

## Introduction

My enthusiasm was pretty well aroused Monday—it being “Memorial Day”—and it was a beautiful sight to see the Grand A.R. observe the ceremonies consequent on that day. I think on one occasion on that day, and I don’t know but more than one, the thought came to me that perhaps we as soldiers would be as much thought of if we were under the turf as well—but of course live soldiers don’t deserve as much credit as dead ones.

Letter from James C. Bolles to Charles Maxim

The question of what the living owe to the dead is central to the healing process for any culture following war. Cemeteries, monuments, and rituals such as parades are all pieces of the attempt by a society to remember the sacrifices of those who gave their lives in its defense. From these commemorations, a public memory develops of the war, its causes, and larger significance. This public memory becomes the story of the war that a society tells to its future generations. What civilians owe to veterans is a much thornier question. Unlike dead soldiers, veterans endure as everyday reminders of the conflict in which they participated and often require considerable medical and financial aid to help them adjust to life following the war. Veterans also tend to complicate the portrait of war created by public memory. Their diverse experiences remind society of the messiness of war at a time when most are searching for closure.

Each war has its unique characteristics, but they all seem to share this conundrum of how to address living veterans. *New Men* explores this dilemma in the context of the post-Civil War era United States. In this book we see the tangled reintegration process of former soldiers from the North and South as they attempted to reenter civilian life. We also see growing tension that develops between the well-meaning civilians who attempted to understand those who fought in the war and Civil War veterans who sensed that they were different following discharge from the army but struggled to explain how and why. From that tension emerged a new understanding of what it meant to be a “veteran.” No longer the marker of a temporary status, veteran came to connote a new identity that was associated with a new state of consciousness. This shift in the understanding of what it meant to be

a veteran was a different type of reconstruction that would influence how later generations of U.S. authors wrote about war. Not simply one event in a man's life, military service in time of war became a defining experience.

Through studying this shift in the conception of "the veteran," the research in *New Men* engages two entrenched narratives associated with scholarship on the post-Civil War era in the United States. The first is connected to literary history—the theme of the "unwritten war." Having its origin in the statement by American poet Walt Whitman that "the real war will never get in the books," this theme has long been used as the starting point for examinations of why no "great" literature of the Civil War was written in the three decades following its close.<sup>1</sup> Feminist scholarship has done much to undermine this belief by showing how female authors published hundreds of popular novels, short stories, and poems that until relatively recently have not been classified by scholars as Civil War fiction.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, the theme of the unwritten war still has a strong hold on the critical imagination as scholars continue to study the gaps in the literary record for clues about how the war was represented in fiction and why authors chose to represent it the way they did.<sup>3</sup>

*New Men* addresses the theme of the unwritten war by uncovering the origins of veteran claims to representational authority of "their war."<sup>4</sup> Veterans of the war experienced a gap between what language could describe and what they had survived. Some former soldiers attempted to ignore this gap, writing conventional narratives that belied their experience. Others explored it in an attempt to reshape language and narrative structure to better conform to their lives. What all veterans shared, however, was a sense that only those who had participated in the war could truly understand the conflict. Civilians often laughed at the tendency of old soldiers to argue with each other endlessly over minute details associated with a Civil War battle, but the arguments of these veterans signaled a challenge for anyone attempting to write about the war in the late nineteenth-century United States.

The war was not left unwritten. Instead the terms of representation shifted in such a way that non-veterans were discouraged from writing.

The second narrative addressed by my research comes from historiography—the so-called “road to reunion.” The road to reunion assumes that the central issues of the war—slavery and black civil rights—were hidden in the late nineteenth century through a focus on white solidarity. That solidarity was represented for many Americans by the image of soldiers from the North and South reuniting on their former battlefields as friends in Blue-Gray gatherings.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies of Civil War veterans have begun to call into question the dominant interpretation of the role veterans played in the road to reunion. They highlight the tensions that persisted between Union and Confederate veterans well into the twentieth century as well as the importance of questions surrounding manhood and disability.<sup>6</sup> These studies encourage future scholars to move beyond an approach to analyzing the war that often tells us more about dead soldiers than it does living veterans.

What we learn from the experience of veterans described in *New Men* is that historians have overestimated the degree of amity between former soldiers and civilians. At the same time they have also underestimated the degree of understanding that existed between northern and southern veterans. Even though veterans were not willing to forget the issues that motivated them to fight and divided them from their foes on the battlefield, both Union and Confederate veterans shared the experience of camp and combat. What we see in photos of Blue-Gray reunions is filtered through the lens of late nineteenth and early twentieth century civilian political needs. For the nation to become an international power, it first needed to unite around a common mythology. Johnny Reb and Billy Yank shaking hands with each other at Gettysburg provided that foundation. However, veterans took a different meaning from their reunions. As *New Men* shows, veterans of the North and South shared a survivor’s sense of changed identity and an ongoing determination to understand the force that had reshaped the course of their lives.

A few words are in order at this point about the scope of this project. *New Men* is a qualitative rather than a quantitative study. Even in this era of digitized texts, it still isn't possible to view much less analyze every narrative written by a Civil War veteran. Moreover, the experiences of veterans are often so different in the details that thus far the only successful quantitative studies of Civil War veterans have been limited to regional histories of states and counties.<sup>7</sup> My interest throughout this study has been in larger trends that illustrate the way many veterans understood themselves and their war experience. I have also sought to expose patterns in the way that civilians responded to veteran claims of exceptionalism. These trends have then been used as a way to understand the literature and culture of the postwar era. Veteran reintegration thus provides a new heuristic for cultural historians, an alternative to examining the era's cultural production exclusively through the lens of race and reconciliation or sectionalist politics.

Because this new heuristic depends upon an altered conception of what it meant to be a veteran, it is necessary to briefly consider how this term was used prior to the Civil War. The term "veteran" appears in relation to fiction and non-fiction writings associated with the three major wars that preceded the Civil War: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War. In these wars, however, the term reflected the length of service or technical expertise of a soldier rather than representing a unique state of consciousness or altered sense of social identity in relation to civilians. This less exclusionary use of the term reflected the fact that divisions existed within the soldiery between officers and enlisted men as well as regulars, militia, and volunteers.<sup>8</sup> Politics also proved to be more of a dividing factor for soldiers than their military service.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, veterans of wars prior to the Civil War felt a greater affinity with groups outside the ranks of the army than they did with other former soldiers. All of this meant, of course, that "veterans" would not become an object of social interest in their own right. Instead they would be discussed as a subsidiary factor related to larger social issues.

These issues varied in each of the three major wars that preceded the Civil War. Revolutionary War veterans would initially be ignored to emphasize the character of that conflict as a “people’s war.” Distrustful of standing armies, the leaders of the new republic wanted to enshrine in public memory the image of the Revolutionary War as a struggle won by all the people mobilized in defense of their homes.<sup>10</sup> Over time this vision of the war would change due in part to the poor performance of the militia in the War of 1812, whose veterans were frequently lumped together in nineteenth century public memory with those of the Revolutionary War, and also the rise of a new generation for whom the Revolutionary War was a part of history rather than their living memory. This new generation looked with pity upon the aging veterans of the Revolutionary War and sought inspiration in their record of service to the nation.<sup>11</sup> Mexican War veterans would initially be understood as torch bearers of the Revolutionary War veterans’ legacy. Their military service showed that the patriotic spirit of the founding generation had not faded away. What that legacy might have become remains an object of speculation as public memory of the Mexican War was quickly elided into that of the Civil War that soon followed.

Literary history also reflects the changed usage of the term “veteran.” Studies of war literature as a distinct genre in the United States tend to begin after the Civil War.<sup>12</sup> Far from accidental, this indicates the changed status of war as a concept in American culture and of the men who fight in the nation’s wars. Before war was conceptualized as a transformative experience and the veteran as the possessor of a unique form of consciousness, it was not unusual for civilians to write about veterans. Among the better known antebellum works of fiction addressing the topic of veterans in the early republic are Washington Irving’s *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) and Herman Melville’s *Israel Potter* (1855), which was based on a memoir titled *The Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel R. Potter* (1824). This perspective changed to such a degree after the Civil War, thanks to the reintegration experience of Civil War veterans, that by the 1890s it was impossible for Americans to conceive of a young man like

Stephen Crane, who had not served in the war, writing so “realistic” an account of combat. Not simply a watershed moment in national politics and race relations, the Civil War also proved itself the dividing point between two distinct ways of writing about war. Finding the “real” war would now become the obsession of American authors writing about combat and possession of that reality would be assumed under the control of those who had “gone to see the elephant.”<sup>13</sup>

The change in conception of what it meant to be a “veteran” and the belief that this status came with a unique perspective on war was due to the exceptional nature of the Civil War in comparison to the wars that preceded it. There is considerable disagreement among historians over what made the Civil War different from earlier conflicts in the United States. Some have even claimed that the Civil War was not that unique from prior wars. Much of this disagreement hinges on the question of whether the Civil War was the first “modern” or “total” war in the United States.<sup>14</sup> How one defines a war as modern or total depends upon a number of factors. Chief among them is the degree of involvement of civilians in the conflict. Sherman’s “march to the sea” has often been used as evidence that civilians became legitimate targets in the last years of the Civil War. By destroying their property, Sherman hoped to hasten the war’s end and make sure that the South would think hard before engaging in another conflict with the “legitimate” government.<sup>15</sup> Another key factor is the use of technology on the battlefield. Rifled muskets and artillery increased the range of fire for soldiers in the Civil War. Breech loading versions of these weapons increased the rate of fire. Trenches became far more elaborate in part to help infantry deal with these new threats.<sup>16</sup>

For the purposes of this book, modernity and totality are not reviewed as absolutes. Recent scholarship on the Civil War has shown the limits of our assumptions about Sherman’s march and the lethality of the rifled musket. What this proves, however, is not that the Civil War was not a modern or total war but rather that no war can live up to the abstract ideal represented by these terms. The United States Civil War contained within it elements of a modern or total war that co-existed (often

uncomfortably) with tactics and strategies present in prior conflicts. This makes sense as many of the commanding officers during the war had fought in the Mexican War using tactics based on the Napoleonic tradition as it was passed down by Jomini.<sup>17</sup> Although few Civil War generals were conscious practitioners of Jomini's principles, they instinctively applied them in the preparation of their battles. Battles were planned on the assumption that the terrain would be open and relatively flat. This would allow the army to maneuver around the enemy, threatening their communications and supply, and forcing them into a decisive engagement. Troops would then move towards the enemy massed in straight lines with artillery close behind them to provide covering fire. Once the battle was concluded, the armies would disengage and begin the process of recovery before starting a new campaign.

This tactical pattern remained fairly consistent throughout the war in spite of torturous terrain that often made its application a nightmare for common soldiers. Rosters of the dead from battles such as Shiloh, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Chickamauga indicate the real cost in lives of the significant gap that frequently existed between a general's plan of battle and battlefield conditions.<sup>18</sup> When Ulysses S. Grant became General of the Army in 1864, the greatest alteration he made was strategic rather than tactical in nature. Frustrated by the lack of coordination between armies in the various theaters of war, Grant sought to craft a plan that would attack Confederate forces on all fronts in a synchronized fashion. This would put maximum stress on the supplies for Confederate soldiers and prevent armies in different regions from sending each other reinforcements.<sup>19</sup>

One of the few significant tactical changes made by Grant appears minor upon surface examination. Beginning with the Overland Campaign in May of 1864, the Army of the Potomac maintained continuous contact with the Army of Northern Virginia. No longer would the armies fight a battle and disengage to recuperate. Grant would drive his army to follow Lee's troops wherever they went. For seven weeks the Army of the Potomac maneuvered in an attempt to cut off Lee from his base of supplies or force him into a major battle. What they eventually accomplished was to drive

Confederate forces into entrenchments around Petersburg.<sup>20</sup> There the Army of the Potomac settled in for a siege while Grant in his role as General of the Army encouraged his subordinates to follow his example and give all the southern armies no rest.



Figure 1. Dead Confederate Soldier. Cold Harbor. Library of Congress.

The decision to fight a series of continuous battles on every front made sense as part of a larger plan for the war. From the beginning, the Confederacy saw its primary goal as survival. If they could maintain an army in the field and gain international recognition, Confederate leaders believed that the North would have no choice but to let the southern states form a new nation distinct from the United States. This strategy was not dramatically different from that followed by the Continental Congress in the Revolutionary War, which was ultimately successful in creating the fledging United States as a republic. Union war strategy thus far had played into the hand of the Confederacy. By fighting southern armies and then disengaging, the North had allowed them a chance to marshal their resources in terms of men and supplies for the longest war possible. Grant intended to break that cycle and end the war quickly while keeping the nation intact.

In the end, Grant's plan for the war succeeded. Southern will to fight declined as both territory and supplies were lost to the North. That success, however, came at a price. Casualties remained fairly consistent in relation to earlier battles. At Gettysburg, for instance, 3,155 were killed, 14,531 wounded, and 5,369 captured or missing. During the battle of Cold Harbor, which supposedly cemented Grant's reputation as a butcher, casualties were 1,844 killed, 9,077 wounded, and 1,816 captured or missing.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the psychic toll on the living was greatly magnified by the increased tempo of combat. After the battle of Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac would not fight a major engagement with the Army of Northern Virginia for over three months. Following Cold Harbor, the northern army made one last attempt to flank General Lee's command. Then it settled down for a long siege of Confederate forces near Petersburg. Although no longer engaging their opponents in the open, neither side found respite in the trenches. Under near constant shelling, Private Daniel Bond of the First Minnesota confided to his diary "Oh! I am sick of war. God save me that I may oppose this slaughter of human beings."<sup>22</sup> Just one day later, he was a prisoner of war on his way to Andersonville. It would take nearly another year before God would answer his prayers.

“Modern” war is not simply about technological change or depredations against civilians. Nor is it solely about casualty statistics. In the context of the United States Civil War, it is the changed rhythm of war more than anything that marks it as different from earlier national conflicts. As soldiers are driven from battle to battle, there is something elemental in them that changes. Instinct takes over as consciousness is worn down by fatigue. Even today, we only partially understand these changes. Neuroscience still struggles to determine the physiological alterations that occur in battle. Civil War era soldiers had none of this knowledge at their disposal. All they had were the comrades they had fought beside and the stories they began to tell before the last of the war’s battles had even ended. What these soldiers had, however, they used to great effect. Leaving the ranks of the army, Civil War veterans left a trail of writings that document their uneven process of reintegration into civilian life. From examining that process we do not necessarily arrive at an answer about how the changed tempo of war had altered them but it soon becomes clear how they came to understand the ways in which they had become new men.

To uncover the trail of writings that illustrate veteran reintegration in the Civil War era, *New Men* relies upon a selective pairing of literary works. Most of these were chosen because they had been written by veterans of the war who wanted to better understand the conflict they had survived. The issues in these texts matched nicely with the non-fiction writings of Civil War veterans attempting a similar task in a different genre. This allowed the opportunity to explore some of the differences between representing war in fiction versus non-fiction forms. Additional texts were chosen based on their engagement with veterans’ issues in the postwar era. These were largely written by civilians attempting to understand the statements of Civil War veterans about their experience. They appear in the text primarily at moments when veterans were a matter of public concern such as during the period of army demobilization, during the debates over pension expansion, and in the Jim Crow era as African-

Americans debated the best role models for racial uplift. The narratives written by these civilian authors are meant to provide a greater context for issues veterans faced at each stage of their reintegration.

Blending an analysis of such a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction narratives alters our conception of many classics of Civil War literature such as *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*, and *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*. Suddenly it becomes clear how these works were involved in the task of documenting and defining what it meant to be a veteran in the late nineteenth-century United States. In addition, the juxtaposition of these texts offers an explanation for why war literature as a distinct genre in American fiction only seems to begin after the Civil War. Without a conception of veteran uniqueness, war is simply one event out of many in a man's life. Civil War veterans came to see their war service as a defining "experience" rather than simply an "event." This perspective and the narratives used to describe it made possible a new way of writing about war in literary forms. Military service came to be viewed as analogous to religious conversion. Writers of the "Lost Generation" such as Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos would find this new way of writing influential to their own conception of war as a subject for literature.

Understanding how Civil War veterans came to see their war service as an "experience" rather than an "event" requires a systematic and coherent analysis. In order to achieve this goal, *New Men* is organized both chronologically and thematically with each chapter marking a particular stage in the process of veteran reintegration. The first of these stages, explored in chapters one and two, comprises the initial period of army demobilization (1865-1867) and the search for employment among white veterans of the North and South that soon followed (1867-1877). Subsequent to this initial stage is a period (1877-1890) of growing awareness among veterans that their memories of the war set them apart from the civilian population. This growing sense of apartness among veterans led to the final stage (1890-1900) examined in *New Men* where civilians of the rising generation responded to former soldiers' claims of a unique and privileged identity with mingled appreciation and resentment. It is

worth noting that these periods are meant to be descriptive rather than proscriptive. Some overlap exists between themes explored in each period or stage. However, specific themes appear with greater frequency during the periods in which they are examined.

Additionally worth noting is the fact that *New Men* examines black veterans in their own chapter rather than spreading an analysis of their reintegration process throughout the book. This decision was not made lightly given the segregation that black veterans and the African-American community as a whole faced during the nineteenth century. Research indicated, however, that the postwar reintegration experience of former soldiers in the U.S. Colored Troops differed enough to warrant distinct examination. Consequently, even though we will see many of the same themes discussed at each stage of the reintegration process of white veterans appear in the discussion of the reintegration of black veterans, the details of each stage will vary significantly. This variance is due, in no small part, to the fact that while white veterans were fighting as one of the duties of their citizenship in the nation black veterans were fighting in large part to attain citizenship status in the first place. Moreover, those who had only recently been freed from chattel slavery saw this as an opportunity to prove that they were men and not property.

An examination of the stages of white veteran reintegration begins in chapter one. Here the initial period of army demobilization and civilian uneasiness about soldiers returning home is described. Analysis of Union veteran John William De Forest's novel *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty* and Confederate veteran Sidney Lanier's *Tiger Lilies* serve as examples of a veteran reaction against early postwar civilian claims that the majority of recently demobilized soldiers were disabled by their wartime service. Powerfully evoked in images such as Winslow Homer's engraving for *Harper's Weekly*, "The Empty Sleeve at Newport," the pervasive sentimental image of the wounded warrior in need of civilian care was created to allay anxieties concerning the dangerous and "demoralizing" effects of army life, which civilians believed exposed soldiers both to violence and vice. Civil War veterans

resisted the wide-spread belief circulating in newspapers and popular periodicals such as *Harper's* that former soldiers were victims of war in need of civilian caretakers to nurse them back to health and normalcy. They sought ways to prove that the war had simply been an interlude in their pre-war lives.

De Forest addresses these issues in his novel through an unflattering comparison of the heroic amateur soldier, the citizen-soldier Edward Colburne, with the stigmatized professional soldier John Carter. Colburne is sober, dutiful, and self-controlled, traits that the author believes necessary for success in civilian life. Carter, in contrast, is improvident and a slave to his passions. The heroine of the novel, Lillie Ravenel, finds this out, much to her chagrin, when she marries Carter only to find that he is incapable of supporting a family economically and is a philanderer, engaging in an affair with Lillie's Aunt. At the conclusion of the narrative, Carter is killed in battle, an ending that the author suggests is appropriate for this hapless old soldier. Following her first husband's death, Lillie, finally seeing the error of her ways, goes on to marry the heroic citizen-soldier Edward Colburne, who the narrative assumes will succeed at establishing himself in a postwar civilian career.

Despite De Forest's optimism, however, the narrative struggles to convince the reader near its conclusion why one veteran will succeed in postwar civilian life whereas the other could not. This dilemma is made all the more acute by the author's subconscious doubt concerning the *de facto* difference between citizen-soldiers and regulars. Both types of soldiers had survived the same campaigns and engaged in the same wartime actions. The author, consequently, can only reiterate his earlier claim that Colburne's status as an amateur rather than a professional warrior is a good omen for his ability to live a normal life in peacetime society.

Lanier's response to civilian anxiety focused less on distinctions among soldiers and instead envisioned a shared narrative of suffering that would join southern soldiers and civilians. That narrative would move beyond civilian pity for veterans and instead cultivate empathy. As the survivor of a Union prisoner of war camp and a sufferer of tuberculosis, Lanier shows less resistance than De Forest to the

sentimental image of the wounded warrior that was embraced by the postwar civilian populace. Nonetheless, his novel *Tiger Lilies* demonstrates the emergence of the belief that even though civilians could empathize with former soldiers, they would never fully understand what soldiers had lived through. The love of his friends and family allow the Confederate veteran Phil Sterling, the protagonist in the narrative, to reclaim his name and, along with it, the identity that he had lost in the prisoner of war camp. There he had simply become number four and then later answered to another man's name during roll call in order to attain better sleeping quarters. But being recognized by his friends and family and thereby reclaiming his name is a far cry from feeling "at home." Already in the days following the war's end, Phil Sterling senses a wall of experience that has dropped between him and the ones he loves.

Chapter two examines the assumption held by white Civil War veterans of both the North and South that civilian employment would function as the cornerstone of a normal life. This belief emerged in part as a reaction to the civilian anxieties surrounding the soldier's homecoming that were examined in the first chapter. It was also in response to their own doubts about the lasting influence of the war on their character. My examination of Union veteran Albion Tourgée's novel *Figs and Thistles* and Confederate veteran John Esten Cooke's novel *The Heir of Gaymount* reveals that finding a civilian career was a highly conflicted process. Union as well as Confederate veterans sought to hold onto their pre-war assumptions about autonomous, self-employed work, which they believed shaped their sense of manhood. Born into a largely agrarian world composed of self-sufficient regions that were largely detached from a national market, veterans confronted with deep uncertainty the rapidly industrializing and nationalizing economy of the 1870s United States.

Tourgée's main character, Union veteran Markham Churr, becomes a politician, ostensibly in order to manage these troubling changes in ways that would be favorable to northern veterans. The narrative tries to imagine a way to preserve the small town as veterans knew it before the war. This

would ensure that the values they fought for would not become obsolete. Cooke's hero, the southern veteran Edmund Cateret, cautiously enters the new postwar economy by turning his families' ruined Virginia plantation into a produce farm. In contrast to Tourgée's corporate jeremiad, which calls the northern reader back to the values of the pre-war nation while attempting to holding on to its postwar economic growth, Cooke's narrative embodies a tentative exploration for a New South among southern survivors of the war. Cateret attempts to find a way to blend core southern cultural values such as gentility with the antebellum vision of political economy championed by the northern victors.

These narratives, despite their differences, both share an initial optimism about the future that gradually fades into disillusionment. Confronted with the perceived egoism and self-indulgence of what would come to be known as the Gilded Age, these fictional veterans discover that re-entry into society depended upon the acceptance of a set of new values that they were either unwilling to accept or unable to implement. This helps to explain the retreat, found at the end of both of these works, to an idealized past that is sharply at odds with the more realistic and forward-looking moments in each story. When faced with the prospect that they might have to abandon the values of autonomous manhood that had led many of them to war, these authors turned to the past for comfort. Tourgée, in the hope that others might follow the example of his corporate jeremiad in order to change the wayward, materialist course of the postwar nation; Cooke, in the belief that, by waiting in the realm of memory, a Southern alternative to the Gilded Age narrative of success might be found.

Both works bear within them the signs of growing veteran disillusionment with the post-Civil War nation and serve as early harbingers of what will become the second stage in the veteran reintegration process, the turn to memory (1877-1890). In chapter three, I examine the troubled nature of veterans' memories. Veterans initially turned to their memories of both the war and their pre-war youth in self-defense. They desperately wanted to escape the sordid economic realities that confronted them in the postwar nation and led them to believe that they no longer had a place in American society.

However, it was impossible for them to remember the idealized world of their antebellum youth without being confronted with the traumas of their wartime experience. While searching for succor in the past, veterans dredged up long buried psychic wounds that threatened their health and, in some cases, their public legacies.

The traumatic nature of veterans' memories are central to my analysis of William Tecumseh Sherman's *Memoirs*, Confederate veteran Sam Watkins personal narrative *Company Aytch*, and a selection of stories from the Union veteran Ambrose Bierce. Combat narratives promised a way to organize the traumatic events of the past into something coherent that could then be reconciled with the present-day lives of former soldiers. The cathartic results of these narratives, however, proved to be mixed, as authors like Sherman were compelled to choose reputation over exposure, revealing trauma in accidental slips of the tongue. Moreover, among those veterans who were willing or able to reveal traumatic memories like Watkins and Bierce, the exposure of traumatic events in their narratives had the unintended consequence of separating them from those who had not suffered in the same way, confirming rather than dispelling their sense of isolation and difference.

Watkins, in particular, struggles to explain to civilian readers in his community the violation of key social norms during the war such as those prohibiting theft and murder. He is haunted more by the memory of stealing a pig from a widowed woman and her children in Tennessee, knowing that they will probably starve to death as a result, than he is by the sudden death of a close friend due to artillery fire. This callousness of emotion towards the phenomenon of death becomes a key subject of examination for Bierce and Watkins. Watkins, like Sherman, tries to apply socially acceptable explanations to the death and despoliation that surround him. This allows him to argue, at least on the surface, that he is not materially different from his readers in sentiment. Bierce shocks his civilian readers with the reality of sudden, brutal, and un-heroic death. In his works, death is taken for granted and survival becomes an end in itself. The dead, he suggests, are lucky as their troubles are over.

Whether they attempt to connect with their civilian readers, as in the case of Sherman and Watkins, or embrace the gulf that divides them, as in Bierce, these authors nonetheless seem to arrive at the same conclusion—only those who have experienced the Civil War battlefield can understand them and their troubled memories. This led former soldiers increasingly to talk about the war primarily with other veterans, not just in writing but in veterans' reunions and through associations such as the Grand Army of the Republic and United Confederate Veterans. In doing so, Civil War veterans came to adopt a distinct and exclusive sense of self. This altered understanding of their identity bore religious undertones, as is evidenced in Union veteran Oliver Wendell Holmes' oft-cited phrase "touched by fire," which drew a comparison between Civil War veterans and the Apostles who had been touched by the Holy Spirit with "tongues of fire." War had made them into new men and many of them chose to view that metamorphosis as a sign of cultural superiority.

The third stage of veteran reintegration (1890-1900) involved society's growing awareness of this new veteran sense of self as a "chosen people" and the pressing need on the part of society to come to terms with it. Chapter four examines the societal consequences of this new veteran identity, uncovering the growing resentment among members of the succeeding generations of middle-class white males towards the exclusionary language espoused by Civil War veterans and the burdens that their unique self-conception placed on American society. These burdens were both literal, in the form of pension costs, as well as figurative, through the constraints placed on young men's maturation by the rhetoric of singularity and sacredness that was attached to military service in the Civil War.

Stephen Crane's novel *The Red Badge of Courage* and the sequel short story "The Veteran" demonstrates that the argument regarding the unique social status of veterans, employed by veterans and grudgingly accepted by society as a whole, excluded succeeding generations of young middle-class white men from participating in one of the crucial rituals of manhood. Denied a chance to wage a war of their own, young men were thereby denied an active leadership role in the nation, which had been

governed by Civil War veterans for nearly thirty years. Moreover, they were asked in the form of pensions, monuments, and parades to help further the heritage that continued to exclude them from the pantheon of American manhood.

As a member of the younger generation, Crane confronted the burdensome legacy of the Civil War veteran in his writings. Borrowing from a public discourse that was saturated with panegyrics to the heroes of the Civil War, Crane developed an indirect mode of narration that allowed him to subtly undercut the pretensions of these old soldiers. On the surface, his writings seemed to praise veterans of the Civil War. Yet underneath the façade of filial piety was a rejection of their monopoly on the ideals of American manhood. By highlighting the ludicrous ordinariness of the Civil War veteran Henry Fleming in his novel *The Red Badge of Courage* and its sequel the short story "The Veteran," Crane contended that his generation contained just as much manly potential as the one that came before. All that was required was a chance to prove it. They could not do so, however, as long as the prior generation stood in the way.

When Crane portrays the death of the now aged Civil War veteran Henry Fleming in his short story "The Veteran," it seems that a path has now been cleared for the younger generation to prove its mettle. This is reflected in Crane's choice to cease trying to understand the heroism and manhood of the Civil War generation. Instead he decided to set out to experience war first hand, serving as a war correspondent first in the Greco-Turkish War and later in the Spanish-American war. Here on the field of battle, Crane, along with many other young men of his era, found a way to transcend the obstacle represented by the Civil War veteran. Accepting the logic held by veterans of the Civil War that "war made men," the rising generation had succeeded in its struggle with their forebears. They had found a war of their own and thereby facilitated entry into the pantheon of real American men.

Chapter five examines the reintegration experience of African-Americans who served in the ranks of the Union army. The decision to study in a separate chapter the struggles of black soldiers in

the United States Colored Troops (USCT) to enter civilian life is intended to acknowledge the unique nature of their wartime service, which of necessity influenced their understanding of the return “home.” Black men did indeed, as Barbara Gannon suggests, share with white northern veterans a commitment to the “won cause,” the Union effort to end slavery and the ongoing quest to remember that accomplishment. Freedom’s soldiers, however, hoped through their military service to convince white Americans of more than just their capability of taking discipline and standing up under fire. Many learned to read and write in camp and prepared themselves for citizenship and postwar social integration even more so than combat. These non-combat related experiences filled them with the confidence that led black veterans to speak out after the war in defense of their rights as citizens, including the right to vote.

Ironically, the voices of black veterans began to fade just as those of white veterans began to dominate American publishing in the 1880s and 90s. This growing silence has been alternately explained by the successful passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments or the growing virulence of white racism. The passage of the constitutional amendments affirming black citizenship and the black male right to vote, as the historian Christian Samito notes, seemed to resolve the issues that black soldiers had initially set out to address through their military service.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, unlike their white comrades who were struggling with the discordant values of the Gilded Age, there seemed to be little need for black veterans to publish memoirs of their military experiences during the “renaissance” in white veteran-authored narratives about the war. Furthermore, white racism, at a time when most publishers and readers were not African-Americans, along with lower levels of literacy would have seemed to discourage black male authors in the publication of such war narratives as they sought to avoid becoming targets of mob violence.

What these explanations of the dearth of black veteran memoirs do not adequately address, however, is the curious avoidance of black military service during the Civil War as a topic of discussion

within the writings that were published by civilians in the African-American community. By discussing black veteran Joseph Wilson's history of black troops during the war, *The Black Phalanx*, alongside Paul Laurence Dunbar's novel *The Fanatics* and Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy*, chapter five demonstrates that near the end of the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth the perceived value of black military service in the Civil War had declined within the African-American community. This was especially true among those black civilians who were engaged in the project of racial uplift. Dunbar saw the black veteran "Nigger Ed" in his novel *The Fanatics* as an unpleasant reminder of what northern free blacks had lost in social status through their association with emancipated slaves during the war. Harper, in contrast, felt that evoking the image of the black soldier would only encourage more violence in an era plagued by lynch mobs and race riots.

These negative connotations led each author to search for a way to champion the values once associated with the black soldier, such as equality before the law and the ability to succeed or fail based on merit rather than identity, without actually representing him. African-American veterans such as Williams and Wilson fought a rearguard action in the black veterans' struggle for relevance both within their communities and in the nation as a whole. Yet even with the help of their comrades in the Grand Army, black veterans were never able to regain the social power and prestige they possessed in the early postwar years.

An epilogue serves in place of a conclusion to *New Men*. Here I discuss the lessons that can be drawn from the Civil War veterans' reintegration experience and the relevance of those lessons to our own time.

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<sup>1</sup> For Whitman's comment on later representations of the war see "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books" in *Specimen Days*. Michael Moon reproduces this section of Whitman's prose reminiscence of the war on pages 778-79 of the Norton Critical Edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Edmund Wilson in *Patriotic Gore* and Daniel Aaron in *The Unwritten War* use Whitman's comments as a point of departure and source of inspiration for their studies of Civil War literature and the supposed lack of great literary representations of the war.

<sup>2</sup> See the Introductions to Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War* and Young, *Disarming the Nation*. Here they formulate their argument against the theme of the "unwritten war."

<sup>3</sup> Cynthia Wachtell's *War No More* examines the phenomenon of the "unwritten war" as a byproduct of the Civil Wars status as the first modern war in the United States. Authors were uncomfortable writing about a conflict that challenged their conceptions of heroic war. See Chapter 8 of Wachtell, *War No More*. Craig Warren also explores this theme in his book *Scars to Prove It*. See note 4.

<sup>4</sup> Craig Warren argues that veteran claims to representational authority intimidated would be writers of Civil War literature. However, he leaves the origins of their claims largely unexamined. See in particular Chapter one of Warren, *Scars to Prove It*.

<sup>5</sup> This narrative, initiated by Paul H. Buck's *Road to Reunion*, was reintroduced by David Blight in *Race and Reunion*. It has since become the dominant paradigm for understanding the post-Civil War era in the United States. See David Blight, *Race and Reunion*, particularly Chapters four and five, for his interpretation of the road to reunion.

<sup>6</sup> Among the recent scholarship examining friction between Union and Confederate veterans is *Remembering the Civil War* by Caroline Janney and *Across the Bloody Chasm* by Keith Harris. Janney contends that political "reunion" rather than emotional "reconciliation" was what veterans and civilians were able to achieve in the postwar nation. All sides remembered the causes of the war as they understood them, but nonetheless chose to work together for the cause of postwar national advancement. Harris takes a similar approach to that of Janney but chooses to focus primarily on veterans, examining the ways in which they sought to work within the climate of reconciliation while still remaining true to their memories of the war. See Janney, pages 5-7 and Chapters five and six. See Harris, Introduction. Chief among the recent scholarship on manhood and disability relating to Civil War veterans is James Marten's *Sing Not War*. Marten shows that for many former soldiers, especially those veterans who received pensions or lived in Soldier's Homes, it was important to prove to the civilian populace that the war had not unfitted them for life in the peacetime nation. See Marten, *Sing Not War*, Chapters four and five.

<sup>7</sup> An excellent example of just such a regional history of Civil War veterans is Jeffrey McClurken's *Take Care of the Living*, which examines the postwar lives of families of Confederate veterans in Pittsylvania and Danville counties of Virginia.

<sup>8</sup> To a certain extent divisions between regulars and volunteers persisted during the Civil War and in its immediate aftermath. Union volunteer John William De Forest makes this division a key aspect of the plot in his novel *Miss Ravenel's Conversion*, which I examine at length in chapter one. General and politician John Logan, one of the founders of the Grand Army of the Republic, also remained vocal in his disregard for regular army troops after the war. By the end of Reconstruction, however, this distinction was mostly ignored. Former soldiers saw each other as comrades regardless of how they had served. The diaries and letters of Union and Confederate soldiers suggest that they felt a greater affinity for their officers than veterans of prior U.S. wars. Speeches and letters written by officers indicate that the feeling was mutual. This stands in contrast to the outright hostility and disgust that many officers felt towards their men in the Mexican War. For more information on relations between officers and enlisted men in the Mexican war see Paul Foos, *A Short Offhand Killing Affair*, particularly Chapter five. Richard Bruce Winders provides an extensive description of the differences between volunteers and regular soldiers in the Mexican war in Chapters 4 and 5 of his book *Mr. Polk's Army*. Social norms during the Revolutionary War era held that officers were by nature "gentleman" and therefore of higher status than the men they commanded. The consequences of this belief are explored by Caroline Cox in *A Proper Sense of Honor*. See in particular Cox, Chapter one. Gregory T. Knouff examines the relationship between the militia and the regular soldiers of the Continental Army in Chapter three of his book *The Soldier's Revolution*.

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to his research on differences between regulars and volunteers in the Mexican War, Richard Bruce Windars also explores the role of politics in what many Americans saw as the “Democrat’s” war. He argues that volunteers were often selected who shared the views of President Polk’s Democratic Party while the regulars who bore the brunt of the fighting tended to be Whigs. This intensified the divisions within the army and ensured that any legacy of the war would be fractured rather than creating solidarity amongst all the soldiers who fought in the war. See Windars, Chapter three. This was not the first time, however, that a president sought to create an army of voters rather than simply an army in the field. Theodore J. Crackel in *Mr. Jefferson’s Army* examines the efforts of President Jefferson to shape the regular army into an institution more friendly towards his Republican Party. See Crackel, Chapter two.

<sup>10</sup> See Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 356-60.

<sup>11</sup> See John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, 90-92, 148-51. Sarah J. Purcell also describes the new generation’s reaction to Revolutionary War veterans in *Sealed With Blood*. See Purcell, 187-94.

<sup>12</sup> John Limon’s *Writing After War* begins with a brief analysis of Rip Van Winkle then shifts to the post-Civil War writing of Henry James, William Dean Howells, and Stephen Crane; James Dawe’s *The Language of War* starts directly with Crane’s *The Red Badge of Courage*; and Cynthia Wachtell’s *War No More* opens with popular fiction written during the Civil War.

<sup>13</sup> Although the origins are uncertain, soldiers in the Civil War era commonly described their first experience of combat as “going to the see the elephant.”

<sup>14</sup> An expansive literature debating the status of the United States Civil War as the nation’s first “modern” or “total” war has developed in the last twenty years. For an overview of the issues involved in this debate see Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler (eds.), *On the Road to Total War*. Of particular interest are the essays by Mark E. Neely Jr., Edward Hagerman, and James M. McPherson. Neely questions the status of the Civil War as a “total war” in his essay, which presents many of the same arguments as his later book *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*. Edward Hagerman and James M. McPherson crystallize in these shorter pieces arguments in favor of seeing the war as modern or total that are embedded in their earlier research. In Hagerman’s case *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare* and in McPherson’s *The Battle Cry of Freedom*.

<sup>15</sup> Recent scholarship on Sherman’s march through Georgia and the Carolinas questions the destructiveness or “totality” of the campaign. Jacqueline Glass Campbell and Wesley Moody both argue that the psychological impact of Sherman’s march on the southern population was greater than its physical destruction. See Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North From the Sea*, Chapter five; and Moody, *Demon of the Lost Cause*, Chapter seven.

<sup>16</sup> Earl J. Hess provides an extensive examination of the impact of the rifled musket and trench warfare upon combat tactics and strategy in the Civil War. See Hess, *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat and Trench Warfare Under Grant and Lee*.

<sup>17</sup> The Napoleonic origins of early Civil War tactics are a recurring theme in much of the scholarship on the war. However, the degree to which Civil War commanders consciously studied and applied these precepts is a subject of debate. See James McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, 331-338 and Carol Reardon, *With a Sword in One Hand and Jomini in Another*, particularly Chapter two.

<sup>18</sup> Civil War casualty statistics remain inexact. Scholars must remain cautious, therefore, about using casualty statistics alone as markers of the unique character of the war. Nicholas Marshall provides a critique of the use of casualty statistics to prove the war’s unprecedented destructiveness in his article “The Great Exaggeration: Death and the Civil War.” See Marshall, “The Great Exaggeration,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, 4(1) March 2014: 3-27.

<sup>19</sup> Grant stated in an official report that “the armies in the East and West [have] acted independently like a balky team.” Hereafter Grant claimed that he intended to “use the greatest number of troops practicable against the armed

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force of the enemy, preventing him from using the same force at different seasons against first one and then another of our armies. See *The War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, Volume 36 (Part 1), 12.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the Overland Campaign and Grant's ascendance to the position of General in Chief of the Union army see Mark Grimsley, *And Keep Moving On*, Chapter eight and Ernest B. Furgurson, *Not War But Murder*, 12-16.

<sup>21</sup> For casualty statistics on the battle of Cold Harbor see Edward H. Bonekemper III, *Ulysses S. Grant: Victor Not a Butcher*, 306-07. Statistics on casualties from the battle of Gettysburg can be found in John W. Busey and David G. Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), 125. These statistics are similar to those listed by William F. Fox in his *Regimental Losses in the Civil War* (1889), which at one time served as the standard text on combat casualties during the conflict. See Fox, 541. The ongoing debate over the significance of Civil War casualty statistics is addressed in note 18.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Bond, *Unpublished Diary*, June 21, 1864.

<sup>23</sup> For Samito's discussion of the black soldier's successful role in passing the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments see chapter six of *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era*.