Private family histories linking Northerners and Southerners together provided a useful and popular means.⁵⁰

Confederate lineage thus captured the Union imagination, as some of the South's most prominent families had their family trees scrutinized in the pages of Union newspapers. Most accounts centered on families in which recent generations appeared to "betray" their ancestors' national loyalty. The Lees of Virginia made frequent appearances, with articles praising Revolutionary War hero Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee while condemning his son, Robert E. Lee. The Keys of Maryland were also noticed when it became known that Francis Scott Key's daughter was under investigation for Confederate spy activity. The Breckinridges of Kentucky, who produced a Confederate general, likewise were lamented in the pages of newspapers. Kentuckian Henry Clay, long identified with forging compromises to stave off civil war, was featured for having several grandsons who fought for the Confederacy. The Clay grandsons' service was a "sad" postscript to the storied life of that "illustrious statesman," according to the *Louisville Daily Journal*. Most troubling was the family of Thomas Jefferson. "Alas, how his descendants are divided in this war!" exclaimed the *Nashville Daily Press* before outlining how all the former president's grandsons were fighting for the Confederacy while his granddaughters sided with their Union husbands.⁵¹

Tracing the political lineage of these prominent families offered to Southerners an effective reminder of where they came from, and to Northerners additional ballast for their charge of Confederate treason. But indirectly this process also established a blueprint for reconciliation. Implicit in these articles, and in the greater impulse to identify the "Union" heritage in Southern families, was a sense of impermanence. Political division and alienation could hardly endure when the force of history and family ties were fully realized; Confederates and Unionists alike could not ignore their deep interconnections. Private, family life thus was centrally linked to the future of the nation. These genealogies demonstrated that there was something deep and inalienable that bound Northerners and Southerners together, something that would provide the basis of reunion.

Reluctantly or not, nearly every pair of divided fathers and sons acknowledged the pull of these personal ties at some point during the war. As we have seen, the death of his son in battle compelled George Pren-

tice to sentimentalize their relationship; an attack on his son's honor similarly drew John Crittenden to his son's defense. Death, illness, and the loneliness of war created pressures that mediated against even the best attempts to remain estranged. A process of reconciliation thus coincided with the escalation of hostilities. The unique context of war gave the very familiar conflicts of deference and authority an urgency that forced fathers and sons to move beyond arguing in letters and to forge some sort of truce, or a working relationship, that could assuage their colliding loyalties.

Constant reminders of the deadly nature of the war sensitized rebel sons to their fathers' welfare. Isaac Noyes Smith, a native of Charleston, Virginia (later West Virginia), had not hesitated to join the 22nd Virginia Volunteers in 1861, even though his father was a prominent Union man. But by September of that year he had grown "depressed" at the fierceness of the war. It was difficult for him even to rejoice at the prospect of Confederate success. "Virginia is to be red with blood before the end," he noted in his diary, "yet my source of constant trouble is that my father will be in danger." This was at times a terrifying thought, Smith continued, for "I am here actually leading a set of men one of whose avowed objects is the arrest and judicial or lynch murder of my father." His father's welfare distracted Smith from what otherwise might have been a zealous defense of the Confederate cause.³²

Other sons acted upon these sentiments and offered direct protection to their Union fathers. One rebel son sent \$300 in Confederate scrip to his Union father in Tennessee in order to assist him in dealing with rebel merchants. Others made sure their families were protected from Confederate army raids. The *Louisville Daily Journal*, for example, took note when Robert J. Breckinridge suffered no losses after Confederate cavalryman Kirby Smith and his men raided his hometown. Smith had apparently sent Breckinridge a letter of protection ahead of time, and as a result, "not so much as a grain of corn has been taken from him." The paper noted with a hint of envy that Breckinridge was more fortunate in this regard "than many of his Union neighbors." His protection may have been made possible by his son, twenty-four-year-old William. This young man had made it clear to his father he still valued his father's welfare and was relieved to know that his father would benefit from any Confederate setbacks. "I am glad that if we are driven from Kentucky," he wrote in October 1862, "that you . . . will be benefited by our loss."³³

Rebel sons took some solace in using their positions to protect their fathers. When Brutus J. Clay's other rebel son, Christopher, wrote home warning of that same raid in 1862, he advised his family to bury their silver and warned them that Confederate leaders were plotting to take

his father "hostage." To protect his father Christopher called on a "friendly rebel" to watch over him. Christopher Clay was proud of having made these arrangements and prouder yet that no corn or other property was taken from his father during the raid. As his stepmother informed Brutus Clay: "He & Elzekiel say that you will yet be indebted to your rebel sons for saving your property." To these sons the act of protection exhibited a personal loyalty, and filial duty, that their father had accused them earlier of abandoning. Brutus Clay cared little, however, for what meaning lurked behind their gesture. He replied to his wife that "all the protection I want from my rebel son is to shoot the rogues who come to steal."³⁴

The tone of Brutus Clay's response was typical of the state of mind of other Union fathers. Although they too came to the aid of their sons, sending money and clothing in desperate times, often that assistance was accompanied by an expectation that their sons would abandon the Confederacy. A father's aid could be conditional: protection for a son offered in exchange for his deference again. Union fathers thus conceived of their own vision of reconciliation that restored their lost paternal authority, and they often succeeded. To understand why, it is important to remember that events on the battlefield worked in a Union father's favor. Confederate military weaknesses left sons demoralized and in need of material assistance, particularly after 1862. By this time in the war sons were growing increasingly ready — albeit to varying degrees — to seek their fathers' aid and accept a reunion on his terms. Fathers thus could end their conflict as they defined it at the beginning: a personal rebellion that should end with a decisive reassertion of their fatherly authority.

Fathers sometimes looked to the biblical tale of the prodigal son as a model for this conception of reconciliation. The tale offered a useful allegory, for it outlined the process by which an errant son could be welcomed back into the family fold. A son was to first recognize the error of his ways, according to this story, then repent his sins and resubmit himself to his father's protection and authority. His father could then embrace his son again and restore his own status as father. The Confederate sons' likeness to the rebellious son in scripture was not lost on this younger generation. One Kentucky son, broken and tired from fighting, declared himself "prodigal & poor" to his sisters in 1862. Newspaper and magazine editors likewise compared the increasingly desperate position of rebel sons to the prodigal son. The *Missouri Statesman* reported as early as 1861 that the Hannibal, Missouri, mayor's son had returned "prodigal like," and speculated about whether the "fatted calf" would be killed. "Return of a Prodigal Son," is how the *Louisville Daily Journal* entitled one article about a son who deserted his Tennessee regiment and returned home to his parents' embrace.³⁵

The story of the prodigal son particularly resonated when more and more border state sons filled the cells of Union prisons, especially at Camp Chase in Ohio and Camp Douglas in Illinois. Prison life was notoriously grim, and some men would do anything to be released—including disavowing their Confederate service. In 1863 the *Nashville Daily Press* recognized the opportunity that this afforded Union fathers and urged “every sensible man . . . to get his son out of the rebel army.” Those loyal citizens with “deluded relatives” in the Confederate service can, the paper explained, take advantage of a Lincoln Administration policy allowing prisoners to take the oath of allegiance to the Union as a favor to his friends or family. All it would take was a repentant son and a family willing to write a petition.⁵⁶

Numbers of Kentucky fathers got their chance after a failed raid through the state in 1863 led to the arrest and imprisonment of hundreds of soldiers in John Hunt Morgan’s cavalry. Many soldiers escaped along with their leader, but others heeded the urging of their families to take the oath to the Union and be released from prison. Petitions testifying to their newfound Union loyalty poured into congressional offices. In February 1864, Congressman Brutus J. Clay, painfully aware himself of the ordeal of these families, received thirty-three appeals by Union fathers in his congressional district asking for the release of their rebel sons.⁵⁷

In their petitions these fathers typically explained their sons’ service as the naïveté of youth. Their sons had been “seduced” into the service by “designing men,” they wrote, but after two years of war their sons were now repentant of their errors. One man explained that his son was intoxicated when he joined the rebel army but was immediately sorry once he became sober and realized what he had done. A more typical letter was that of A. H. Calvin of Fayette County, Kentucky. His son had enlisted with John Hunt Morgan the previous year, but once imprisoned wanted to return home as quickly as he could. Calvin was at first unwilling to help his son. “I thought he had not repented enough,” Calvin explained, but after receiving numerous letters from his son claiming to be sorry for fighting with the Confederacy, he became convinced that his son was ready to become a “good and Loyal citizen.” Calvin promised, as did other Union fathers, that his son would be true to his word. He would make sure of it.⁵⁸

This language of repentance suffused fathers’ descriptions of their sons’ behavior. “He has repented for the sins that he committed in joining the rebellion,” one typical petitioner explained. Fathers listened for signs that their sons were sufficiently prepared to be prodigal. One uncle who had assumed a fatherly role in a boy’s life was upset when the boy had not expressed enough willingness to apologize for his ser-

vice. “Had you said in your note that you had been duped, deceived, betrayed into this rebellion, and that you repented,” the uncle wrote, “I would have labored for your release.” Because he had not, and because he still sided with men who threatened to kill his uncle, the uncle informed him that “you can never have my aid.” This man left the boy to suffer for his sins; the boy had not yet earned forgiveness.⁵⁹

Parents skeptical of their sons’ repentance sometimes preferred prison over a parole. “I would much sooner see it then to see you in the Rebel army,” one father explained to his son in 1862. This father sympathized with his son’s incarceration but refused to help him because he did not trust his son to return home after being released. Other fathers chose to view imprisonment as a boon to their child’s health and well-being. The *Louisville Daily Journal* argued that sons would be well cared for while in the custody of United States officials, as they would not experience the cold, hunger, and battlefield dangers that came with Confederate service. Even better, prison could serve as a deterrent to their rebellious behavior: the paper argued that by remaining in prison “they will not be guilty of the awful crime of . . . attempting to strike down the glorious flag that protected them in their cradles.”⁶⁰

Some rebel sons themselves preferred remaining in prison to returning home to their parents. Indeed, not all sons were ready to repent, or “swallow the dog,” as one Tennessee soldier put it. Thomas Hall of Maryland recoiled at the idea of his father appealing to the Union government for his release. “What—you & my sister go to the Ape as supplicants in my behalf?” he exclaimed after hearing that Abraham Lincoln had been consulted about his release. “I would rather spend my days in prison than obtain liberty by such means.” Ezekiel Clay likewise refused his father’s arrangement for his parole when it became clear that Zeke would not be exchanged and returned to the Confederate army. Zeke wrote to his father that it was inconsistent with his “views of honor” to deny him the option of an exchange, and explained that the parole as it stood would make him a deserter from the Confederate army—a “brand of disgrace.” This should not have been difficult for Brutus to understand, he continued, if he took “a father’s interest in my welfare.”⁶¹

Brutus Clay was forced to reckon with the collision between his son’s individual honor and that of his family. He never followed through on his threat of disinheritance, and even indicated in a letter to his daughter that he could understand Zeke’s latest request. “I would certainly not wish him to do any thing that was dishonorable,” he acknowledged, but at the same time he also viewed Zeke’s release as something quite honorable. The fact that the government was allowing Zeke to have his home as his prison was showing “greater deference” to him,

Brutus reasoned. More important to Brutus was the honor that would come to him when he stopped his son from taking up arms against the Union again. Zeke would have to come home on these terms—and he eventually did. Like other sons whose fathers obtained their parole, Zeke was powerless to resist his fate. When he eventually returned home, Brutus gave him land and instructed him on building a livelihood closer to the Clay family home. Zeke once again had to answer to his father, and their conflict thus ended with Brutus's reassertion of his paternal authority.⁶²

Not all cases ended in such a prodigal reunion. Edmund Patterson, for example, was so angry that his Union father did not come to his aid when he was imprisoned in Ohio that he did not speak to him again until 1890. For some families it took generations to achieve some sort of reconciliation, for others it happened right away. But for almost all, the experience of war as a personal, family conflict—which to sons seemed at first more devastating than the political conflict they preferred—ironically made reconciliation possible. It gave members on both sides an incentive to sort through their differences and a means by which to forge new bonds. That means was the same uneasy territory in which fathers and sons negotiated their relationship before the war. Fathers' concerns about their sons' filial dependence remained, even as they reasserted their own authority with new vigor. And sons still sought to assert their independence, as well as their political views, even as they asked for their fathers' help. This was all familiar to fathers and sons, and though heightened by the stress of war, made reunion manageable. It also made reunion seem possible for the nation.⁶³

"As it is in the family and household, so it is in the state, and between States." When the *Charleston Mercury* wrote these words in January 1863, it appealed to leaders North and South to see the intimate connection between family life and national politics. The family provided an ideal "basis of political relations," the paper suggested, one that valued personal ties over differences, affection over conflict. In the *Mercury's* view, only this domesticated politics could bring a peaceable end to the Civil War. The nation therefore should act like a family writ large.⁶⁴

The *Mercury* was not the only publication that turned to the family to help think about national reconciliation. The divided family—and particularly the divided father and son—became a staple of wartime and postwar short stories, novels, and newspaper essays exploring the question of reunion. This was not the first time the family provided a model for a nation. It was a popular convention in antebellum political culture, both in the United States and abroad, to talk of ideal relations among the states in generational terms. The nation was "father," or

sometimes "mother," the states its "sons," and the nation of people, the "great American family." But the line between metaphor and reality blurred in a war that quite literally pitted sons against fathers, and this language—particularly its masculine overtones—took on a new resonance in popular culture. It spoke of tragedy, but it also offered meaning to the conflict. At least in the eyes of Northerners, the Union became the father—often under the leadership of "Father Abraham"—the Confederacy the rebellious or "degenerate son." The war was to bring those errant sons back into the family fold.⁶⁵

Here again the parable of the prodigal son was resonant. On Christmas 1864, for example, *Harper's Weekly* published an allegorical illustration entitled "the return of the prodigal son," and with it an article making clear the North was willing "to welcome the rebellious children back to the family banquet." The Union was ready to reassert its fatherly authority if its sons would repent and return to the national household, this illustration suggested, and this allegory seemed apt for the divided nation. It depicted a reunion of loved ones, but not of equals: a submissive, childlike South was urged to return to the dominant, paternal North. It was imagery not unlike the trope of intersectional "marriage" described by historians of postwar reunion, in which mid-century writers cast the North as the dominant husband, the South the submissive wife. Instead of gender, though, *generations* articulated definite and unequal roles for the sections. The relationship of father and son embodied the central questions of reunion—authority and repentance—while still capturing the ambivalence that would surround the reintegration of the North and South.⁶⁶

This language of prodigality provoked a lively dialogue on the reunion question in the border states. Former Confederates resisted its implication of repentance, while strident Unionists were vocal about its misrepresentation of the South. "It is interesting to note the difference between the Prodigal Son and these returning rebels," Tennessee's Republican governor William G. Brownlow argued in an October 1865 speech that was later published in the *Nashville Daily Press*. Criticizing members of his state legislature who he believed were too lenient on former Confederates—and who frequently quoted this parable—Brownlow noted that the prodigal son "did not secede," like the Confederates, and more significantly, sincerely repented his sins. Nothing about the Confederates, in Brownlow's view, was deserving of the prodigal label. "Do rebels, coming home, come repenting of their unparalleled crimes?" he asked. "Are they not coming back because they are whipped, and 'perish with hunger'?"⁶⁷

Defeat and resignation should not be mistaken with repentance, Brownlow argued, but he was outnumbered in his view. Maryland's

governor A. W. Bradford, who had a rebel son of his own, urged a Baltimore crowd in 1866 to "welcome back the returning prodigal." Newspapers across the border states likewise published overtures to the "returning prodigals" throughout the 1860s. In this middle region of the country, where former Confederates and Unionists had to find a way to live side by side again, this family imagery made reconciliation seem possible. Real families that split grappled with the same fundamental questions about the meaning of conflict and loyalty that also troubled leaders North and South. But just as divided fathers and sons could—however uneasily—patch up their differences on the grounds of a stronger personal bond, so too could the nation. The overriding message of this metaphorical image was clear: as a family, the nation could manage both conflict and reconciliation.⁶⁸

Notes

I would like to thank Edward Ayers, Cindy Aron, Joan Cashin, Gary Gallagher, and Scott Taylor for their very helpful suggestions and comments on this essay.

1. Henry Stone to mother and father, February 13, December 5, 1863, Henry Stone to father, September 7, 1863, Stone Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, (hereafter FHS).

2. "What Secession Has Done," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, October 4, 1861, 1.

3. Joseph C. Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, February 23, 1862, Breckinridge Family Papers, Library of Congress (hereafter LC). On the Civil War in the border states, see James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988), 276–307; Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York, 1927); Daniel Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill and London, 1989); Lowell H. Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington, 1975), 1–13; Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York, 1989); Edward L. Ayers, *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*, <http://www.jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2>; William W. Freehling, *The South versus the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the War* (New York, 2001).

4. I have found only three cases which demonstrate the reverse: fathers who sided with the Confederacy while their sons fought for the Union.

5. Diary of Johanna Louisa "Josie" Underwood, February 9, 1861, Special Collections, Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky (hereafter WKU); "Letters of a Father, No. 1," *Louisville Daily Journal*, September 9, 1861, 2.

6. On the generational divide, see William Barney, *The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860* (Princeton, 1974), 61–88; Peter S. Carmichael, "The Last Generation: Sons of Virginia Slaveholders and the Creation of Southern Identity," (Ph.D. Diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1996).

7. Samuel Halsey to Joseph J. Halsey, July 23, 1857, Morton-Halsey Family Papers, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library (hereafter UVA).

8. John J. Crittenden to George Crittenden, April 30, 1861, Crittenden Family Papers, FHS. See also John Cox Underwood, "Lincoln, Sumner, and Corwin: Reminiscences of Interviews with Charles Sumner, President Abraham Lincoln, and Judge Thomas Corwin," n.d., 3, WKU; Samuel Kennard to his parents, March 12, 1862, Civil War Collection, folder 181, Missouri Historical Society (hereafter MHS); letter from Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas to Union Secretary of War Simon Cameron, as quoted in Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 15.

9. No title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, September 19, 1862, 2. On political socialization within families, see Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York, 1986), 164; George C. Rabbe, *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution against Politics* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 178; and especially, Jean H. Baker, *Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca and London, 1983), 22, 29–70.

10. Matthew Page Andrews to Anna Robinson, May 7, July 28, 1861, Charles Wesley Andrews to Matthew Page Andrews, May 27, 1861, Charles Wesley Andrews Papers, Special Collections Department, Duke University, (hereafter Duke). On the social pressures compelling men to fight, see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, 1997), 88–89; E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago, 1990), 15–36.

11. Henry Stone to his father, February 13, 1863, Stone Family Papers, FHS; Letters of Matthew and Charles Andrews, Charles Wesley Andrews Papers, Duke. On conscription laws, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 427–31, 492–94; Philip Shaw Paludan, *A People's Contest: The Union and the Civil War, 1861–1865*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 189–90; Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation: 1861–1865* (New York, 1979), 152–55.

12. Ann Clay to Brutus J. Clay, September 19, 1861, Clay Family Papers, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky (hereafter UKY).

13. Ezekiel Clay to family, September 24, 1861, Clay Family Papers, UKY.

14. Brutus Clay to Ann Clay, October 14, 1862, Ann Clay to husband Brutus, September 25, 1861, Clay Family Papers, UKY.

15. See also William Preston Johnston to Rosa, September 18, 1861, William Preston Johnston Papers, FHS.

16. On affectionate child rearing, see E. Anthony Rotundo, "American Fatherhood: A Historical Perspective," *American Behavioral Scientist* 29 (September/October 1985): 7–13; Robert E. Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York, 1993), 11–30; Stephen Frank, *Life with Father: Parenthood and Masculinity in the Nineteenth-Century American North* (Baltimore, 1998), 23–51; Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority, 1750–1800* (Cambridge, 1982). On the endur-

ance of patriarchal authority, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York, 1982), 117-98, quote 170; Joan E. Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York, 1991), 32-52; Joseph E. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790-Present* (New York, 1977), 45. Additional works on the conflicted relationship between fathers and sons include Steven Mintz, *A Prison of Expectations: The Family in Victorian Culture* (New York, 1983), 59-101; Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1992), 68-108, 166-68; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York, 1981), 32; James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York, 1983), 69-71.

17. "Letters of a Father, No. 1," "Letters of a Father, No. 2," *Louisville Daily Journal*, September 9, 20, 1861, 2.

18. Barney, *The Secessionist Impulse*, 61-88; Carmichael, "The Last Generation," 1-37.

19. William Sydnor Thomson to Warner Alexander Thomson, March 24, 1861, Warner Alexander Thomson to William Sydnor Thomson, March 17, 1861, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University (hereafter Emory). See also Crittenden Family Papers, UKY; John Kemphall Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives (hereafter TSA). Thirty-nine of the 52 families studied for this essay could be found in the census records, and of those 39, 31 (or 79 percent) had rebel sons living in their father's household in 1860. The fact that nearly 50 percent of these sons were also oldest children perhaps underscores just how much they depended upon their fathers to guide their futures. Indeed, sociological and psychological studies suggest that oldest children identify more closely with and are more likely to inherit family legacies than other children. Of the rest of the sons, 31 percent were middle sons, 12 percent were the youngest, and 7 percent were only children (Federal Census of 1860, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia). On birth order and parental identification among siblings, see Stephen P. Bank and Michael D. Kahn, *The Sibling Bond* (New York, 1997), 6-7, 55-56; Susan Scarf Merrell, *The Accidental Bond: The Power of Sibling Relationships* (New York, 1995), 223-30; and Lori Glover, *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds among the Early South Carolina Gentry* (Baltimore, 2000), 28.

20. S. F. Gano to Brutus J. Clay, March 29, 1864, Clay Family Papers, UKY; no title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, October 23, 1861, 2.

21. See Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America* (New Haven, 1982), 1-32.

22. William C. P. Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, July 15, 1862, W. L. Breckinridge to William C. P. Breckinridge, May 3, 1862, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC; C. L. Field to Brutus J. Clay, May 24, 1861, Clay Family Papers, UKY.

23. Diary of C. Alice Ready, March 8, 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (hereafter UNC); "Errant Youth," *Louisville Daily Journal*, September 25, 1861, 3; Henry Stone to James Stone, September 3, 1863, Stone Family Papers, FHS; Christian Ashby Creek, ed., "Memoirs of Mrs. E. B. Patterson: A Perspective on Danville during the Civil

War," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (Autumn 1994): 351. This estimate of how many sons followed Morgan is taken from a combined count of the following sources: manuscript collections of Union families in which sons served with Morgan; letters written by Union fathers to their Kentucky congressmen complaining of Morgan's influence; and newspaper accounts of service in Morgan's cavalry. See the 1862 issues of the *Louisville Daily Journal* and the *Nashville Daily Press*, and the letters from fathers to Congressman Brutus J. Clay, Clay Family Papers, UKY. On Morgan's appeal, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 514; James A. Ramage, *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan* (Lexington, 1986), 1-7, 65-70, 100-101.

24. Will S. Richart to Brutus J. Clay, January 22, 1864, A. H. Calvin to Brutus J. Clay, January 16, 1864, John [Lee?] to Brutus J. Clay, February 18, 1864, James Hanagan to Brutus J. Clay, March 29, 1864, Clay Family Papers, UKY; Henry Stone to his mother, January 4, 1864, Stone Family Papers, FHS. On soldiers' desire for "adventure," see McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 26-28; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge and London, 1978), 17.

25. C. W. Andrews to Sarah Andrews, June 1, 1861, Charles Wesley Andrews Papers, Duke; Diary of Louisa Brown Pearl, TSA.

26. Adeline L. Lawton to Alexander J. Lawton, June 8, 1861, Alexander R. Lawton Papers, UNC; Bethiah McKown to John D. McKown, April 17, June 4, 1863, John D. McKown Papers, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri. On the "republican mothers," see Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (New York, 1980), 283; Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York, 1993), xi-xiv, 86-87.

27. Henry Stone to father, February 5, 1864, Henry Stone to father and mother, December 5, 1863, Stone Family Papers, FHS.

28. William Thomson to Warner Thomson, February [?], 1861, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory.

29. Ezekiel Clay to family, September 24, 1861, Clay Family Papers, UKY; Henry Stone to his father, December 29, 1862, July 21, 1863, Stone Family Papers, FHS; Matthew Page Andrews to Anna Robinson, March 10, 1861, Charles Wesley Andrews Family Papers, Duke; Samuel Kennard to parents, March 12, 1862, Letters of Samuel Kennard, MHS. On why soldiers fought, see Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 15-27; Randall C. Jimenson, *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought during the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge, 1988); Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York, 1988); McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*.

30. C. W. Andrews to Matthew Page Andrews, May 21, 1861, Charles Wesley Andrews Papers, Duke; Henry Stone, "My Reasons for Evading a [Union] Draft," September 25, 1865, Stone Family Papers, FHS. Of the 39 families located in the census, 33 (or 84 percent) were included as slave owners (Federal Census for 1860 *Slave Schedules*, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia). On proslavery Unionism, see John C. Inscoe and Gordon B. McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, 2000), 83-104.

31. Brutus Clay to Ann Clay, October 14, 1862, Ann Clay to Brutus Clay, September 10, 1862, Clay Family Papers, UKY. See also William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory. On disinheritance practices among Southern planters, see Joan E. Cashin, "According to his Wish and Desire: Female Kin and Female Slaves in Planter Wills," in *Women of the American South: A Multicultural Reader*, ed. Christie Anne Farnham (New York and London, 1997), 100-104.
32. On the importance of letters to parenting, see Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual and the Lives of Planters* (Baltimore, 1987), 144-47; James Marten, "Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and their Children," *Journal of Southern History* 63 (May 1997): 269-92.
33. Diary of Warner Thomson, May 29, 1864, Warner Thomson to William Sydnor Thomson, December 3, 1860, William Sydnor Thomson to Josephine Thomson, July 27, 1864, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory.
34. William Sydnor Thomson to Josephine Thomson, July 27, 1864, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory; Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 170.
35. Diary of Warner Alexander Thomson, February 19, 1863, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory.
36. William Sydnor Thomson to Josephine Thomson, July 27, 1864, Josephine Thomson to William Sydnor Thomson, August [?], 1864, William Sydnor Thomson Papers, Emory.
37. Exactly how far the South's honor culture extended is difficult to determine, although the border-state families considered here clearly embraced its tenets. On the idea of family honor, see Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War*, 182-83; Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 132-33. On the intersection of private life and public reputation in antebellum America, see Norma Basch, "Marriage, Morals, and Politics in the Election of 1828," *Journal of American History* 80 (December 1993): 890-918; Jacob Katz Cogan, "The Reynolds Affair and the Politics of Character," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (Fall 1996): 389-417.
38. "John J. Crittenden," *Louisville Daily Journal*, March 10, 1864, 2; John J. Crittenden to George Crittenden, April 30, 1861, John J. Crittenden Letters, FHS; no title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, May 5, 1862, 3; "Mr. Crittenden's Position," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, June 21, 1861, 3; Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, 17; Albert D. Kirwan, *John J. Crittenden: The Struggle for the Union* (Lexington, 1962), vii.
39. John J. Crittenden to George D. Prentice, May 8, 1862, John J. Crittenden Letters, FHS.
40. Ibid. For an overview of the literature on separate spheres, see Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39.
41. No title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, March 26, 1862, 2; no title, *Richmond Enquirer*, June 18, 1861, 2; James M. Pritchard, "Champion of the Union: George D. Prentice and the Civil War in Kentucky," (master's thesis, Wright State University, 1988).
42. "George D. Prentice and His Son," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, October 4, 1862, 1 (reprinted from the *Cincinnati Commercial*); "Letter from George D. Prentice," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, October 8, 1862, 1

- (reprinted from the *Cincinnati Commercial*); no title, *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, October 3, 1862, 1 (reprinted from the *Cincinnati Gazette*); "George D. Prentice in Memory of His Rebel Son," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, December 12, 1862, 1 (printed also in the *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, October 11, 1862).
43. "William Courland Prentice: A Brief Sketch," *Louisville Daily Journal*, October 8, 1861, 3 (reprinted as "George D. Prentice in Memory of his Rebel Son," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, December 12, 1862, 1). On mourning as a private affair, see Haltunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 124-52.
 44. For an analysis of how religious beliefs motivated other men and women to publish similar funeral narratives during the war, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying," *Journal of Southern History* 67 (February 2001): 3-38.
 45. "A Note from Geo. D. Prentice—Reply to a Slander," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, March 27, 1863, 3 (also published in the *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, March 20, 1863); "Parson Brownlow on George D. Prentice—A Withering Expose of a Copperhead," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, November 16, 1864, 2. Prentice's pride in his newspaper's Union influence is reflected in a remark he once made to Abraham Lincoln: "[W]ithout it [the *Journal*], Kentucky could not have been kept in the Union" (George Prentice to Abraham Lincoln, November 16, 1861, George D. Prentice Papers, UKY).
 46. No title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, March 11, 1862, 2.
 47. Ibid. On the southern veneration of bloodlines, see Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 118-25; Carmichael, "The Last Generation," 128-30; William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 145-76. On Davis and Stephens, see William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (New York, 1991); Thomas Edwin Schott, *Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia: A Biography* (Baton Rouge, 1988).
 48. "One of Jeff. Davis's Children in Wisconsin," July 23, 1863, *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, 1 (reprinted from the *Oshkosh [Wisc.] Northwesterner*, also published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, August 8, 1863, 311); and no title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, June 18, 1865, 3; "Jeff Davis's Son in the National Service," *Louisville Daily Journal*, February 9, 1864, 2; "Miscegenation by Jeff. Davis," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, April 27, 1864, 5 (reprinted from the *Boston Journal*); "Jeff Davis's Son in the Federal Service," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, February 3, 1864, 1 (reprinted from the *London Star*).
 49. "Miscegenation by Jeff. Davis," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, April 27, 1864, 5; "Jeff Davis's Son in the Federal Service," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, February 3, 1864, 1.
 50. "Davissegregation," *Franklin Co. (Pa.) Repository*, June 22, 1864, 1. I have found no evidence of any public response by Davis in the border-state newspapers.
 51. "Did the writing of a patriotic song entitle the writer's posterity to immunity in treason and adultery?" the *Louisville Daily Journal* asked hypothetically of Francis Scott Key (no title, August 19, 1861, 2). Of the numerous articles on

- the Breckinridges, see "Is He Loyal?" *Louisville Daily Journal*, November 3, 1864, 3; "An Uncle on his Nephew," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, August 15, 1862, 2. On the Clays, see no title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, October 26, 1863, 3. On the family of Thomas Jefferson, see "Jefferson's Descendants," *Nashville Daily Press*, November 21, 1863, 2.
52. William C. Childers, ed., "A Virginian's Dilemma: The Civil War Diary of Isaac Noyes Smith," *West Virginia History* 27 (January 1966): 184.
53. "Union Feeling at the South," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, February 28, 1862, 3; "Dr. R. J. Breckinridge," *Louisville Daily Journal*, November 3, 1864, 3; William Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, October 27, 1862, Breckinridge Family Papers, LC.
54. Ann Clay to Brutus J. Clay, April 17, August 19, September 17, 24, 1862, Brutus J. Clay to Ann Clay, October 14, 1862, Clay Family Papers, UKY.
55. George Starling to Mary, December 22, 1862, Lewis-Starling Papers, WKU; "Return of a Prodigal Son," *Columbia Missouri Statesman*, December 13, 1861, 2; "Return of a Prodigal Son," *Louisville Daily Journal*, February 28, 1862, 4.
56. No title, *Nashville Daily Press*, August 28, 1863, 2; Col. W. Hoffman to Brig. Gen. A. Schoepf, August 4, 1863, and Col. W. Hoffman to Maj. Gen. W. S. Roscreans, August 7, 1863, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C., 1880-1906), ser. 2, vol. 6, 175, 186.
57. See, for example, Burgess Ecton to B. J. Clay, January 8, 1864, Clay Family Papers, UKY.
58. Will S. Richart to Brutus J. Clay, January 22, 1864, Allen Kiser to Brutus J. Clay, February 20, 1864, M. E. Glover to Abraham Lincoln, February 28, 1864, A. H. Calvin to Brutus J. Clay, January 16, 1864, Clay Family Papers, UKY.
59. M. E. Glover to Abraham Lincoln, February 28, 1864, Clay Family Papers, UKY; "Letter from a Rebel Prisoner to his Loyal Uncle—The Uncle's Reply," *St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat*, April 18, 1862, 1.
60. Henry Whisler to his son, June 5, 1862, Camp Chase Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; no title, *Louisville Daily Journal*, February 20, 1862, 2.
61. *Memoirs of John Kempshall*, 5, TSLA; Thomas Hall to his father, November 3, 1862, Thomas W. Hall Papers, Maryland Historical Society (hereafter MDHS); Ezekiel Clay to father, January 18, 24, 1865, Clay Family Papers, UKY.
62. Brutus Clay to daughter Martha Davenport, January 21, 1865, Clay Family Papers, UKY.
63. John G. Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund De Witt Patterson* (Chapel Hill, 1966), viii.
64. "Seymour and the Union," *Charleston Mercury*, January 12, 1863.
65. On family metaphors, see Anne Norton, *Alternative Americas: A Reading of Antebellum Political Culture* (Chicago, 1986), 40-41, 266-73; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly* 44 (October 1987), 689-721; George Forge, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age*

(New York, 1979); Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair*; Melvin Yazawa, *From Colonists to Commonwealth: Familial Ideology and the Beginnings of the American Republic* (Baltimore, 1985); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1992); and Frank Costigliola, "The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance," *Diplomatic History* 21 (Spring 1997): 163-83.

66. "Christmas," *Harper's Weekly*, December 31, 1864, 834. On the equation of reunion with a marriage, see Nina Silber, *Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1993), 39-65; Norton, *Alternative Americas*, 132-202, 240-76; Paul Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston, 1937), 196-235; Jane Turner Censer, "Reimagining the North-South Reunion: Southern Women Novelists and the Intersectional Romance, 1876-1900," *Southern Cultures* (Summer 1999): 64-91.

67. "Gov. Brownlow's Message," *Nashville Daily Press*, October 3, 1865, 2.

68. Governor A. W. Bradford, "Address," [?], 1866, Governor A. W. Bradford Papers, MDHS; "Duty of the Returning Prodigals," *Nashville Daily Press*, May 26, 1865, 2.