TRANS-MISSISSIPPI SOUTHERNERS IN THE UNION ARMY, 1862-1865

A Thesis

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by

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I congratulate you all upon the glorious victory you have won by your cool and
determined bravery for that Union which our Revolutionary sires established by their
valor and sealed with their blood, …thereby testifying to our patriot brethren in arms
from other states that we are not only willing but anxious to second their efforts in
rescuing our state from the dominion of traitors.

Colonel M. LaRue Harrison, First Arkansas Cavalry, Fayetteville, Arkansas, April 19, 1863
I would like to thank several individuals, without whose assistance this project could never have been completed and might possibly never have started. Dr. William Cooper has most graciously given his time to provide critical direction, assistance and support. Dr. Charles Royster first challenged my thinking about the period and likewise encouraged my progress. Dr. Stan Hilton introduced me to the possibilities and feasibility of military history, and has been a steadfast supporter. Finally, as Graduate Advisor, Dr. Charles Shindo offered sustaining encouragement when my own desire faltered.

Several noted historians graciously corresponded with me via email during the course of this project and provided valuable clues and offered new interpretations. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Arthur Bergeron, of Pamplin Historical Park, Dr. Carl Brasseaux, of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and Dr. Daniel Sutherland of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

My mother, Marilyn McWhorter Rein, nurtured my interest in the period from an early age and has ardently supported my academic career, creating yet another debt I can never repay.

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ABSTRACT

Men from throughout the Trans-Mississippi South enlisted in the Union army during the Civil War both in existing northern regiments and in units raised specifically for the purpose of enlisting southerners. The men who joined and fought represented almost every social and ethnic division within the region and contributed substantially to the success of Union arms during the war. Examining a single regiment from each state or territory in the region (except Louisiana, where one white and one black unit were chosen due to segregation) reveals similarities of background, experience and purpose.

Louisiana’s contributions to the Union army were primarily black soldiers, although a smaller number of white immigrants and freeholders also served. Texas’ contribution was equally divided between native-born southerners and Hispanics, while the Indian Territory contributed Native Americans from several southern tribes. Arkansas’ Union soldiers were split equally between white farmers from the northwestern corner of the state and freed slaves from the southeast. Service varied among the several regiments, but included active campaigning, anti-guerrilla operations and the far more mundane garrison duty. Men succumbed to disease in extraordinary numbers due in part to their position at the end of an extended logistic system in an ignored backwater of the war.

These southerners represent the staunchest internal opposition to the Confederacy and contributed significantly to the restoration of Federal authority. Whatever their background these soldiers possessed a strong ideological attachment to the Union and endured severe hardships and oppression in order to vindicate a cause many valued more than their own lives.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Civil War in general remains a topic of wide interest among both historians and the general public, and the field’s popularity has generated substantial scholarship on almost every level of the conflict. Most recently, the experiences and motivations of individual soldiers and sailors have garnered much attention, as the focus shifted from battles and leaders to the everyday experiences of the common soldier. A full understanding of the men who fought, advanced most recently by James McPherson,¹ is crucial to understanding the conflict as a whole. Without the willing participation of the men in the ranks, the tragic war could never have reached the level of destruction it did, and politicians rather than soldiers might have been able to resolve the sectional dispute.

Various studies have attempted to delve into the daily lives of Civil War soldiers, beginning with Bell Wiley’s two comprehensive volumes, published in 1943 and 1952, on the northern and southern soldier. In 1956, Dudley Cornish began a more current wave of scholarship when he investigated the previously overlooked contributions of black soldiers. Laurence Hauptman has only recently illuminated the Native American contribution, further developing the heterogeneity of the Union Army. One of the last groups to receive attention was the southern Unionists who enlisted in the U. S. Army.

Richard Nelson Current’s *Lincoln’s Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy*, published in 1992, brought long overdue attention to these previously neglected soldiers.\(^2\)

In his groundbreaking work, Current provides brief synopses of each southern state’s contribution to the Union war effort and then focuses on the motivations and effectiveness of these forces. While an excellent starting point, the book’s scale prevents exploration of the composition of individual units and the experiences of individual soldiers, both of which varied widely with each state and even within individual units. Other scholars have produced excellent individual unit histories, but these studies focus attention on a specific area and lack the scope of a regional study.\(^3\) It is my hope that several brief unit histories can illustrate a common if not prevalent belief that transcended state lines; the belief among many southerners that the Union was worth preserving, even at the cost of their lives. My thesis explores the backgrounds and wartime experiences of the men who served in several selected military organizations while simultaneously developing similarities among these units in different areas of the Trans-Mississippi region.

The Confederacy defined the Trans-Mississippi District as the portion of Louisiana west of the Mississippi, the states of Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas, and the Indian and Arizona Territories. In this study I have included the eastern portion of Louisiana but excluded both Missouri and the Arizona Territory for the following

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reasons. First, the city of New Orleans played a central role in operations in the remainder of Louisiana and its inclusion facilitates discussion of Louisiana units. Second, no popularly elected secession convention ever removed Missouri from the Union, and much of the state, including the state’s largest city, St. Louis, remained under federal control for the duration of the war. While the southern and western regions of the state were as divided in sentiment as any other region in the country, the state’s northern location combined with its large contributions to the federal army prevent its consideration as a part of the Confederacy. Finally, the Arizona Territory, extending from Texas to California, was only sparsely populated and the region remained essentially unaffected by the larger conflict. While some residents of the territory enlisted in the U.S. Army and aided in repelling a Confederate invasion, the future inactivity in the region coupled with dissimilarities with the remainder of the Trans-Mississippi justify the territory’s exclusion.

Like much Civil War scholarship, the few existing studies of southern Union soldiers have focused primarily on either the eastern theater of the conflict or the border states, at the expense of both the Deep South and the Trans-Mississippi, (although border state studies frequently include Arkansas) where comparatively more black but fewer white southerners served. While acknowledging the substantial and critical contributions of Unionists in Appalachia, this approach continues the separation of white and black southerners who, often for widely varying reasons, both served the same cause. When white and black soldiers are considered together, two of the four states with the largest contributions to the U. S. Army were in the Trans-Mississippi district, Louisiana and
Arkansas. Histories of the conflict that focus on the combined Trans-Mississippi district either omit mention of loyalists entirely, or, as in Alvin M. Josephy’s compilation, cover only part of the region. Despite the work of Current and others, the role of Trans-Mississippi Southerners in the U. S. Army remains one of the few underdeveloped areas of the vast field of Civil War history. This study attempts to determine the motivations, combat effectiveness and overall contributions of this group to the Union war effort.

In order to relate personal experiences without losing a narrative in a jumble of actions and events, I have chosen a series of five regimental histories as a framework. Regiments were designated by state and were often composed of men from the same locale. I selected one regiment from each state or territory in the Trans-Mississippi region, except Louisiana where I chose to include two regiments, due to the segregation of white and black troops. All five units served as either cavalry or mounted infantry. As the only Texas unit was a cavalry regiment, I selected mounted units from the other states and territories to preserve continuity. Mounted regiments enjoyed similar advantages and suffered the same difficulties, including frequent assignment to scouting duties and chronic shortage of horses and forage that hampered effectiveness. As the Texas unit was designated the First Texas, I have chosen the First Louisiana, First Arkansas, First Indian Home Guards (Indian Territory) and First Corps d’Afrique (Louisiana) Cavalry Regiments. The Corps d’Afrique was raised exclusively in Louisiana but upon the organization of the U. S. Colored Troops, the Corps D’Afrique regiments were absorbed into the larger structure. The First Corps d’Afrique Cavalry was then redesignated the

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4 Tennessee remains first with 51,225, Louisiana second with 29,276, Mississippi third with 18,414 and Arkansas fourth with 13,815. See Appendix I.
Fourth U.S. Colored Cavalry, but its constituency remained primarily Louisianians, and was the only black cavalry regiment raised west of the Mississippi River.

The regimental history has enjoyed a renaissance since first being introduced by veterans in the 1890’s, but most contemporary studies focus excessively on southern units. In their recent compilation on the war in Arkansas, Anne J. Bailey and Daniel Sutherland called for “more military unit studies” as “an essential means of testing larger themes. One such theme, revealed by this study, is the prevalence of Unionist units in counter-guerrilla operations. All five regiments examined here operated in areas infested with bushwhackers, jayhawkers and guerrillas, especially late in the war. Their knowledge of an area’s residents and topography frequently made them more effective than northern units. Another theme is the strong correlation between groupings of Unionists and southern enlistment. In all five units, many of the enlistees were from strongly Unionist areas, indicating an individual soldier was far more likely to enlist if he had the support of either peers, family or community. Few soldiers from geographically isolated areas found their way to the Union army.

A complete understanding of a Civil War regiment requires a brief structural explanation. Regiments formed the basic building blocks of Civil War armies, and were the only unit to retain a state designation, such as the Thirtieth Pennsylvania Infantry or Second Mississippi Artillery. Regiments nominally contained a thousand men, but over the course of the war a flow of new recruits steadily replaced casualties, so that over 1,500 men served in a single regiment during the conflict. A colonel commanded each regiment, assisted by a lieutenant colonel and a small regimental staff, which included an

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6 e.g., Stanley S. McGowen *Horse Sweat and Powder Smoke: The First Texas Cavalry*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999).
adjutant, commissary and quartermaster officers, and, if available, a surgeon and a chaplain. While infantry regiments contained ten companies, cavalry regiments had twelve, lettered “A” through “M” (excluding “J”, to prevent confusion with “I”). The regiment’s twelve companies were divided into three battalions of four companies each, with one major assigned to each battalion. A captain commanded each company, assisted by a first lieutenant and a second lieutenant. Between sixty and eighty enlisted men completed the company, including five sergeants, eight corporals and at least sixty-four privates.\(^7\) Cavalry companies frequently operated independent of their regiment, and single companies or battalions of several companies often made small patrols into hostile territory or garrisoned outlying posts.

Discovering the true motivations of the soldiers who comprised these regiments is hampered by a paucity of primary sources. Few Trans-Mississippi southerners kept diaries or left memoirs of their experiences in the Union army. For men who were forced to conceal their beliefs or suffer brutal persecution, diary keeping could be a hazardous undertaking. Likewise, the stigma of federal service, especially after the end of Reconstruction, made those who had assisted federal arms unpopular with their neighbors and outside the southern mainstream. Many of the men covered in this survey were not literate, and therefore unable to record their feelings or experiences.

Two contemporary sources reveal the hardships suffered by many southern Union soldiers. Albert W. Bishop, a Wisconsin native who served in the First Arkansas Cavalry, published accounts of the persecution of several members of that unit as early as 1863. Dennis E. Haynes also published an account of his wartime experiences, including

\(^7\) Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973) 11. Black regiments were initially authorized only 50 privates.
federal service in a Louisiana cavalry unit, in 1866.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the dearth of sources, the service of these men was amply documented by the U. S. War Department and can be gleaned from both the official records and from the compiled service records of individual soldiers.\textsuperscript{9} While war records offer valuable information on the duties and experiences of a regiment as a whole, the Compiled Service Records enable the association of individuals with specific events. Aside for providing raw data, such as age, place of birth and enlistment, and occupation, letters included in the Compiled Service Records contain detailed, often highly illustrative accounts of individual soldier’s motivations and experiences. Combined, these sources permit an adequate examination of each unit’s composition and allow reconstruction of their wartime experiences and combat effectiveness.

Studies of black Civil War soldiers often fail to differentiate between those from northern states who went south and those who were already in the seat of the war. Studies of other minorities in the conflict are sorely lacking. Few sources mention the divisive effect of the war on south Texas’ Hispanic communities, and the majority of Native American regimental histories involve Confederate units. By segregating troops by state

\textsuperscript{8}The two extant works are Dennis E. Haynes’ \textit{A Thrilling Narrative of the Sufferings of Union Refugees, and the Massacre of the Martyrs of Liberty of Western Louisiana ...}, (Washington, DC, 1866); and Albert W. Bishop’s, \textit{Loyalty on the Frontier, or, Sketches of Union Men of the Southwest; with Incidents and Adventures in Rebellion on the Border}, (St. Louis: R. P. Studley, 1863).

\textsuperscript{9}U. S. War Department, \textit{The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies}, 128 volumes, (Washington: GPO 1880-1901), National Archives and Records Administration, \textit{Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served during the Civil War} (Record Group 94) Compiled Service Records of Union Volunteers from the States of Arkansas (Microfilm M399, Rolls 1-14); Kansas (First Indian Home Guards); Louisiana (Microfilm M396, Rolls 1-14) and Texas (Microfilm M402, Rolls 1-9); also, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who Served
and by race, Current, among others, misses the possibilities of a unified approach to Union forces in the theater. When examined as a whole, it becomes clear that every major ethnic group within the region was represented in the Union Army, demonstrating not only the service’s willingness to include all potential recruits but also the strength of each ethnic group’s ideological conviction. Native Americans, Hispanics, blacks, immigrants and even native white southerners all endured unspeakable hardships and made extreme sacrifices in order to support a government they felt was worth preserving. The strength of this ideological attachment should not be underestimated.

in the U. S. Colored Troops, First through Fourth Colored Cavalry Regiments, Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry and Sixth U. S. Colored Cavalry Regiment (Microfilm M1817, Rolls 50-60)
CHAPTER 2
LOUISIANA: THE FIRST LOUISIANA CAVALRY

Louisiana raised six white and thirteen black regiments for the Union Army, enlisting more Union soldiers than any other southern state except Tennessee and roughly as many as several northern states.10 Most of the recruits came from the urban population of New Orleans and the surrounding area, but all regions of the state were represented on the muster rolls of units assigned to the Department of the Gulf. Many recruits were immigrants, either from overseas or from throughout the United States, but a large number of native-born Louisianians also served. Virtually every segment of Louisiana society was represented in the ranks, attesting to the pervasiveness and strength of Union sentiment in the state.

In 1860 New Orleans was the state’s largest city and the nation’s second largest port, with regular connections to most of the Atlantic world. These transoceanic ties had supported waves of immigrants from “practically all of the states of the United States, and small numbers of persons from almost any place in the world.”11 The number of foreign born residents in 1860 has been estimated at over 70,000, or over forty percent of the city’s 170,000 inhabitants. Early French and Spanish colonial populations had been

10 Louisiana’s contribution of white soldiers is estimated at 5,224, while the total number of black troops has been placed at 24,052(Ira Berlin, Joseph Reidy and Leslie Rowland, eds., Freedom’s Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War, (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 17. The combined total of 29,276 compares favorably with Minnesota (24,020), New Hampshire (33,937), Rhode Island (23,236), Vermont (33,288) and West Virginia (32, 068). See Appendix I.
surpassed by more recent arrivals, primarily from Germany and Ireland, making antebellum New Orleans a true melting pot. Many of the white soldiers who joined the Union army came from this ethnically diverse immigrant population.

German immigrants had established a colony upriver from New Orleans in the eighteenth century but the continental instabilities heightened by the 1848 Revolution had prompted a massive increase. In the twelve years that followed, over 200,000 Germans landed in the city and, though many continued upriver to populate the Midwest, New Orleans’ own German population swelled to an estimated 30,000.12 Robert C. Reinders’ comprehensive overview of antebellum New Orleans society gives evidence of a German cultural aversion to the South, noting, in a backhanded slap at the city’s community, that “because of epidemics and the institution of slavery, few Germans with money or zeal stayed in New Orleans.”13 Most who remained were skilled tradesmen and benefited from German connections already established within the city, but remained suspicious of their new neighbors and their peculiar institutions.

Famines in British-controlled Ireland created a similar exodus, but with several significant differences. The lack of an established population coupled with the immigrants’ lack of skills resulted in a concentration of Irish occupationally in the unskilled trades and geographically in a destitute section of the city known as the Irish Channel. Reinders identifies this group as the largest in the city, numbering almost 25,000 in 1860. (He estimates the German population at only 20,000) Immigration had

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slowed by 1860, according to Reinders, due to “the improvement of conditions in Ireland.” A synopsis of New Orleans’ immigrant population is included in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Origin of New Orleans’ Foreign-born Population, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>24,398</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>10,564</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>3,849</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>73,203</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the mid-eighteenth century, New Orleans and the surrounding area had harbored another immigrant population, the French-speaking Acadians, who resided mainly along the bayous in the swampy lower sections of the state. Displaced in some areas by sugar-planting Creoles and later-arriving northern opportunists, the Cajuns established thriving and distinctive communities, but generally remained aloof from the English-speaking inhabitants of the remainder of the state. When war came to southern Louisiana, most Acadians preferred to remain neutral in the “Anglo” conflict, but when forced into service by Confederate conscription, many deserted and enlisted in Federal organizations.

The rural areas of central and northern Louisiana also harbored a small loyal population. Many non-slaveholders in these areas opposed secession but were initially

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14 Ibid., 17.
isolated from the Union Army and forced to cooperate with Confederate authorities. As Federal forces penetrated the state, recruiting offices were established and met with great success. Lt. George Smith, a Connecticut-born officer in the First Louisiana Infantry, recorded an 1864 encounter with an Alexandria woman whose son had just enlisted and noted that that section of the state “put many recruits in the Union army.”16 In his travels throughout the state, Smith noted the trials of another Union family. Near Pineville he met a woman who testified:

that her husband was a union man, and had been hiding in the woods for several months to keep from being drafted into the rebel army, and she had been feeding him. . . . And I might well say that this was not an isolated case for we found many men, and women too, throughout the South faithful to their country and flag: ready to sacrifice property and life too, if need be to protect them from wicked rebellion.17

On April 29, 1862, General Benjamin Butler arrived in New Orleans at the head of an occupying army composed mostly of New Englanders. Butler’s capture of the city, made possible by Admiral David Farragut’s calculated and courageous passage of the two forts erected to control the Mississippi River, was a major coup for the northern forces. Coupled with General. Ulysses S. Grant’s pyrrhic victory at Shiloh earlier that month, the capture erased a string of Union reversals and gave the North its first tenuous foothold in the Deep South, while denying the Confederacy its largest city. Union forces continued upriver to occupy the state capital at Baton Rouge but were turned back by the strong Confederate works commanding the river at Vicksburg.

Numerous problems immediately beset Butler’s administration, including the management of a large city with an openly disloyal population and a shattered economy.

15 Numbers are from Reinders, 19-20, with the exception of those of the Germans, which are taken from Clark’s revised estimates.
17 Ibid., 106.
Maintaining law and order, obtaining provisions for a starving populace, and organizing numerous public works projects occupied the initial months of Butler’s controversial tenure in New Orleans, but military matters soon returned to the forefront. On August 6, a portion of Butler’s army repulsed a Confederate force of over 5,000 men attempting to recapture Baton Rouge, heightening Butler’s awareness of his vulnerability. His chief of staff, Lt. Col. Richard B. Irwin, estimated that the Union forces now numbered less than 7,000 men, down from the 15,000 Butler brought south the previous spring. Throughout the summer, Butler’s numbers declined as men succumbed to the heat and pestilence in the military encampments around New Orleans. Irwin notes, “In the intense heat and among the poisonous swamps the effective strength melted away day by day,” and concludes that “the condition of affairs was therefore such that Butler found himself with an army barely sufficient for the secure defense of the vast territory committed to his care, and for any offensive operation absolutely powerless.”

Butler’s most pressing need was an effective cavalry arm, the one branch of the service absolutely necessary to begin offensive operations in hostile territory. In his entire command, he had with him only one troop (company) of the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, which alone was insufficient to screen any attempt to expand the area under Federal control. As early as May, Butler had recognized the possibility of enlisting citizens of New Orleans to address this deficiency, noting in a letter to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, “If the War Department desires and will permit, I can have five thousand able bodied white citizens enlisted within sixty days, all of whom have lived here many years, and many of them drilled soldiers, to be commanded by loyal intelligent

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officers.” Butler’s estimates were a bit optimistic, but by August 14 he had enlisted over a thousand Louisianians in the “old” regiments and 1,200 in the newly raised First Louisiana Infantry. In his search for officers to command the Louisiana regiments, Butler also included the ambitious men who had joined his organizations in New England. Lieutenant George Smith, of the First Louisiana Infantry, was one of several privates who earned commissions as officers in the Louisiana regiments.

On August 26, Butler noted “the First Louisiana [Infantry] Regiment is full and ready for service, and nearly enough men enlisted to form a second regiment. The men are generally foreigners – many Germans – and will do good service.” His estimations of their ability were echoed by his chief of staff, Richard Irwin, who described them as “two good regiments of infantry, the 1st Louisiana, Colonel Richard Holcomb, and the 2d Louisiana, Colonel Charles J. Paine, both regiments admirably commanded and well officered; three excellent troops of Louisiana cavalry, under fine leaders.” The three troops of cavalry mentioned by Irwin would form the foundation of the First Louisiana Cavalry regiment.

The recruits for these three companies came from several sources. Immigrants who remained loyal to the Union were the largest group, and the ethnic composition of the regiment closely parallels the city as a whole. Although the fifty percent foreign born is well above the average of twenty-four percent for Union regiments, it approximates the total of forty percent for New Orleans. The compiled service records of members of

20 Ibid., v. II, 191.
21 Ibid., v. II, 528.
22 Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps*, 49.
the First Louisiana Cavalry contain 1,798 individual records, 219 of which were northern-born transfers from the Second Rhode Island Cavalry. Another 113 can be positively identified as members of other northern regiments who transferred, either to avoid infantry service, to obtain a higher rank, or to take advantage of reenlistment bonuses. Of the remaining 1,466, enlistment contracts are available for 1,050. These contracts show place of birth, age, occupation and, in some cases, pre-war place of residence, and permit construction of a significant statistical abstract. (See Table 2.2) Although blacks were segregated in separate units during the Civil War, the muster rolls of the First Louisiana Cavalry list twenty-eight black soldiers, most of whom were employed as either cooks or teamsters.

While native-born Louisianians made up less than twenty percent of this unit, the number of Louisiana residents is probably much higher. Most of the foreign-born soldiers resided in the state in 1860, as did many of those born in the lower South, (the largest group of native born recruits). Many of the immigrants had belonged to ethnic militia companies in the city and avoided Confederate service by remaining active in the home defense units. After the city’s capitulation, many of these men either enlisted in the new units recruited by Butler or joined one of the under-strength northern units.

Louisianians from the surrounding area also flocked to New Orleans to offer their services, and several found places in the northern regiments that had already lost men to disease. In early 1863, Lt. Col. Edward Bacon of the Sixth Michigan Infantry searched for guides to accompany a raid to Ponchatoula and found “among the detachments of eastern troops two men who had been enlisted as recruits for New England regiments and who had formerly lived near Wadesborough,” Louisiana. Bacon was evidently pleased
with his discovery, noting that “our guide, the soldier who used to live near here, assures me that we are on the right road, and tells me where other roads are by which the enemy might advance upon us.”

Seven residents of the German settlement of Des Allemands, just southwest of New Orleans, also sought service in the Union army but quickly became aware of the treatment their service could earn them in Confederate hands. The men enlisted in the Eighth Vermont Infantry regiment and were with the unit in its advance down the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad. In October 1862 at Boutte Station, a few miles down the railroad from Des Allemands, a portion of the unit was surrounded by Confederate forces and compelled to surrender. Upon learning that the men were residents of the area who had been assisting the federal forces, Confederate authorities staged a mock trial and executed the men by firing squad.

The successful service of Louisianians in northern units spurred the formation of Louisiana regiments. As more men came forward to offer their service, Federal authorities established an extensive recruiting network. Henry Gardner, a New York soldier assigned to recruiting duty in New Orleans, described the processing of new recruits:

Every man that is enlisted has duplicate papers made out - these with the ‘victim’ are turned over to the tender mercies of the Officer in charge. The men go in to a large room, where they are kept until examined by the Surgeon, and clothered by Q.M. [quartermaster] The papers are given to me. On a large book, appropriately ruled, their names, where born, age, height, color of eyes, hair & complexion, occupation, when & by whom enlisted & period. In a column is entered the remarks, whether “passed or rejected” by the Surgeon, when mustered into service, and into what organization. … Then the mustering Officer comes, administers the oath and they are

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truly and firmly in the service of the U.S.26

Following enlistment, a new recruit would be mustered into the regiment following a delay of a few days or several weeks, depending on the unit’s location and the available transportation. Initially, recruits reported to Camp Kearney, located just upriver from New Orleans, where they received instruction in drill and marksmanship. A soldier in a northern regiment stationed there described the camp and its routine:

Am in camp about five miles above New Orleans and on the right [west] bank of the Miss. River. It is a beautiful place and commands a view of N.O. [New Orleans], Algiers and Carlington [Carrollton]. The [New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western] rail road runs through the center of camp, making it quite a busy place. I like it much better than the Custom House and I think it much more healthy. We have to drill 5 hours a day and practice at target shooting besides. The brigade is called the reserve brigade under Gen. [Godfrey] Weitzel and consists of the 12th and 13th Conn., 75 N.Y. 1st La., 7th Vt. 8 N.H., 4 cos. of cavalry and one battery of light artillery. The 7th Vt. is the regt. which ran so ungloriously at the battle of Baton Rouge for which Gen. Butler took their colors from them and they have none now.27

Nickerson’s concerns about the performance of fellow regiments in battle did not extend to the as yet untried Louisiana troops.

The men of the First Louisiana Cavalry received their baptism of fire in the Lafourche campaign of October, 1862. Most of the brigade boarded transports for Donaldsonville while the remaining two regiments, including the Eighth Vermont, marched along the railway. Lieutenant Smith noted his regiment, the First Louisiana Infantry, seemed pleased with the assignment, as Donaldsonville “was the home of many members of the regiment.”28 The remainder of General Weitzel’s brigade, screened by the three troops of the First Louisiana Cavalry, advanced down Bayou Lafourche. The

27 Edwin Nickerson to Sarah Nickerson, Oct. 16, 1862, in Edwin L. Nickerson Papers, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.
28 Smith, Leaves from a Soldier’s Diary, 39.
Lafourche region had been a major sugar production area before the war and offered sufficient resources to support a small Confederate force. This force presented a potential threat to the security of New Orleans, prompting Butler’s efforts to clean out the Confederates and open the railroad to Brashear City (present day Morgan City).

On October 27, 1862, Confederates forces met Weitzel’s column three miles north of Labadieville. In an engagement known as Georgia Landing, the Union brigade defeated the Confederates and went on to occupy Thibodaux, the area’s largest town. Throughout the campaign, Weitzel commented on the effectiveness of his mounted forces, and reported that “my cavalry has been of invaluable service to me; both officers and men have done splendidly. I wish I had four times the number.”

Company A of the First Louisiana was cited for preventing the destruction of the railroad bridges across Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne. Combined, the three companies sustained 20 casualties, more than three of the four full-strength infantry regiments engaged.

The regiment’s next action came in the Teche campaign, the first step in the advance on and eventual capture of Port Hudson. In December 1862, General Nathaniel P. Banks, another New Englander who had enjoyed political success in the pre-war years, relieved Butler as commander of the Department of the Gulf. Banks was charged with the reduction of Port Hudson, a citadel on the Mississippi just north of Baton Rouge. Coupled with Vicksburg, Port Hudson denied a one hundred mile stretch of the river to Federal gunboats and allowed provisions from the Trans-Mississippi to be floated down the Red River and crossed to the eastern Confederacy. Banks elected to advance a portion

29 *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 volumes, (Washington, DC, 1888-1901) Series I, v. 15, 169. (hereafter referred to as the OR, all citations from Series I unless otherwise noted)

30 Ibid., 172.
of his forces directly upriver to Port Hudson, but sent Weitzel up Bayou Teche to prevent supplies from reaching the garrison from the rear. Both the infantry and cavalry regiments supported the advance up the Teche and Atchafalaya, before joining Banks’ main force at Port Hudson.

The advance began with a sharp engagement at Irish Bend, where Weitzel attempted to cut off a portion of the retreating Confederates under Gen. Richard Taylor. The First Louisiana Infantry led an amphibious landing on the shores of Grand Lake, opening the way for subsequent units to disembark. Once made aware of the force in his rear, Taylor retreated by an alternate route through Franklin and avoided the trap.

Weitzel’s brigade marched to Alexandria and then turned down the Red River towards Port Hudson. On May 20th while just outside Cheneyville, Confederate troops captured a portion of the First Louisiana Cavalry. Captain Barrett, commanding Company “B”, ignored an order from the regiment’s commander, Major Harai Robinson, to halt and “rather too daringly” pursued a harassing force in advance of the main column.31 Confederates cut off Barrett’s command and compelled him surrender. Fortunately, prisoner exchanges were still occurring during this stage of the war and the majority returned to their regiment by way of City Point, Virginia, and the nation’s capital.32

By the time the First Louisiana Cavalry arrived outside Port Hudson, Banks had already invested the garrison and attempted to storm the works. His combined force outside the post included the First and Second Louisiana Infantry regiments and the First, Second and Third regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards. Most of Port Hudson’s

31 OR, v. 26, 39.
32 Information compiled from individual Service Records.
garrison was from other states and the Federal Louisianians outside the post probably outnumbered the Confederate Louisianians inside. Henry Gardner, a New York soldier whose artillery battery was brigaded with the Second Louisiana, recorded the ill will the two groups held for one another, noting that the Native Guards and “the 2d La. swear that no prisoners, especially Officers, shall be taken alive.”

Banks assigned the task of protecting the rear of his army from Confederate raiders to his cavalry. On June 4, 1863, a punitive expedition left for Clinton, a small town northeast of Port Hudson used as a staging area for the Confederate raids. In a sharp engagement with an equal number of Confederates, a portion of Company “C” was again separated from the main force and nineteen men were captured. Col. Benjamin Grierson, commanding the cavalry brigade, ordered a withdrawal but:

Captain Godfrey’s company, from some unknown cause, had not obeyed the order to fall back and mount after the infantry had withdrawn, and, when the enemy charged, they found him still dismounted; and his horses having gone to the rear, he took to the bushes and along the railroad, where the enemy, coming in upon his left, cut off a number of his men.

The infantry regiments did not fare much better during the campaign; the First Louisiana losing 123 men and the Second Louisiana 144, both among the highest in their respective divisions. Many of these casualties were sustained in the two massive assaults launched by Banks on the works. Irwin’s description of the May 27 fiasco serves as an indicator of the folly of storming fortifications across open ground and its cost in loss of life:

Hardly had the movement begun when the whole force-officers, men, colors, stormers, and all-found themselves inextricably entangled in the dense abatis under a fierce and continuing discharge of musketry and a withering cross-fire of artillery.…..

34 OR, v. 26, 136.
35 Ibid., 69-70.
The attempt had failed without inflicting serious loss upon the enemy, save in ammunition expended, yet at a fearful cost to the Union Army.36 Lt. Smith of the First Louisiana echoed Irwin’s observations, and lamented the “terrible and useless slaughter.”37 Banks ordered a second assault on June 14, with equally disastrous results. Both regiments of Louisiana infantry lost their commanders in this assault. Banks settled into a siege and forced the garrison to surrender in early July, following Vicksburg’s capitulation to Grant.

Later in 1863, Banks sent almost 20,000 men on an overland expedition across southwestern Louisiana towards Texas.38 The First Louisiana Cavalry accompanied this expedition, suffering heavily in the skirmishing between Vermillionville (present Lafayette) and Opelousas. On October 30, Company “C” lost thirteen men “while on a scout west of Opelousas,” and November 3 a much larger engagement ensued between General Richard Taylor’s Confederate forces and the now retreating Federals. The First Cavalry lost thirty-eight officers and men in this action, further reducing their already depleted ranks. Colonel John G. Fonda, commanding the brigade, estimated the regiment’s numbers to be 300 men.39 Following the abortive expedition, the Federals retired back down the Teche, leaving the region a disputed no-man’s land, exposed to the depredations of both armies.

The First Louisiana was accused of committing outrages against the local population during the retreat. On Sunday, December 13, 1863, the unit skirmished with Confederates at St. Martinville just as church services were concluding. According to Confederate accounts, Robinson’s troops “covered the principal street; when, suddenly

36 Irwin, History of the Nineteenth Army Corps, 180-81.
37 Smith, Leaves from a Soldier’s Diary, 73.
facing to the front, it enfiladed them with volleys of musketry.” One civilian was killed in the exchange. The testimony fails to mention whether the First Louisiana was under fire or if any Confederate forces in the town at the time of the engagement.40

The final major campaign within the state was the last of Banks’ abortive attempts to enter Texas, this time up the Red River, through Alexandria and Shreveport. Taylor’s forces turned back this invasion in two battles near Mansfield and Pleasant Hill on April 8 and 9, 1864. Again, three of Louisiana’s four white regiments participated in the campaign. (The Second Cavalry, raised in November of 1863, remained on garrison duty in New Orleans and Baton Rouge.) On April 7, the First Louisiana skirmished with the van of Taylor’s forces at Wilson’s Farm, alerting the Federal forces to Taylor’s presence. The next day the regiment was assigned to escort the division’s baggage train but became engaged as the lead elements, retreating from the Mansfield battlefield, crumbled back onto the train. “Here the Third Brigade, Colonel [Harai] Robinson commanding, did good service in checking the enemy, Colonel Robinson being himself seriously wounded.”41

At Mansfield, the unit lost four men killed and thirty-one wounded while the Second (Mounted) Infantry also suffered thirty-one casualties including nineteen captured.42 Most of these men would spend the last year of the war in Confederate prison camps in East Texas. The First Infantry Regiment remained at Grand Ecore during the advance but was an integral part of the dam building project to prevent the naval

40 David C. Edmonds, ed. The Conduct of Federal Troops in Louisiana During the Invasions of 1863 and 1864, Official Report (Lafayette: The Acadiana Press, 1988), 48, 198. Edmonds believes that “most of the troops in Colonel Harai Robinson’s 1st Louisiana Cavalry were from New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.” (198) which has already shown to be incorrect.
41 OR, v. 36, 452.
42 Ibid., 261-2.
gunboats escorting the campaign from being trapped above the falls of the rapidly dropping Red River.

While garrisoning Alexandria, Banks intensified his recruiting efforts and raised a battalion (four companies) of cavalry scouts. Aware of the disaffected population in the area, he hoped local Unionists who were familiar with the surrounding area could be persuaded to join his ranks. Over a five-day period, April 19-23, 1864, a total of 373 men answered the call. They were divided into four companies and organized as the First Battalion, Louisiana Cavalry Scouts. These men were almost exclusively from the Deep South and most were residents of central Louisiana. (See Table 2.3) Lawrence Van Alystyne, a New England soldier described the recruits as “intelligent men, and the stories they tell of the wrongs they have suffered … made my blood boil with sympathy.”

On the retreat from Alexandria, the Scouts saw their only action on May 18 at Yellow Bayou, near Simmesport, while guarding the rear of the army. Here “a desperate fight ensued, in which the rebels were defeated, the cavalry behaving with great gallantry and losing heavily.” In his own account of the engagement, Gen. Banks reported 180 prisoners captured but “our loss in killed and wounded was 140.” The battalion was eventually consolidated with the Second Louisiana Cavalry but most of the men were mustered out of the service when it became clear that the army had no plans to return to their native area.

The closing years of the war were characterized by small-scale guerrilla operations between Union forces and Confederate irregulars. In an attempt to pacify the

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43 Lawrence Van Alystyne, *Diary of an Enlisted Man* (New Haven, 1910), 294.
Lafourche region, Company “K” of the First Louisiana Cavalry was raised from among the local populace and employed as peacekeepers to prevent depredations and punish offenders. These men hailed almost exclusively from the Acadian population of the Lafourche district, including large numbers from the towns of Labadieville and Chackbay. (See Table 2.4) A mounted Federal force made up of locals who knew the country and spoke the language had a distinct advantage over northern units in maintaining law and order, but still faced many difficulties exacerbated by the conflicting loyalties of the population. As Confederate conscription agents descended on the bayous and prairies, many Acadians turned away from the South and “greeted the Federal troops as an army of liberation.”46 As gray and blue forces ebbed and flowed across the region, Acadians were caught in the middle, suffering equally from Confederate conscription and Union foraging. Yet many Acadians still chose sides and actively participated in the conflict. At the outbreak of war, some enlisted in the Confederate service and remained there for the duration. Yet many others eluded the Confederates and actively aided the Union army. One unidentified Indiana officer reported of southwestern Louisiana:

The Union feeling in this portion of the state – especially among the poor class of citizens, is very strong. They are coming into our lines by the hundreds and either volunteering or taking the oath of allegiance. Many of them say they have not been home or inside of a house for eighteen months, but have been hiding in the swamps to avoid the conscription. There is now already near three hundred of them mounted, and acting as scouts, and they are found to be very useful, as they are acquainted with every part of the country.47

Another Union officer speculated that with a determined effort, “approximately a thousand men could be raised for the Federal army on the prairie.”48

46 Carl Brasseaux, *From Acadian to Cajun*, (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1992), 66.
48 Ibid., 67.
Company “K” struggled to maintain law and order along Bayou Lafourche and mounted numerous expeditions into the surrounding swamps and marshes, pursuing parties of “guerillas stealing horses,” and assisting in the apprehension of deserters. Numa Pomponeau, a pre-war resident of Napoleonville and an engineer by trade, earned an appointment as a second lieutenant in the company, primarily because he “would be a great benefit to the service in the District knowing the country as he does,” and would be able to add his knowledge of the area and its inhabitants to the efforts to keep the peace. On March 24, 1865, Pomponeau and his men visited the home of a suspected Confederate sympathizer who was also engaged in smuggling. A non-native might have been persuaded by the suspect’s affirmations of loyalty, but Pomponeau was suspicious and eventually located the uniforms of two deserters hidden under some logs.

Julius A. Masicot, another south Louisiana native, was appointed “from civil life” to a second lieutenancy in the regiment, primarily because he “speaks French very well,” and served as provost marshal in the Acadian town of Plaquemine, just south of Baton Rouge.51

The other nine companies of the First Louisiana Cavalry embarked for Pensacola and participated in General E. R. S. Canby’s campaign against the city of Mobile. Discipline in the regiment began to break down during the campaign, perhaps as a result of being sent for the first time beyond the state’s borders. On March 20, 1865 several members of the regiment broke into the U. S. Steam Transport George B. McClellan, moored at Barrancas, Florida, and stole “syrup, pickles, dried tongues, bacon, wine,

49 OR, v. 48, 78.
sugar, and cheese” valued at over $2,000.00. Six of the guilty were charged with “conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline” and tried by court martial. The men were convicted and sentenced to one year of confinement at hard labor.

The unit was soon pressed into active service scouting around Pensacola and led the advance on Mobile. On April 12, it met a Confederate force posted on the north bank of Canoe Creek, near the Escambia River. The regiment “swept down upon the enemy, breaking their line instantly. The charge continued about four miles, prisoners being secured all the time” One member of the regiment, Private Thomas Riley of Company D, even captured a Confederate battle-flag. Colonel Asa Badger, in command of the First Louisiana, reported his losses as three killed, three wounded and 26 horses lost.53

Discipline continued to decline, perhaps as a result of hard campaigning and higher casualties. While encamped near Barrancas on April 13, Private James Brown was charged with stating that “the Captain could punish him and that was all he could do and that the said James Brown, Private, Co. B, First Louisiana Cavalry could shit a better Captain any day.” Brown was whipped for his remarks.

Following the capture of the works at Blakeley, Alabama, the unit pursued the defeated Confederates toward Mount Pleasant, Alabama and again broke through their rear-guard. Brigadier General T. J. Lucas, commanding the Third Cavalry Brigade, made the following report of the engagement near Claiborne on April 18, 1865:

I maintained my ground, and ordering the remainder of the First Louisiana Cavalry

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51 Masicot Service Record, CSR.
52 The six were Max Conrad, William Pollens, Alfred Rich, William Smith, Louis Hendricks and Addison Lewis. Copies of the charges against them are in each service record.
54 James Brown Service Record, CSR.
forward and into line, charged them. As the regiment swept down upon them their line was broken, and they retreated in disorder in all directions. I pursued them four miles, capturing prisoners all the way. The force of the enemy was utterly demoralized and scattered. Among the results of the engagement were the capture of two commissioned officers and 70 men, 2 battle-flags (1 taken by the Second Illinois [Cavalry]), horses, arms, &c.

The unit continued towards Montgomery, arriving sometime after May 5. On that date the unit was near Cross Keys, where Privates Patrick Dolan and Thomas Glynn were charged with “entering the house and putting a gun to the head of Madam H. L. Yancey,” indicating the continued erosion of discipline within the regiment.55

The First Louisiana Cavalry returned to Louisiana following the Confederate surrender and was assigned garrison duty within the state. On June 23, 1865 the Edward F. Dix, carrying Capt. Samuel B. Alger’s Company D up the Red River to Shreveport, struck the sunken U.S.S. Eastport near Montgomery, Louisiana. The boat sank in less than 20 minutes. The men managed to escape and were commended for their calmness as they assisted other passengers in evacuating the sinking boat. The men eventually reached Shreveport, but without much of their supplies and many of their mounts.56

The regiment remained in Shreveport only briefly before being ordered to march across Texas and garrison Austin, the state capital. In both Shreveport and Texas desertions increased dramatically and at least 20 men left the service and headed home.57 Desertions were not unique to the Louisiana unit during this time. A. F. Whelan, whose own Third Michigan Cavalry was also on the trek to Texas, noted wholesale desertions in many of the regiments. On July 1, his diary records “3 or 4 deserted from the regiment last night” and on the July 6, the entire Second Illinois Cavalry refused to go any farther

55 Patrick Dolan Service Record, CSR.
from their homes. Whelan attributed the desertions to the “dissatisfaction of the troops at being kept over their terms of service.” Poor treatment could have been a contributing factor to those electing to leave. On July 26, Whelan recorded:

we came through Cameron 5 or 6 miles from our last camp [...] there was a sick man there who had been brutally left by his officers without any provision being made for his comfort – I think he belonged to the first Louisiana Cav., Dr. Johnson got a Dr. in town to take care of him.

Those who left during this time deprived themselves of valuable postwar pensions. The unit was officially mustered out on December 10, 1865.

The combat record of the regiment indicates that it was as effective as any other cavalry regiment in the Department of the Gulf. Examination of the individual service records reveals that while some members of the regiment were certainly not saints, the vast majority behaved honorably and added significant numbers to the Union cause at a time when they were sorely needed. In many cases, they also offered local expertise, providing valuable scouting and reconnaissance services to the Union war effort. Though not strictly a garrison unit, the regiment excelled in that role, but also saw many minor and major engagements and suffered their share of combat and disease casualties, especially as the war closed. During the war, at least forty-three men died in combat, and an undetermined but undoubtedly higher number succumbed to disease.

The immigrants and natives, freeholders and freedmen, dirt farmers and Cajuns who enlisted in Louisiana’s Federal units represented a broad cross section of the state who actively resisted Confederate hegemony. Although their contributions have been largely excluded from post war histories, they provided valuable service to their country.
when popular opinion ran largely against it. Often persecuted during and even after the
war by unrepentant Confederates, these men stood their ground. Though pro-Confederate
sentiment did dominate the state, a small percentage of the state’s population was
sufficiently tied to the United States to risk their homes, their families, their health and
even their lives to express their support for the Union.
Table 2.2. Birthplaces of 1050 Soldiers of the First Louisiana Cavalry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign born: 522 (49.7%)</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany………………………..179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland ……………………….136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France…………………………66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England………………………37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada…………………………25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland…………………..16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico…………………………13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy………………………..11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 (15 countries)……39</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native-born 528 (50.3%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Region:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South 329 (31.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY 14</td>
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<td>GA 10</td>
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<td>TN 9</td>
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<td>TX 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England 50 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH 1</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Midwest 37 (3.5%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OH 13</td>
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<td>IN 7</td>
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<td>IL 6</td>
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<td>MO 4</td>
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<td>IA 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI 2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-Atlantic 112 (10.7%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NY 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC 1</td>
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</table>

60 Collected from the Compiled Service Records.
Table 2.3. 1860 Parish of Residence for 209 of the 373 Recruits of the First Battalion, Louisiana Cavalry Scouts\textsuperscript{61}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapides</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winn</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catahoula</td>
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<td>Calcasieu</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claiborne</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchitoches</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Helena</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoyelles</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Map 1 for a graphical representation)

\textsuperscript{61} Residence determined from either a death certificate in the Compiled Service Records or the 1860 Census Index.
Table 2.4. Cajuns in the Union Army: Roster of Company K, First Louisiana Cavalry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICERS</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capt.</td>
<td>Alexander, John B.</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Transfer from 4th Iowa Cav.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Lt.</td>
<td>Daniels, Asa O.</td>
<td>Lt. Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Lt.</td>
<td>Pomponeau, Numa</td>
<td>Lt. Napoleonville, LA</td>
<td>Appointed from civil life</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENLISTED MEN</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert, William</td>
<td>Hannover, GER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allemand, Antoine</td>
<td>St. Vincent, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, John</td>
<td>Buffalo, NY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antement, Antoine</td>
<td>Donaldsonville, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aucoin, Orsin</td>
<td>Texas Brulin, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basse, Roffe</td>
<td>Sardinia, ITA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergeron, Omar</td>
<td>Chackbay, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billot, Joseph</td>
<td>Houma, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billt, Robert</td>
<td>Houma, LA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Borner, Julius</td>
<td>Breslau, Prussia, GER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boudron, Alfred</td>
<td>Chackbay, LA</td>
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<td>Boudron, Desire</td>
<td>Labadieville, LA</td>
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<td>Boudron, Ernest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boudron, Francis</td>
<td>Labadieville, LA</td>
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<td>Boudrou, Onesifor</td>
<td>Labadieville, LA</td>
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<td>Bourg, Nicholas</td>
<td>Bayou Boeuf, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bourg, Ries</td>
<td>Bruly Guillot, LA</td>
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<td>Bourg, Wilfred</td>
<td>Bruly Texas, LA</td>
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<td>Bourgh, Marsllian</td>
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<td>Bouvelin, William</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Charles</td>
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<td>Brunet, John B.</td>
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<td>Carlin, Desire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clement, Ellis</td>
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<td>Close, Oscar</td>
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<td>Conlin, Edward</td>
<td>Amagh Co. IRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contra, John</td>
<td>Nueva Leon, MEX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cordier, August</td>
<td>Lille, FRA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement, Ellis</td>
<td>Chackbay, LA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire, Carlin</td>
<td>Houma, LA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doherty, James</td>
<td>Londonderry, IRE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donovan, Dennis</td>
<td>Limerick, IRE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferrion, Ambrose</td>
<td>Labadieville, LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62 From Compiled Service Records.
Ferrion, Clement   Labadieville, LA
Fisher, John    Fannin Co. GA
Fitzpatrick, William   St. John’s, CAN
Fogarty, Daniel   Salisbury, NC
Gross, Clariville   Labadieville, LA
Harris, Frank    Franklin, VA
Hiller, John G.    Stuttgart, GER
Houlditch, Henry C.   Cahaba, AL
Hoyman, Adolph   Labadieville, LA
Johnson, Henry   Syracuse, NY
Kelley, Edward   Belfast, IRE
Kelley, Michael   IRE
LaBlanc, Frissimo   Labadieville, LA
Laboyere, John   Miolout, FRA
Legendre, Augustine   Chackbay, LA
Louis, Frederic   Houma, LA
Lynch, Henry    Montreal, CAN
Martin, Oscar   Thibodaux, LA
McGuire, John   Philadelphia, PA
Moreau, Ernest   Chackbay, LA
Morvant, Hudson   Chackbay, LA
O'Neal, Louis   Chackbay, LA
Oute, Felix    Pointe Coupee, LA
Pelletiere, Emile   Metz, FRA
Perque, Auguste   Chackbay, LA
Plumly, Mordon   Trenton, NJ
Reckert, Charles   Muesbach, GER
Robertson, Tressimo   Chackbay, LA
Robertson, Joseph   Labadieville, LA
Sance, Basile   Houma, LA
Sanders, John   Cleveland, OH
Smith, John   Middlesex, VA
Tabor, Augustine   Chackbay, LA
Taylor, George   Carrollton, KY
Thibodeaux, Augustine   Houma, LA
Thibodeaux, Claudounire   Houma, LA
Thidodeaux, Joseph   Labadieville, LA
Thompson, Henry   Portland, ME
Templet, Charles   Bayou Boeuf, LA
Toups, Pierre   Houma, LA
Trahan, Simeon   Labadieville, LA
Troscier, Ceatie   Chackbay, LA
Tusen, Thomas   Attakapas, LA
Weigle, August   Sallinger, Baden, GER
White, Washington   New Orleans, LA
Map 1. Central Louisiana in 1864. (Circled numbers indicate number of residents who enlisted in the First Battalion, Louisiana Cavalry Scouts)
CHAPTER 3
LOUISIANA: THE FIRST CORPS D’AFRIQUE CAVALRY

The vast majority of Louisianians who would eventually wear the Union blue were legally barred from serving in any military organization in 1860. These men were enslaved blacks, who were specifically prohibited from serving even in state militia organizations. Free blacks were not legally barred, and some responded to State appeals for manpower but, after Union occupation, readily enlisted as regular troops and served with distinction. The combined total of both freedmen and free blacks in the northern ranks is estimated at 24,052, or 31 percent of the state’s black male population of military age. This number represents a higher total than any other state.63 Once enrolled, most black troops in the Department of the Gulf garrisoned remote posts and labored on military works projects while suffering at the hands of incompetent and often racially prejudiced officers. The men received only half the pay of their white peers until very late in the war, and their families suffered constant abuse and neglect.64 Nevertheless, the vast majority that entered the Union ranks remained there for the duration of the war and for many months afterward (white troops received priority in mustering out) and provided valuable service. By bolstering Union numbers in what the administration perceived as a less important theater, black troops enabled Union forces not only to hold what they

64 Black privates were paid ten dollars per month and had three dollars withheld for clothing while white privates received thirteen dollars per month, including the three dollar clothing allowance.
gained, but permitted further operations that expanded the area returned to federal control and accelerated the pace of emancipation in the state.

In 1860, Louisiana’s black population included 331,726 slaves and 18,537 free blacks. 10,939 of the free blacks were concentrated in New Orleans, where they artisans and skilled craftsmen made up a significant portion of the cities 25,423 blacks.65 The remainder of the free population was scattered in other towns and cities, including Baton Rouge. Most of the state’s black residents were slaves on the sugar plantations clustered on Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Teche, or on cotton plantations in the Mississippi and Red River valleys. Many of the slaves had been born in other southern states and were moved west in the lateral slave trade to support Louisiana’s developing antebellum economy.

The Confederacy initially refused to allow blacks in the armed forces, but permitted Louisiana Governor Thomas O. Moore to enlist over 3,000 free blacks in state militia organizations.66 These units had long been part of the state militia, serving as early as 1815 at the Battle of New Orleans. When faced with Union occupation, Confederate authorities declined to evacuate these units from the city and left them to their fate. At the head of the occupying army, General Benjamin Butler had no designs to utilize the vast numbers of blacks available to him even though he had been instrumental in determining federal policy towards freed slaves. Labeling them “contraband of war,” Butler realized the invaluable assistance they provided to the Confederate cause and, while stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia, sought to remove as many as possible from


In New Orleans, Butler immediately received large numbers of escaped slaves into his lines and envisioned a similar role. Many served as camp laundresses, cooks, officers’ servants and at hard labor strengthening the city’s defenses. Like many northerners, Butler did not initially see a need for black troops in suppressing the rebellion but, like many politicians, was willing to “shift with the tide of popular sentiment.”\footnote{Dudley Taylor Cornish, \textit{The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army 1861-1865}, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1956), 63.} In July 1862, Butler was challenged by General John W. Phelps, a Vermont abolitionist, who began organizing units of black soldiers from the “Africans” pouring into his lines.\footnote{Berlin, et. al., \textit{The Black Military Experience}, 62-3.} Butler ordered the units disbanded, eventually forcing Phelps’ resignation, but the following month sought and accepted into service the three regiments of free blacks that had served in the state militia.\footnote{For a complete description of the controversy between Phelps and Butler, see Cornish, \textit{The Sable Arm}, 58-64.} Desperate for manpower and having exhausted the city’s supply of white recruits, Butler defended his actions by noting that these militia units gave the Confederacy the precedent of enrolling black troops.\footnote{By use of this argument, Butler enrolled the First, Second and Third regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards, who would later distinguish themselves at Port Hudson, into federal service. Other black regiments were simultaneously raised in Kansas and South Carolina, and policy slowly shifted in support of black troops.}

Recruiting of black troops slowed during the winter of 1862-63 as the three Native Guard regiments struggled to integrate themselves into the Department and
simultaneously retain their black officers. The Second Native Guards participated in the October 1862 Lafourche campaign but was banished to Ship Island, Mississippi for allegedly inciting slaves in the region to revolt.\textsuperscript{72} Once on the island, black officers continued to be persecuted by insubordinate white soldiers from northern regiments.\textsuperscript{73} In December 1862 General Nathaniel Banks arrived in New Orleans to replace Butler as head of the Department of the Gulf. As governor of Massachusetts, Banks had vetoed legislation that would have permitted blacks to serve in that state’s militia, an act that did not bode well for the black soldiers, especially the black officers, under his command. During his tenure, Banks would enthusiastically support black recruiting (mostly out of necessity) but sought to eliminate all black officers. Believing them to be incompetent, he presided over the removal of the majority of the black officers in the Native Guards.\textsuperscript{74}

As General Ulysses Grant besieged Vicksburg and Banks surrounded Port Hudson, black soldiers from both armies saw their first real combat in the Deep South. On June 7, 1863 at Milliken’s Bend, Louisiana, just across the Mississippi from Vicksburg, the “Ninth and Eleventh Regiments of Louisiana Volunteers of African Descent” successfully resisted a Confederate attempt to relieve pressure on Vicksburg from the West and convinced skeptical northerners of their fighting prowess.\textsuperscript{75} Earlier, on May 27, the First and Third regiments of Native Guards were sent into a slaughterhouse in an assault on Port Hudson by an impatient General Banks. Their own

\textsuperscript{71} Berlin, et. al., \textit{The Black Military Experience}, 65-67.
\textsuperscript{73} The regiments trials on Ship Island are enumerated in the diary of the regiment’s white commander, Col. Nathan W. Daniels, a pre-war resident of Point Coupee Parish, Louisiana. (Weaver, \textit{Thank God my Regiment an African One}, 28)
\textsuperscript{74} James G. Hollandsworth, \textit{The Louisiana Native Guards: The Black Military Experience during the Civil War}, (Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1995) 61.
\textsuperscript{75} Cornish, \textit{The Sable Arm}, 144.
commander noted “they were exposed to a terrible fire and were dreadfully slaughtered.”\textsuperscript{76} Banks later bragged of their courage, claiming their conduct was “in many respects …heroic” and that “they fought splendidly.”\textsuperscript{77} The attack was launched across ground that had not been reconnoitered and was essentially unsupported by other units or artillery. If the assault had been better planned and coordinated, a few more Native Guardsmen might have survived to hear Banks’ words of praise.

Rather than proving the success of the black “experiment,” the assault established a pattern of neglect and harsh treatment for black Louisianians in the department. Assigned to remote posts under cruel officers and called into combat only in the direst emergencies, troops had every reason to leave the service. Better jobs with “higher and more regular pay” that offered “the opportunity to remain near family and friends” were available in the urban centers and on leased plantations.\textsuperscript{78} Yet many freedmen still came forward and volunteered for service against their former masters and with the government that promised the prospect of freedom.

In May 1863, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered General Lorenzo Thomas, Adjutant General of the Army, to begin active recruiting of black soldiers. Thomas formally established the Bureau of Colored Troops and traveled to the Upper Mississippi Valley to promote the program among reluctant field commanders.\textsuperscript{79} In the Department of the Gulf, Banks was allowed to continue recruiting a separate corps of black troops known as the “Corps d’Afrique.” General Daniel Ullmann, a prominent New York

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 142.
  \item \textsuperscript{77} Hollandsworth, \textit{The Louisiana Native Guards}, 62.
  \item \textsuperscript{78} Berlin, et. al., \textit{The Black Military Experience}, 13.
\end{itemize}
politician, obtained permission to travel to Louisiana and raise a brigade (four regiments) of black soldiers from the contrabands pouring into New Orleans. Active operations initially slowed Ullmann’s efforts, and on June 30, 1863, he complained to the Department’s adjutant general that his troops had been digging for “twenty consecutive hours” in the trenches at Port Hudson, which had “entirely prevented my recruiting, excepting to a very limited degree.”80 The fall of Port Hudson on July 8 freed Ullmann’s recruiters, and by mid-August he had organized five regiments of five hundred men each.81 These units were combined with existing Native Guards and black engineer regiments to form the foundation of the Corps d’Afrique.

Recruiting began in earnest in August 1863 to fill out the corps with an additional twenty regiments. Banks assigned recruiters to scour the countryside for potential soldiers, beginning in the region closest to New Orleans, the Lafourche district. William Shelly, of the 176th New York infantry, served as a recruiter for the 16th regiment, Corps d’Afrique and traveled through the Lafourche district. On August 31, Shelly reported he “went to Terre Bonne [station] and Thibadauxville [Thibodaux]” and by September 1, sent his first recruits to New Orleans.82

Banks resorted to compulsive service to accelerate the completion of his Corps d’Afrique. On September 23, he issued General Orders No. 70, mandating that “all able-bodied men of color between the ages of twenty and thirty years, employed upon government or private plantations, will be detailed for military service in the Corps

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81 Hargrove, Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War, 100.

82 William Shelly Diary, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
The order was suspended until after the fall harvest and later reinstated, subjecting many blacks to forcible conscription and bringing some soldiers into the service against their will.

Officers applying for commissions in regiments raised by the Bureau of Colored Troops were required to complete rigorous examinations before earning commissions. In addition, most volunteers were veterans who had already completed several years of service, and as a result most officers in those units were capable men. Officers in units recruited by General Ullmann were initially exempt from these strict requirements, and many were personal associates from back east with little or no military experience. To remedy this defect, Ullmann instituted a harsh training program that served only to drive off many capable men. The quality of those who remained varied widely; some proved capable while others treated their men worse than their former masters. Even General Banks described the white officers in the Corps d’Afrique as “generally poor men.”

The draconian measures implemented by one commander in the Corps d’Afrique resulted in one of the most notorious affairs in the corps’ brief history. On December 9, 1863, “one quarter to one half” of the Fourth Corps d’Afrique Infantry mutinied after a member of their regiment had been publicly and severely whipped. The punishment was the latest in a string of severe acts by the unit’s executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Augustus C. Benedict. The men, most of whom were former slaves, had been tied by their thumbs and suspended inches above the ground or were tied to the ground with their

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83 Hargrove, Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War, 101.
84 See Glatthaar’s Forged in Battle for a detailed description of the selection process.
85 Fred Harvey Harrington, “The Fort Jackson Mutiny” in Journal of Negro History vol. 27, No. 4 (October 1942), 421.
86 Ibid., 423.
arms and legs spread while their faces were smeared with molasses to attract insects.\(^{87}\) Benedict was not the only abusive officer in the unit; several junior officers were charged with forcefully entering the quarters of the unit’s black laundresses, and the regiment’s commander, Colonel John Drew, physically abused several members of the regiment. Army officials tried and convicted the ringleaders of the mutiny and sentenced eight to prison, but General Banks commuted the sentences of two others who were to be executed by firing squad. Despite the harsh treatment and attempts to disperse the men among other black units, the regiment retained its integrity and even earned praise from Drew, promoted to command of a brigade, after charging Confederate works near Mobile in April 1865.\(^{88}\)

Banks’s order establishing the Corps d’Afrique authorized black artillery and cavalry units to eliminate conflicts between supporting white units from those branches and the black infantry units. Several field and garrison artillery units entered the service but only one cavalry regiment, the First Cavalry, Corps d’Afrique, completed its organization. General George L. Andrews, who had been appointed as commander of the Corps d’Afrique, proposed to recruit “picked men, selected from those accustomed to riding on horseback and to the care of horses; they should be active, robust men. From their knowledge of the country, it is thought that such a body of men, well-officered, cannot fail to be of great service.”\(^{89}\)

In New Orleans, there was no shortage of black men with experience with horses. Slaves on outlying plantations had longed served as stablemen and grooms, and several soldiers in the regiment listed their occupations as hostlers, and black jockeys were not

\(^{87}\) Ibid., 422
\(^{88}\) Ibid., 426.
uncommon at New Orleans' racetracks. Officially mustered into service on September 12, 1863, the unit was not mounted for over a year but forced to labor in the defenses of New Orleans or serve as infantry.

The majority of the men were Southerners by birth (91 percent) and over half were Louisiana natives, although the eastern slave states, especially Virginia (10 percent), are well represented in a list of soldiers’ birthplaces. (See Table 3.1) The Louisiana natives were from all regions of the state but three-fourths (748 of 1038) were enrolled in New Orleans. The regiment was composed almost entirely of freedmen, but did contain at least thirty free blacks. During the late 1863 campaign in western Louisiana, over 100 men from the Teche region enlisted at New Iberia. On October 12, writing from Crow Plantation, (Carencro) Louisiana, the regiment’s commander, Colonel James Grant Wilson, reported, “the regiment is progressing very well. One company is full and has their arms and uniforms, and four others are in the course of formation.” Formerly an officer of the 15th Illinois Cavalry, Colonel Wilson was serving as General Banks’ aide de camp, a position he filled until May, 1865, when he was discharged from the service. The regiment’s colonel never actually served with the unit, depriving it of much needed leadership.

Recruiting continued in early 1864 as far west as Texas. Captain Franz Benter accompanied Banks’ army to Texas and enrolled at least twenty men at Indianola. Most of the men were natives of the lower Mississippi valley and were probably serving in

89 Cornish, *The Sable Arm*, 129.
91 Wilson Service Record, “Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who served with the United States Colored Troops in the 1st through 5th United States Colored Cavalry, 5th Massachusetts Cavalry (Colored), and the 6th United States
white units stationed in Texas. Benter was a German immigrant who had served as an officer in the Prussian army and edited the German language newspaper, the *Louisiana Staats Zeitung* in New Orleans. He was “one of the first to openly avow his loyalty upon the arrival of U.S. forces,” and was a “zealous and active” recruiter.92

During the 1864 Red River campaign, recruiting officers First Corps d’Afrique cavalry accompanied the expedition and found that recruiting black troops in Confederate Louisiana could be a hazardous undertaking. Second Lieutenant William Hamblin, formerly of the Third Massachusetts Cavalry, was captured March 22, 1864 near Washington, Louisiana, and was never heard from again. Major Joseph Paine, another Massachusetts native, contracted dysentery while recruiting in northwest Louisiana and died in New Orleans the following November. In a eulogy published after his death in Boston, Colonel Wilson credited Paine with recruiting more men for the Corps d’Afrique than any other officer in it. Paine was commended not only for bringing in not only recruits, but also their families and possessions, and arranging for them to travel together to New Orleans.93

The compiled service records of the regiment reveal that 109 men were enlisted at Alexandria and another forty-one just upriver at Grand Ecore, during the campaign. One of the men, Corporal Louis Dearborne, a nineteen-year-old native of Natchitoches, enlisted at Alexandria on April 27, 1864 and was mustered out of the service in March, 1866. After the war, Dearborne returned home to Cloutierville where he was married the

92 Benter Service Record, CSR.
following year and lived until 1932, when he was buried in the cemetery of a church he founded near Lena, Louisiana.⁹⁴

In April 1864, the War Department ordered Banks’ Corps d’Afrique placed under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Colored Troops. The order removed the corps from departmental control and was the first step in a series of improvements for all the regiments involved. The most obvious change was a redesignation of all Corps d’Afrique regiments to numbered units of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). The twenty-one infantry, five engineer and two artillery units were renumbered as the 73<sup>rd</sup>-99<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Artillery regiments, USCT respectively⁹⁵. In addition, The First Corps d’Afrique Cavalry became the Fourth U.S. Colored Cavalry, one of only seven black cavalry units in the entire Union army. As a result, many of the less competent Corps D’Afrique officers were replaced with men screened by examining boards of the Bureau of Colored Troops. In December, 1864, at least six officers were dismissed for failing an examination.⁹⁶

During the Red River campaign, Banks’ troop shortage forced the removal of several black units from garrison duty. To replace units moved up the Red River, the Fourth Colored Cavalry sent two companies (A and K) to garrison Donaldsonville while the remainder reported to the Cavalry Camp of instruction at Greenville, Louisiana (near New Orleans) for training. General Ullmann, then in command of the garrison at Port Hudson, had begged for cavalry support for his post, testifying in a May 31, 1864 letter to headquarters:

⁹⁵ General Orders No. 51, Headquarters, Department of the Gulf, Grand Ecore, La., April 19, 1964; in OR, vol. 34, Part III, 221.
⁹⁶ Data compiled from CSR.
the mounted force at this post is wholly insufficient to perform the service needed. It is scarcely adequate to the discharge of picket duty. If I had a cavalry force of 1,000 men, and a steamer that could transport a battery and a detachment of 250 mounted men, I could hope to protect the telegraph line between here and Baton Rouge, and also some distance upriver.

By early August all ten companies of the freshly trained and mounted Fourth Colored Cavalry reported to Port Hudson for duty.

In February 1864, Private Daniel D. Slauson, a physician serving as a hospital steward in the 60th Indiana Infantry at Passo Cavallo, Texas, applied for and received a 60-day furlough to travel to New Orleans to seek an appointment as a surgeon in one of the newly organized black units. Slauson’s experience as a practicing physician in Indiana prior to his enlistment aided in his selection and on March 29, he was mustered in and reported to the First Cavalry, Corps d’Afrique as its regimental surgeon. He would remain with the unit until it was mustered out in 1866 and his monthly medical reports provide a snapshot of the unit’s activities and personnel losses during that time.

When Slauson reached his unit at Camp Parapet, he observed:

The regiment is camped on rather low ground within a few yards of the Mississippi. When the regt. came upon the ground there was a large stagnant pool of water in the middle of the grounds which has since been filled up. The regt. has been employed on fatigue duty outside the parapet felling trees where the men have to stand in water reaching to the tops of their boots and exposed to the intense heat of the sun and the malarious exhalations.

During the month of June, Slauson treated 449 men at sick call, a rate of over fifteen per day, in a unit whose total strength was only 37 officers and 625 enlisted men. During the same month, nine men succumbed to disease and another fourteen were transferred to the
post hospital. This staggering sick rate prevented any active service and testifies to the dangerously unhealthy conditions the men worked and lived in.97

On July 7, the unit was granted a brief reprieve from fatigue duty for one day to “act as escort in the procession in honor of the passage of the emancipation act by the state convention.”98 As New Orleans was already under federal control on January 1, 1863, all slaves in the area were not emancipated by Lincoln’s proclamation, and many loyal plantation owners had continued the practice under federal protection. While participating in the procession, the troops were ordered to “carry arms and ammunition, but the arms will not be loaded,”99 reflecting a concern for either the public or the troops’ safety. In the previous months, several soldiers had been wounded by accidental discharges of their firearms.100

On August 8, Special Orders No. 211 arrived from Departmental headquarters bringing eagerly anticipated news: “The Fourth Regiment, U. S. Colored Cavalry is relieved from duty in the defenses of New Orleans and will at once proceed to Port Hudson, La.”101 In less than a month the unit would have a new, healthier camp on higher ground and see its first active campaigning. By August 22 the unit had reached Port Hudson with an estimated 325 horses and was at that time the only cavalry force on the east bank of the river.102 Two days later the regiment formed part of an expedition to Clinton, to break up a Confederate post used by rebel forces to harass Union troops in the vicinity of Baton Rouge. The next day near the Olive Branch of the Comite River, the

97 Fourth U. S. Colored Cavalry, Casualty Report for June, 1864, in D. D. Slauson Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
98 OR, v. 34, pt. IV, 292.
99 Ibid.
100 Casualty reports for April and May 1864, Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.
102 Ibid., 800.
unit suffered its only combat casualty of the war as Private “Philip Perry, Co. A, (was) wounded by a pistol ball, in battle, (the) ball entering near the head of the radius in the left arm.”\textsuperscript{103} During the same month, four of Perry’s fellow cavalymen died, including one struck by lightning.\textsuperscript{104} From April through October of 1864, forty-six men died from various diseases, but none from enemy fire.

The leading killer was dysentery, accounting for over half the deaths, followed by various lung diseases, including pneumonia and tuberculosis. (See Table 3.2) These numbers support Andrew K. Black’s estimations for mortality causes of all black troops. (Dysentery was again the leading cause, with twenty-three percent of the 29,963 disease deaths among black soldiers, followed by lung disorders with over twenty percent)\textsuperscript{105}

Table 3.2. Causes of Death for the First Corps d’Afrique Cavalry, April-October, 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dysentery</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung Disease</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunshot</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drowning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poor sanitation and polluted water supplies account for the high dysentery rate, which was endemic in Civil War armies, but black troops were afflicted by respiratory ailments at a much higher rate than their white counterparts. Black attributes this to a recurrence of tuberculosis in troops who were initially exposed in crowded slave quarters

\textsuperscript{103} Casualty Report for August, 1864, D. D. Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
that facilitated transmission of airborne pathogens. Field hospitals recreated these crowded environments, as Slauson had only three small tents to shelter the average of forty soldiers he saw daily. White and black units alike suffered from poor medical care. A July 1864 inspection found the regimental hospitals of both the Second Louisiana Cavalry and the Fourth U. S. Colored Cavalry “poorly supplied” but only the two black regiments at Camp Parapet, the Fourth Cavalry and 20th USCT had “contagious diseases prevailing.”

Even with the shortages, the care Slauson provided was probably superior to the care the soldiers received in post hospitals, where an overload of patients and exposure to new diseases often meant death for soldiers committed to their care. Joseph Glatthaar’s analysis of medical care for black troops leads him to conclude that “soldiers in the USCT received their best care in these regimental hospitals.” This was especially true for soldiers in the Fourth Colored Cavalry, as their post hospital was the old Corps d’Afrique hospital, judged by Glattharr as the worst in New Orleans with a mortality rate much higher than the white hospitals in the city.

The experiences of the men in the Fourth Colored Cavalry likewise support Black’s conclusion that, “African Americans who served in the Union Army did so in conditions of considerably greater distress than their white compatriots. They were assigned more onerous duties which exposed them to a greater likelihood of disease.” However, his claim that “When they became ill, they received substandard care” seems to

106 Ibid., 322.
107 Inventory of Quartermaster Supplies assigned to the Fourth U. S. Colored Cavalry Regimental Field Hospital, Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library.
108 Inspection Report for the Hospital Department, Department of the Gulf, July 22, 1864, in Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library.
be erroneous. In the two years Slauson was regimental surgeon, the unit suffered only fifty-one deaths out of an average of over 700 men assigned, or a casualty rate of around seven percent, well below the estimated thirty percent for black troops and only slightly above the six percent rate for white troops.\textsuperscript{111} However, if only half of the 216 soldiers transferred to post or corps hospitals during this time died (See Table 3.3) the additional 108 deaths would raise the mortality rate to twenty-three percent, much closer to the average for black troops.

As cooler weather reached Louisiana, the sick rate dropped dramatically. From November until May, only three soldiers of the Fourth Colored Cavalry died, one from drowning and another after being shot by the provost marshal while attempting to escape confinement. Slauson saw only slightly more than 100 soldiers per month, down from a high of almost 500 during the summer. The unit remained active during this time, patrolling the surrounding area. Returns for March 7, 1865 revealed 728 men present, but listed only 321 effectives, a much lower percentage than the infantry and artillery units at the post. On March 1, General Francis Herron estimated that he had “about 200 colored cavalry in condition for service” at Port Hudson, but this did not preclude active operations.\textsuperscript{112}

The regiment made several raids into the surrounding countryside during their stay at Port Hudson, guided by soldiers who had lived in the area. At least twenty soldiers were born in the nearby towns of Jackson, Clinton and Bayou Sara (St. Francisville).\textsuperscript{113} The region immediately to the east of Port Hudson, known as the “Florida parishes,” had

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Black, “In the Service of the United States,” 328.
\textsuperscript{112} OR, v. 48, pt. I, 1051.
\textsuperscript{113} CSR.
been abandoned by regular Confederate units but was still infested with guerrillas and jayhawkers, as well as the occasional Confederate conscription agent.¹¹⁴ In April 1865, the unit made two raids to Jackson, La., one on April 13 that netted two Confederate officers and their correspondence, and another on April 19 that captured another officer, “without a shot being fired.”¹¹⁵

In the closing days of the war, the unit transitioned to its peacetime role, monitoring surrendered Confederates, and maintaining law and order, but on May 30, 1865, the unit was ordered to “immediately be put in condition for field service.”¹¹⁶ The following month, thirty-four men who were deemed unfit for service were discharged, including six who were too old, another five of “insufficient age” and several who were judged to possess some “mental incapacity” or “lack of intelligence.”¹¹⁷ These men had been adequate for wartime service and served honorably during that time but were evidently judged liabilities in a peacetime army and turned out, indicating either the strength of racial prejudice in the service or the poor health of recruits assigned to the regiment. Also in June, the regiment suffered its second fatality of the year, as a soldier allegedly attacked the owner of a plantation and was shot. Slauson noted only that the encounter occurred at night and did not mention if it was in the line of duty.¹¹⁸

In the months that followed, the unit was split into detachments and assigned to various points around the state. As an army of occupation, the unit was in constant danger but rendered valuable service in protecting liberated blacks and government agents.

¹¹⁴ For a full description of the region during the latter half of the war, see Samuel C. Hyde, Jr., “Bushwhacking and Barn Burning: Civil War Operations and the Florida Parishes’ Tradition of Violence,” Louisiana History 36 (Spring 1995), 171-186.
¹¹⁷ Casualty Report for June, 1865, Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.
¹¹⁸ Ibid.
During the one-year period following the war, the unit lost only one more soldier, a drowning victim in August. The scattered detachments were called together and ordered to Greenville, La., in March, 1866 to be mustered out, several months after the last white regiments from the state.\textsuperscript{119} Later that year, Colonel Edward Hatch established a recruiting office in Greenville for experienced cavalrymen who desired to remain in the United States Army. By November, Hatch had several hundred recruits on hand for what was to become the Ninth Regiment of Cavalry, one of the two units who would earn distinction on the western plains as the “Buffalo Soldiers,” and keep alive the black presence in the army.\textsuperscript{120}

The black Louisianians who served in the Union army did not lead many victorious assaults nor did they suffer any ignominious defeats. Their role is best described by President Lincoln’s famous quote asking “those not skinning” to “hold a leg.”\textsuperscript{121} By March 1865, black troops accounted for over 18,000 of the 28,000 Union soldiers serving along the Mississippi River in the Department of the Gulf (roughly between Fort Jackson and Vicksburg).\textsuperscript{122} By protecting the various vulnerable points in the Department of the Gulf, black troops like the Fourth U. S. Colored Cavalry freed many troops for active operations like the Red River campaign. If the departmental commanders had been able to overcome their racial prejudices, black troops might have played a more active role and even altered the outcome of those campaigns. If there were failings among the black troops, it was a failure of white leadership, for those units properly trained and led never failed in battle.

\textsuperscript{119} Casualty Reports for July 1865 through March, 1866, Slauson Papers, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.
\textsuperscript{121} McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, v. 2, 412.
In return for their sacrifices, black troops received even less compensation than their white counterparts. After a decade of political activism, black Louisianians were abandoned by their government, stripped of their rights, and, by the close of the century, were again relegated to an inferior status by “Jim Crow” legislation. Some escaped this fate by taking advantage of the training they had received and moving West, but many veterans were either persecuted or forgotten. While in the service, nine soldiers of the First Corps d’Afrique Cavalry died accidentally and another 168, or seventeen percent of the regiment, succumbed to disease, an incredibly high mortality rate for a unit never engaged in extensive campaigning. Another 103 men received medical discharges, their health broken by their years in the service. 130 more deserted the army, most during the lethal summer at Camp Parapet, others after the war had been decided. Capable, effective soldiers, they represented their state well in arms under trying circumstances and greatly facilitated the eventual Union victory.

122 Cornish, *The Sable Arm*, 115.
Table 3.1. Birthplaces of 552 of the 1038 Soldiers of the First Cavalry Regiment, Corps d’Afrique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>(91%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>552</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3. Summary of Casualty Reports for the First Cavalry Regiment, Corps d’Afrique, April 1864-March 1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Duty Station</th>
<th>Sick</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Disch.</th>
<th>Hospitalized</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cos.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April, 1864</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Camp Parapet</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Greenville</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Camp Parapet</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Port Hudson</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1866</td>
<td>Greenville</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1861 there was considerable division over secession within Texas. A popular Unionist governor, Sam Houston, unsuccessfully attempted to keep the state out of the sectional conflict. Although the pro-secession faction eventually prevailed, many of those who opposed them did not readily join hands with their foes or even, like their hero, Governor Houston, fade quietly into the background. Isolated geographically from the remaining loyal states, Texas Unionists formed leagues to oppose the new Confederacy at home and, when persecuted, undertook long and dangerous journeys to reach Union lines in Missouri or the border with neutral Mexico. Once there, many resolved to join federal organizations and aid in restoring what they perceived to be the rightful government in their home state. Those who traveled north were absorbed into existing northern units but those refugees who found their way to New Orleans had the opportunity to join the only federal unit that would bear the state’s name throughout the war: the First Texas Cavalry.

While pockets of Union sentiment existed throughout the Lone Star state, most Unionists were concentrated in three main areas; the northern border along the Red River, the Hill Country around San Antonio and Austin, and the Rio Grande valley along the border with Mexico. Politics in all three areas reflected either established ethnic groups or nineteenth century immigration patterns. Unionists in all three areas were persecuted by both state and federal authorities, but the hanging of thirty-nine suspected Unionists near
Gainesville in October 1862 was probably the most notorious case of Unionist persecution in the state, if not the entire South.

Many settlers in the Red River valley were Midwesterners attracted by plentiful land in Texas. Like their counterparts to the north in Kansas, these adopted Texans opposed slavery and its expansion in the West despite the institution’s existence within their adopted state. When confronted with Confederate allegiance oaths and conscription, many hid their feelings but were eventually forced to move north or hide out in the sparsely populated countryside. Those who sought federal service joined Federal units raised in Missouri, making an exact determination of their number extremely difficult.

One north Texas Unionist who made his way to Missouri was Martin D. Hart of Hunt County. Realizing that Confederate sympathizers in Arkansas were making the journey perilous for refugees, Hart first obtained a commission in the Texas state militia and then secured permission to recruit a company, ostensibly for Confederate service. Armed with these documents, Hart and thirty-seven men made their way through Arkansas, arriving in September 1862 in Springfield, Missouri, where Hart revealed his true intentions, obtaining permission to raise a loyalist company, to be known as the First Texas Cavalry, to operate in northern Arkansas. 123 Making good on this promise, Hart enlisted several other exiled Texans and annoyed Confederate troops, liberating fugitive slaves and subsisting on captured supplies. In January 1863, the band was captured near Fort Smith, Arkansas, and taken to the post there, where Hart and another man were hung. 124

123 David Pickering and Judy Falls, Brush Men and Vigilantes: Civil War Dissent in Texas, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 75.
Perhaps concerned about his uncle’s notoriety, Hart’s nephew, Thomas J. Hart, made his way to Mexico and then New Orleans, where he enlisted in the First Louisiana Cavalry under the alias William Johnson. The younger Hart’s father, former Texas congressman Hardin Hart, learned of his son’s whereabouts in August 1865, when the unit arrived in Austin, and wrote the unit’s commander asking for a release from the service for his seventeen year-old son, even offering to refund his bounty. Andrew J. Hamilton, Provisional Governor, described Hardin Hart as “one of the most dedicated Union men in Texas.” The younger Hart was not the first Texan to make his way to New Orleans in order to enlist in the Union army, and had been preceded by enough men to form an entire regiment of exiled Texans.

For several decades preceding the conflict, central Texas had experienced a massive influx of German, and, to a smaller extent, Swiss, Swedish and Alsatian immigrants. Expelled after the failed 1848 revolution or attracted by the promise of available land, most entered via Indianola on Matagorda Bay and made the journey inland. The 1860 Census enumerated 20,555 Germans in Texas. Though scattered over a wide area, these immigrants established several distinctively European towns, notably Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, Boerne, and Castroville, and had a sizeable population in the larger cities of Austin and San Antonio. Like the northern Texans (and German immigrants in the north) most of Texas’ immigrants were opposed to slavery but grateful for the prosperity they were enjoying in their newly adopted county. German militia

companies raised to defend the frontier from Comanche raiders would form the nucleus of the First Texas Cavalry.

Unlike their freshly arrived counterparts to the north, Hispanic Texans, or Tejanos were firmly established along the Rio Grande valley. Many had supported Texas’ independence from Mexico in 1836 and welcomed statehood in 1845. Though not as prosperous as other Texans, most were moderately successful rancheros, herdsmen, and farmers in the fertile and temperate valley. Hispanic residents of Starr County refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy and “some had declared openly and definitely their intention to support no government except the government of the United States.” Whether animated by real concern for the fate of the Union or perceived grievances against wealthy Hispanic and Anglo landowners, Tejano defiance of the Confederacy continued throughout the Civil War. Though largely Spanish speakers, many Hispanic Texans sought and found service in the Union forces raised in their home state, and ultimately, over one-third of the men who served in the First Texas Cavalry were of Hispanic origin.

To presume, as one author has, that “the strength of the Texas Federal regiments consisted primarily of Mexicans, Germans and Irishmen” ignores both a sizeable Texas and American-born population. While marginally smaller in number than the foreign-born contingent, the native-born soldiers were over-represented in the officer ranks, including all three men who led the First Texas Cavalry in action and arguably represent the unit’s strength. As noted in The Handbook of Texas, “the regiment had a high

127 Claude Elliott, “Union Sentiment in Texas, 1861-1865” in The Southwestern Historical Quarterly (April, 1947), 460.
proportion of Spanish speaking Texans and first generation immigrants, among them German Unionists from the Hill Country, [but] the officer cadre was mostly mainstream southern in background."\textsuperscript{130} The regiment’s organizer and first commander, Colonel Edmund J. Davis, was born in Florida but relocated to Texas in 1838 and was a district attorney and state judge in Brownsville before secession.\textsuperscript{131} When promoted to the rank of general, Davis was relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Stancel, a Georgia native who also resided in Texas. Likewise, the Second Texas Cavalry, later consolidated with the First, was organized and led by Col. John L. Haynes, a Virginia native raised in Mississippi and an 1860 resident of Rio Grande City, Texas. Both Davis and Haynes were veterans of the war with Mexico. During the war, Andrew Jackson Hamilton, an Alabama-born resident of Austin, headed the state’s provisional government. Many other native-born southerners enlisted in the First Texas making up an estimated one quarter of those who served in the unit. (See Table 4.1) Whatever their politics, their presence in the Union ranks provides ample evidence of their opposition to the Confederacy.

Residency information is available for fewer than 300 of the men who enlisted in the regiment, but the home counties of the 263 Texas residents reveal a base that strongly corresponds with the counties opposing secession in the February, 1861 popular referendum. The November 1863 occupation of Brownsville by Federal forces and subsequent recruiting in the area helps explain the 109 Cameron County residents in the ranks, but most of the remainder were concentrated in the heavily German region between San Antonio and Austin. (See Map 2) Of the twenty counties who returned

\textsuperscript{129} Harold B. Simpson, ed., \textit{Texas in the War, 1861-1865}, (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Junior College Press, 1965) fn 162.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{The Handbook of Texas}, 3 vols., (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952) v. 1, 1008.
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{The Handbook of Texas}, v. 1, 526.
majorities opposing secession, ten were in this region, while nine of the others were clustered along the Red River in the north.\textsuperscript{132}

Some Unionists chose not to reveal their feelings and simply coexisted with their secessionist neighbors while others converted to their cause following the outbreak of hostilities. For those who remained committed, life became increasingly difficult as Confederate authorities accelerated attempts to eradicate the disloyal element. German settlers were attacked by members of vigilance committees affiliated with the notorious “Knights of the Golden Circle,” and one author estimates that as many as several hundred farmers had their homes and crops destroyed and their stock driven away.\textsuperscript{133}

In the Hill Country and elsewhere, loyalists formed “Loyal Leagues” to protect against these attacks and to resist the April 1862 Confederate conscription act. In heavily German Gillespie, Kendall and Kerr counties, northwest of San Antonio, Unionists even formed military companies, ostensibly for protection from hostile Indians but actually a means of evading Confederate service and promoting cooperation. Unionist military activity prompted Confederate authorities to dispatch units to the area to break up these bands and enforce the conscription act.\textsuperscript{134} Fearing reprisals for the murder of a man who had betrayed their meetings to Confederate authorities, several Unionists fled to the surrounding hills and made plans for an escape to Mexico.

In the summer of 1862, a group of sixty-one loyalists enlisted four American guides and started for the Rio Grande. On the morning of August 10, while encamped on the west bank of the Nueces River about twenty miles from Fort Clark, the band was

\textsuperscript{132} Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Fayette, Gillespie, Mason, Medina, Travis Williamson, and Uvalde are the ten roughly contiguous counties in central Texas who opposed secession in the popular referendum. See Baum, 64-6.

\textsuperscript{133} Lonn, \textit{Foreigners in the Confederacy}, 426, 428.
attacked by a superior force of Confederates under Captain James Duff. Nineteen men were killed outright while nine wounded were later murdered. Others starved in the desert or were later picked off by the Confederates. Only eleven men succeeded in crossing the Rio Grande and reaching Matamoros, and at least two, Adolph Zoeller and John Sansom, became captains in the First Texas Cavalry. Zoeller hailed from Boerne in Blanco (later Kendall) County while Sansom was born in Dallas County, Alabama but had traded on the Texas frontier. Several weeks after the massacre, another fifty unionists were hanged in Gillespie County, spurring another exodus of refugees. Confederate Texans brutally crushed dissent in both the Hill Country and the Red River valley, revealing the Confederacy’s intolerance of political dissent.

Upon reaching Matamoros, German Unionists had access via the Gulf to New Orleans, the nearest port under Federal control. By October 29, 1862, American diplomats were forwarding refugees and recruits to New Orleans as fast as they arrived and estimated that as many as 1,000 men would join the Union army once it arrived on the Rio Grande. When Union forces occupied Brownsville in 1864, they enrolled almost a thousand men, making the early estimates seem quite accurate. In New Orleans, Davis was actively enlisting Texas refugees in the First Texas Cavalry, and on November 6, 1862, the unit was officially mustered in though it contained only three of the required twelve companies. Company “A” was described as:

composed of Texas refugees who escaped through Mexico to New Orleans in

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134 Ibid., 427.
135 Ibid., 429-30.
136 Compiled Service Records of Union Volunteers from the State of Texas, National Archives Record Group 94, Microfilm 402. (Hereafter referred to as CSR) Zoeller and Samson Service Records.
137 The Handbook of Texas, v. I, 357.
October, 1862. Most of them are old hunters and splendid marksmen and well adapted to mounted service. They have no cavalry arms or equipment but are temporarily armed with old Springfield muskets.¹⁴⁰

The city of New Orleans offered a fertile recruiting ground as many of the city’s residents, especially Irish immigrants, helped to augment the companies but Davis recognized that refugees would continue to arrive and planned to fill his command with native Texans. On November 12, General Benjamin Butler, commanding the Department of the Gulf, wrote the United States consul at Matamoros proposing to establish the island of Galveston, protected by Davis’ men, as a sanctuary for the refugees. Butler hoped that “some of them will enlist, doubtless, in the service of the United States,” and, to promote this, “preference in granting passage, as a rule, will be given to those who are physically able.”¹⁴¹

Shortly after relieving the controversial Butler in mid-December, Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks approved the Galveston expedition and a token federal force of only three companies seized the island on December 24.¹⁴² Confederate authorities responded swiftly to this first attempt to restore the flag to Texas soil and on New Year’s Day, 1863, in a combined land and naval attack, destroyed two Union naval vessels and captured a third as well as the entire landing party. The following evening the Steamship Cambria, carrying Companies “A” and “B” of the First Texas Cavalry and their mounts, as well as many refugees from New Orleans, arrived off the stormy coast.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Record of Events for Company “A”, CSR.
¹⁴² Richard B. Irwin, History of the Nineteenth Army Corps, (Baton Rouge: Elliot’s, 1985 [1892]), 62.
¹⁴³ OR, v. 15, 205.
The following morning, Privates Joseph Cronea of Company “A” and Charles Williams, Morris Foley and John Hand of Company “B”, along with Charles Killian and one other refugee who was familiar with the area, took a small boat ashore to summon a pilot, unaware of the garrison’s capitulation. Confederates captured the boat and, evidently recognized Cronea as a deserter. His service record indicates: “there is good evidence to prove that he was hung at Houston, Texas by the Confederates on or about the 5th of February, 1863 for no other crime than that of being a Texan and a United States soldier.” Foley and Hand spent almost a year in captivity before being exchanged and returned to their regiment in November 1863, while Williams was never heard from again. The following morning, the Confederates sent a pilot to guide the Cambria over the bar with the intention of capturing her but one of the refugees recognized the pilot as a Confederate sympathizer. The would-be pilot then revealed the plan and the Cambria, along with Davis and his men, made her escape.

Following the Galveston fiasco, Davis traveled to Matamoros to enlist the refugees collecting there and suffered a second close call at the hands of the Confederate authorities. On March 15, 1863 a party crossed the Rio Grande near Bagdad and captured Davis, Captain William W. Montgomery, (a Tennessee native and pre-war resident of Caldwell County) and several others, in direct violation of Mexican neutrality. Albino Lopez, Governor of Tamaulipas, made a strong protest to General Hamilton P. Bee, commanding at Brownsville, and forced Davis’ return but only after Montgomery had

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145 Record of Events for Company “A”, First Texas Cavalry, CSR.
146 Foley, Hand and Williams Service Records, CSR.
148 Tilley, ed., Federals on the Frontier, 278.
been lynched.\textsuperscript{149} Bee realized the importance of the free port of Matamoros to
Confederate smugglers and could not take the risk that Lopez would close the vital port
to them. When Federal forces occupied Brownsville in 1864, troops located
Montgomery’s remains and reinterred them, with Provisional Governor Andrew J.
Hamilton presiding over the ceremony.\textsuperscript{150}

J. A. Quinterro, Confederate “confidential agent” at Monterey, reported the
incident to Confederate Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin on March 21\textsuperscript{st}, erroneously
believing that both Davis and Montgomery “will not commit treason again in this world,”
as “they are permanently located in the soil of the country.”\textsuperscript{151} Quinterro also noted that
Davis was “a bitter enemy of our cause. Owing to his former position, and many
acquaintances among the Mexicans on the frontier, he was calculated to do great harm to
Texas.”\textsuperscript{152}

Ordered to cooperate with General U. S. Grant in his campaign for Vicksburg,
Banks was forced to postpone his plans for Texas and concentrate on the reduction of
Port Hudson, a Confederate citadel on the east bank of the Mississippi just north of Baton
Rouge. Relieved from garrison duty in New Orleans, the First Texas was saw its initial
action in this campaign, and the men were armed and mounted in anticipation of active
service. By early May, Banks’ forces had invested Port Hudson but were potentially
exposed to a relieving column arriving from the east. To guard against this possibility,
Banks dispatched his cavalry, of little use in a formal siege, to break up the New Orleans,
Jackson and Great Northern Railroad to prevent its use by any relieving column.

\textsuperscript{149} Smyrl, “Texans in the Union Army”, 237.
\textsuperscript{150} Tilley, ed., \textit{Federals on the Frontier}, 278.
\textsuperscript{151} Quinterro to Benjamin, OR v. 15, 68.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
On May 8, Colonel Davis led his five companies (approximately 500 men) out of New Orleans up the east bank of the river to Doyle’s Plantation. On the 9 the regiment crossed the Amite River on a floating bridge, and proceeded to Ponchatoula, the northernmost point on the railroad in Federal hands. There the Texans joined the Sixth Michigan and 128th New York Infantry Regiments in a raid up the railroad to Camp Moore, a Confederate induction center, destroying bridges, depots, commissary and quartermaster stores. The results of the raid were:

the large car manufactory near Independence, with its contents, consisting of eight cars, a number of unfinished gun carriages, &c., destroyed; the Confederate shoe factory and tannery near Tickfaw destroyed. Several skirmishes took place with the rebels at Ponchatoula and Independence, which resulted in 1 man killed and three wounded on our side.

All the casualties resulted from the May 16 engagement at Tickfaw Bridge, near Independence. Private Charles Brenzel, was fatally wounded and Corporal William Bull was paralyzed by a head wound. Private Henry Lochte and Capt. Edward Noyes, who would later lead a detachment of the regiment in Texas, recovered from their wounds. Another, Private, Otto Lefevre, was reported captured. The Federal forces took 21 prisoners in the Tickfaw bridge encounter, while the entire raid netted “10 to 15 killed, . . . 25 horses, 60 muskets, and 1 lieutenant and 43 prisoners captured.”

After forcing the surrender of Port Hudson, Banks again turned his attention to Texas, but first had to clear the area around New Orleans of Confederates. Taking advantage of the federal concentration at Port Hudson, General Richard Taylor led his forces from western Louisiana down Bayou Teche and up the New Orleans, Opelousas

153 Record of Events for Company “A”, CSR.
155 Brenzel, Bull, Lefevre and Lochte Service Records, CSR.
156 OR, v. 15, 406.
and Great Western Railroad towards New Orleans. On June 21, 1863, Major Stancel was ordered to take Company “A” down the railroad and picket near Boutte station, unaware that federal forces had already blunted the Confederate advance earlier that day at Lafourche Crossing. Stancel lost two soldiers to Confederate cavalry who had slipped through the northern screen. Union forces freed by the victory at Port Hudson won engagements at Fort Butler and Cox Plantation, near Donaldsonville, beginning the long campaign to restore the Lafourche and Teche regions to federal control.

By September Banks had moved most of his forces to Brashear City at the terminus of the New Orleans and Opelousas Railroad and was poised to move west. Under increased pressure from Washington to return a part of Texas to U. S. control, Banks first attempted a flanking attack, sending over six thousand troops to land at Sabine Pass on the Texas-Louisiana border. A successful landing would simultaneously put Federal arms in Texas and force Taylor to detach Texas troops from his Louisiana command to defend their home state, weakening his forces on the Teche. Banks would have preferred cooperating with Admiral David Farragut in an attack on Mobile but was ordered by earlier in the year by General-in-Chief Henry Halleck to “concentrate on planting the Union flag somewhere in Texas” for “reasons other than military,” presumably the threat of Franco-Confederate cooperation in Mexico.

Banks selected Port Arthur, Texas for the landings and planned to destroy the rail line between that city and Houston. Two companies of the First Texas Cavalry were selected to participate in the landing but, as at Galveston, the Texas troopers never reached the shore. On September 8, 1863, a determined defense by a small Confederate

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157 Ibid., 584.
158 Isaiah Tise and Gideon Willis Service Records, CSR.
battery guarding Sabine Pass damaged two gunboats and forced another aground. After spending a tiring eight days at sea on crowded, leaking transports, the men resolved that the best way across the Sabine River was up the swamps along Bayou Teche and across the prairies of western Louisiana.

By October 1, the Texans were at Bisland, in the van of the Union advance. The next day they passed through Franklin and the following morning took fifteen prisoners near New Iberia. The regiment lost one man killed and two wounded three days later in a sharp skirmish near Newton, including Lieutenant William Huster, a Prussian-born San Antonian and First Sergeant Joshua Lacy, an Illinois-born Texan. Lacy was captured but escaped from confinement in Alexandria on December 20. By the October 7 the unit had reached the Vermilion River and on the 10th had the privilege of leading the Union crossing. In the advance, the unit lost one man killed (Frederick Merk, born in Hanover) and had two more wounded but cleared the far bank, permitting the federals to cross. The constant attrition suffered during the advance were the most serious losses to date. The following two days the unit again attacked Confederate forces, first an outpost at Carrion Crow (Carencro) Bayou, then another delaying column near Bayou Bourbeau. Here the unit’s forward progress was checked, not by Confederates but by an order to return to New Orleans. One week later the regiment was in the city and boarded transports for the third attempt that year to enter Texas from the Gulf.

On November 3, 1863, a Union flotilla arrived off of Brazos Santiago, near Brownsville, Texas. Embarked were over 4,000 troops, including two regiments of the Corps d’Afrique and the First Texas Cavalry. Benjamin McIntyre, an officer in one of the first units ashore, recorded on November 3 that “50 Texas cavalry arrived last night.” The

Iowa-born McIntyre noted the regiment was to have “accompanied us to the interior but their horses have been drowned and [they] are of little account to us in their present condition.”

Bad weather further delayed the landings but by the 5th most of the troops were ashore and on November 6 Davis witnessed the raising of the Stars and Stripes over his hometown of Brownsville.

Getting ashore was not the only difficulty Davis’ men faced in their first days back in Texas. Transports carrying the unit’s horses were lost in transit and logistical errors continued to impact the unit’s effectiveness. Over 1,000 sets of cavalry equipment were returned to New Orleans without ever being unloaded, with over 180,000 rounds of ammunition of the caliber required by Davis’ troopers, going with them. As a result, Davis’ men were soon suffering from want of clothing and equipment and effectively unarmed. Despite these setbacks Davis pressed on with recruiting and active operations.

One of Banks’ immediate objectives was to seal off the Rio Grande to all cotton moving south out of Texas and all arms coming in from Mexico. The federal blockade had closed most of Texas’ ports but neutral Matamoros easily made up the difference and by mid-war was a major Confederate trading center. On November 20, Davis left Brownsville and headed up the Texas side of the river with 100 mounted men and two howitzers. He was followed by another 100 infantrymen of the 37th Illinois riding in wagons and an additional 150 cavalrymen and another fieldpiece aboard the shallow-draft steamer Mustang. Their immediate objective was Ringgold Barracks, near Rio Grande City but Davis hoped to ascend the river as far as Eagle Pass and Laredo,

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severing the links from San Antonio. The First Texas met little opposition and forced the Confederates to evacuate the government stores at Laredo, but was unable to subsist so far from the base on the gulf and returned to Brownsville on December 1. The expedition effectively halted cotton exports as far north as Laredo, and confiscated over eighty bales of the “white gold” to replenish federal coffers.163

Davis next goal was to build up his small force. He had arrived in Texas with only 221 men but a month later had enrolled an additional 115.164 Confederate General Hamilton P. Bee observed that both Davis and Haynes, recruiting the Second Texas Cavalry regiment had “a large supply of arms and horse equipments,” and speculated their object was “to enlist the Mexicans and arm the Negroes as they march through Texas.”165 By December 27, the First Texas had 460 effectives and Haynes’ newly formed Second Texas Cavalry boasted over 300 recruits. Some of these men were refugees from the interior but most were local residents, mainly Hispanics.166 McIntyre, the Iowa captain, noted that the soldiers of the Second Texas “are almost entirely of Mexican Origin.”167 Few of these were bilingual but several earned commissions as officers. In less than a year the Second Texas was consolidated with the First, resulting in the transfers of most of the men. By February, Davis described his command as composed of “443 Mexicans and 500 Americans (including in this designation German, Irish, &c) the whole being recruited here.”168 As Frank Smyrl notes, many of Davis’

162 Ibid., 429-30.
163 Ibid., 830.
166 On Dec. 19, Gov. Hamilton reported that “hundreds of refugees from the interior had assembled in Brownsville” (Tilley, ed. Federals on the Frontier, 258)
167 Tilley, ed., Federals on the Frontier, 347.
Mexicans were probably Tejanos, but some, including Capt. George Trevino, entered the service at Camargo, Mexico.

The massive influx of new recruits was equaled only by a mass exodus over the next several months. In December, Banks left Texas to plan and lead his next campaign, an advance up the Red River. This new project siphoned off any hope of reinforcements for the Texas operations. Major General Francis Herron, then commanding the federal forces in Texas, could not expand his base and his troops spent the following months garrisoning Brownsville and guarding against Confederate raids. Some Texans who had tired of the service took advantage of the opportunity to return to their homes and visit family they had not seen nor heard from for over a year. Desertions were especially high among those recruited from the local area. The absence of active campaigning combined with poor provisions, tardy paymasters and a difficult environment induced a sizeable number to desert.

On January 25, Captain McIntyre recorded the shooting of one Texas cavalryman, David Strother, while attempting to desert with stolen property. Strother was an Alabama native but had joined the regiment in Brownsville. He was shot by two men of his own company, indicating that all members of the regiment did not approve of this course of action. General Herron issued an order praising the two, Privates O. D. Reid and Gustave Lagrange, for their “zeal and good conduct” and hoped that the deserter’s fate would “be a warning to every man who seeks to perpetrate acts of villainy under the disguise of the uniform of an American soldier.” On June 22, 1864, another member of

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169 Smyrl, “Texans in the Union Army,” 245.
171 Strother Service Record, CSR.
172 Tilley, ed., Federals on the Frontier, 300.
the regiment was shot, this time publicly. Private Pedro Garcia was convicted by court
martial of desertion and executed, to serve as an example to “the great number of
deserters from the Texas Cavalry Volunteers and the large amount of government
property thereby lost.” Garcia was not the only deserter from federal camps during the
first six months of 1864 but was the only one unfortunate enough to be caught.

In March, McIntyre recorded the continued arrival of refugees, who “tell of many
acts of cruelty and murder of the rebels upon those who refuse to fight in their cause.”

The new arrivals, including a group under James Braubach arriving from Monterrey,
continued to replace deserters. By mid May, Banks’ Red River campaign had been turned
back and many of his troops were being withdrawn and sent to other theaters. Again
critically short of cavalry, Banks needed all available troopers to hold the portion of
Louisiana still under Federal control. On June 19th the First Texas, now eight companies
strong, joined the exodus of Union soldiers returning to Louisiana, leaving three
companies (approximately 200 men under Major Noyes) behind to hold Brownsville.

The departure of so many Federals encouraged Confederates to step up their raids
on Union outposts. On June 25, 1864, a detachment of over 100 men of companies “A”
and “C” under Captain Philip Temple was surprised by 400 Confederates while feeding
their horses near Rancho las Rinas, (or Ruscias) twenty-five miles above Brownsville.
The Texas Federals immediately took cover in several small houses and a brick building
but were eventually driven from their cover. Confederate authorities reported twenty
men killed, ten wounded and thirty-six men captured, but the regiment’s compiled service
records reveal forty-one men either captured or missing in the affair. The captured were

173 Ibid., 356.
174 Ibid., 314.
transported to Camp Groce, near Hempstead, Texas and imprisoned. During their six months in captivity, fourteen men died in the stockade but six managed to escape, bringing word of their fate back to their comrades. Three other soldiers deserted by taking the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, while the remaining eighteen were exchanged at Galveston or released at the conclusion of the war.

A similar affair near Rancho Martinez, or White House Ranch on August 3 resulted in ten missing men and further demoralized the detachment in Texas. On August 3, 1864, Colonel H. M. Day, left in command of the forces remaining at Brownsville, reported that:

No dependence can be placed upon the detachment of the First Texas Cavalry left with my command. They desert at every opportunity. No less than nine deserted yesterday, taking with them their horses, arms and accoutrements. Three more deserted last night from picket post. Major Noyes informs me that among these men were some whom he considered the most reliable.\(^{176}\)

Weeks later Day was forced to recant, noting:

A marked improvement in the discipline and general conduct of the First Texas Cavalry, concerning which I advised you in my last report. No more desertions have occurred since then, and I am in hopes that all the disorderly and unreliable men of the command are those who have left.

The detachment remained in Texas until January 27, 1865, when it was ordered to rejoin the remainder of the regiment in Louisiana.

The companies that left Texas in June were immediately ordered to the cavalry post at Morganza, Louisiana, on the west bank of the Mississippi River above Baton Rouge. The post commander reported their arrival on July 8 but noted the 700 men had but few horses, their mounts having been left in Texas.\(^ {177}\) On July 14 the largely Hispanic

\(^{175}\) Col J. S. Ford to Gen. J. E. Slaughter, July 2, 1864, in OR v. 34, pt. I, 1055.
\(^{176}\) OR, v. 41 pt. II, 532.
\(^{177}\) Ibid., 82.
Second Texas Cavalry was ordered consolidated with the First due to low numbers in both units.178 The transfer occurred on September 15, 1864 but several men of the Second Texas refused to join. They asserted that they had enlisted only to serve during the campaign in Texas and had opposed their removal from the state. In fact, many deserted at Brownsville as soon as they learned that the regiment was to return to Louisiana. The majority of those from the Second Texas accepted the consolidation and served honorably through the remainder of the war, but Surgeon Malek Southworth noted, “the consolidation has never been satisfactory to the Enlisted Men of either of the regiments, on account of the prejudice of races.”179

While at Morganza the regiment patrolled the area along the Atchafalaya and protected plantations from Confederate raids. Patrols repeatedly crossed the Atchafalaya and threatened both the plantations and Union shipping on the Mississippi. These raids periodically picked off Federal soldiers and kept the First Texas on constant alert. From their near destitution in July, Davis worked hard to mount and properly equip his command. A November 26 inspection reported:

The entire mount of his men is good; their horses are conditioned for active and hard service...Having inspected about 1,200 carbines, I found but one that was not clean and in excellent serviceable condition. His horses are well and thoroughly groomed and all their mounts are well kept.180

Later that month the regiment moved to Baton Rouge to participate in a raid on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, the final link sustaining the city of besieged city Mobile, then under attack by Banks’ successor, Gen. E. R. S. Canby.

178 Companies “A”-“D” of the Second Texas became Companies “I”, “K”, “L”, and “M” of the First Texas, finally bringing that unit to its authorized level of twelve companies. Record of Events, Field and Staff, CSR.
179 Southworth to Maj. E. B. Parson, July 12, 1865 in Malek Southworth Service Record, CSR.
The raid, led by General John W. Davidson, consisted of over 4,000 troops, eight guns and eighty-seven wagons, including eight with pontoons. The men left Baton Rouge in late November and reached Franklinton on December 1. From there Davidson veered north into Mississippi and on December 4 crossed the Pearl River at Columbia on pontoon bridges. Unsure of his intentions, General Dabney Maury, commanding at Mobile, was forced to reduce the city’s strength to protect his rail lifeline. Davidson continued east, bridging Black Creek and Red Creek, and reached Augusta, Mississippi on December 6, and the Chichasawha River at Robert’s Ferry on the December 9. He sent a portion of his force across the river but at this point was critically short of rations having consumed most of what he brought while traveling through a region of barren pine forests. The Texans, many of whom were rancheros or “stockraisers” before the war, tried to keep the command supplied with fresh beef by rounding up cattle in the area, but Davidson was forced to subsist his men on the few sweet potatoes found on the local farms, leading the men to dub the expedition “The Great Sweet Potato Raid.” Davidson finally abandoned the raid and retired to Pascagoula on the coast, where he could obtain supplies by sea.181

On December 17, the First Texas Cavalry embarked for Lakeport, Louisiana and spent several weeks in Arkansas, at the mouth of the White River, before returning to Baton Rouge. On February 22, Major General Lew Wallace, appointed commander of the forces in Texas, requested from General U. S. Grant the authority to bring with him “the regiment of Texans now serving in the department” because “they know the region of

West Texas perfectly.”182 Wallace did not get the regiment, but did obtain Davis’ services in negotiating the surrender of Texas.183 Meanwhile, the men closed the war with several small raids to Jackson and Clinton, Louisiana, with little result but at little cost.

On May 23 the unit was ordered from Baton Rouge to Vidalia, Louisiana and then distributed among outposts at Natchez, Fort Adams, and Brookhaven, Mississippi. In late June, the scattered detachments returned to New Orleans, “to be mounted and equipped” for active service,184 and on July 23 the regiment departed on its final campaign, an overland march to Texas. After arriving in Houston on August 11, at least twenty soldiers took advantage of their return to Texas by deserting with over $300 worth of government stores.185 Several were later recaptured near Victoria, Texas but most escaped, trading a government pension for what little they could carry. The regiment arrived in San Antonio in late August and remained on duty there until it was officially mustered out on November 4, 1865.

The First Texas Cavalry regiment assisted in every attempt to restore Federal control to Texas. It suffered higher rates of desertion than units serving far from their homes but always performed well on campaign and in combat. The men who served in the regiment did so for a variety of reasons. Surely some of those who joined at Brownsville wanted only to leave with a new horse, saddle, pistol and carbine. Other poorer residents of New Orleans may have been attracted by a steady soldier salary or enlistment bonus. Both of these types, as Col. Day noted, were quickly eliminated from the ranks. Had it not been for the ideologically motivated refugees who founded and

182 OR, v. 48, 938.
183 Smyrl, “Texans in the Union Army,” 249.
184 OR, v. 41, pt. II, 945.
185 Information collected from CSR.
sustained the regiment through both monotonous and dangerous times, in squalid camps and hostile climates, the regiment would not have been there for others to join. These men mostly hailed from strongly Unionist regions of Texas and voiced those sentiments in their applications for commissions and furloughs. They remained true to their beliefs, even when threatened with the loss of their farms, their families, or even their lives at the hands of either secessionist vigilantes or Confederate prison guards. The men were not, as has been suggested, simply disaffected Europeans or Mexican mercenaries, they were Texans and Americans who had the courage to follow a path that they felt was in their country’s, if not their own, best interest.
Table 4.1. Birthplaces of 781 of the 1514 Soldiers of the First Texas Cavalry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample (781)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 (11 countries)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Foreign-Born</strong></td>
<td><strong>475</strong></td>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper South</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower South</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total South</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>26%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>13%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Native Born</strong></td>
<td><strong>306</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 2. Counties of Residence for 267 Soldiers of the First Texas Cavalry
(Counties opposing secession in 1861 are shown in gray)¹

¹ Original Map from Baum, *The Shattering of Texas Unionism*, 66.
CHAPTER 5

INDIAN TERRITORY: THE FIRST INDIAN HOME GUARDS

In some respects, the territory west of Arkansas set aside by the federal government for reservations was not typical of the remainder of the antebellum South. Most of the residents were Native Americans and many of them had been in the territory fewer than thirty years. The western half of what is now Oklahoma was still inhabited by semi-nomadic Plains tribes like the Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Kiowa. The eastern part had been split among five large tribes removed from the Deep South during the preceding half-century, the Cherokee, Creek (or Muskogee) Seminole, Choctaw, and Chickasaw, and a few smaller tribes displaced from the East Coast and Midwest. Many of these new settlers had had sufficient contact with southern society to acquire several distinctive characteristics, including the maintenance of small farms and even larger plantations worked by slaves. Most tribes also contained a sizeable free black population, made up of slaves manumitted by the natives or fugitives from neighboring slave states. Intermarriage with white and black Southerners allowed southern political thought to penetrate some factions of the tribes. Most of the tribal “agents” were Southerners appointed by southern-born presidents who brought their sectional prejudices to their posts. While the degree of assimilation varied within and between these eastern tribes, the similarities increased daily as war approached.

Despite the apparent similarities with their fellow Southerners, many Native Americans, especially the full-blooded factions of the tribes, resented the land-hungry settlers who had driven them from their homelands and the mixed-bloods of their own
tribes who had collaborated with them. It is possible that many natives held their fellow Southerners responsible for their forced removal and harbored more resentment towards them than the government that physically forced them to leave.\textsuperscript{186} Despite the corruption and racism that plagued the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the treaties and removal effectively bought the tribes time to continue the old way of life and effectively preserved their national identities for almost one hundred more years. Whether the full blood leaders recognized or appreciated the potential benefits of removal is debatable, but when the sectional conflict came, many still cast their lot with the old federal government rather than the new secessionist one.

Indian Territory corresponded roughly with the upper South in terms of Unionist and secessionist sentiment.\textsuperscript{187} While those tribes that bordered slave states Texas and Arkansas were mostly secessionist, those farther north were split more evenly between the two groups. The Choctaws and Chickasaws, along the Red River, were recognized as cotton-growers while the Creeks, Seminoles and Cherokees, “principally grain and stock raisers, were more identifiable with the federal government.”\textsuperscript{188} The Creek, or Muskogee Nation, was split almost in half, with a primarily mixed-blood pro-Southern faction pledging their support to the Confederacy while another contingent attempted to honor the treaties and remain true to the United States.

The pro-Union Creeks rallied around Opothleyahola, a diplomatic chief who urged his followers to reject the promises of Confederate agents and attempt to remain neutral

\textsuperscript{186} One Cherokee missionary alleged that, “the full-bloods remembered only too well how the Georgians had treated them and they would never trust their former enemies [the Confederacy] to abide by any treaty. Lela J. McBride, \textit{Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee: Their Flight to Kansas in the Civil War}, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2000), 145.

in the coming war. Many Creeks, led by the mixed-blood McIntosh family, rejected Opothleyahola’s pleas and allied with the Confederacy, forming military organizations to support the South. Federal officials, including both Indian agents and the troops assigned to protect them and their charges from the Plains tribes, were forced to remove to Kansas. The pro-southern Creeks considered the agent’s evacuation as proof of abandonment by Federal authorities and attempted to pressure the loyal Creeks to respond to Confederate overtures. When the loyal Creeks resisted, pressure turned to harassment and loyal families banded together and planned to evacuate until order could be restored. Their exodus would lead them to three sharp engagements with Confederate forces from Texas and Arkansas, the third of which scattered Opothleyahola’s band and forced the survivors to attempt to reach Kansas individually with no food or shelter in the midst of a severe winter.189

Upon arrival in Kansas, the refugees were not received nor adequately cared for by their absent agents, and many perished in squalid camps along the Neosho River. Unscrupulous contractors obtained rations condemned by the army at Ft. Leavenworth and supplied them to the Creeks, worsening the native’s plight. By spring, the survivors had little desire to remain in Kansas and eagerly sought a Federal escort to return them to their homes.

Desperate for manpower, the Lincoln administration debated the use of Native American troops but was initially hesitant. News of atrocities such as the scalpings and mutilations attributed to Confederate Cherokees in the March, 1862 battle at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, turned public opinion against Federal Indian forces, but Senator James H. Lane

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188 McBride, Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee, 145.
189 Ibid., 301-2.
of Kansas, an ardent abolitionist, urgently advocated the use of both native and black troops to march south from Kansas, through the Indian Territory, and liberate the slaves in Texas. Lane had already begun organizing the First Kansas Colored Infantry from freedmen in that state and fugitives from neighboring Missouri, and proposed the use of native troops to augment his brigade of white and black regiments. The War Department finally conceded to Lane’s requests and authorized recruiting to begin in April, 1862.

Colonel Robert W. Furnas, a newspaper editor from Brownsville, Nebraska, was assigned command of the unit. Like the Kansans, Furnas was incensed at the raids perpetrated by pro-secessionist guerrillas in Missouri, especially the sabotage of the railroad bridge over the Platte River that caused a passenger train to plunge into the river, killing several civilians. Furnas was strongly committed to preserving the Union and advocated a harsh suppression of the rebellion. As early as September of 1861 he asked:

> Could the governors of Nebraska and Iowa, in connection with the Governor of Missouri form an organization by pressing, if need be, every Union man into service and then creating an army to march from the northern border of Missouri southward, gathering strength as it advanced? My opinion is the result would be most beneficial. This war, in my humble opinion, has yet to be one of extermination. Our enemies are desperate, blood thirsty and unprincipled and desperate means must be resorted to on our part.\(^{190}\)

On April 2, 1862, Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas, who would later play a critical role in the organization of the U. S. Colored Troops, ordered Furnas to “organize a regiment of true loyal Indians now in Kansas,” a task Furnas reported completed on April 30.\(^{191}\)

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\(^{190}\) Furnas to General Bowen, September 6, 1861. Robert W. Furnas Papers, Nebraska Historical Society, Lincoln, NE. (Hereafter referred to as Furnas Papers, NHS).

\(^{191}\) Furnas to Major General Henry W. Halleck, April 30, 1862, in Robert W. Furnas Service Record, Compiled Service Records of Union Volunteers from the State of Kansas, (National Archives, Record Group 94), (hereafter referred to as CSR.)
The new Colonel claimed he “did not seek the position,” and “only accepted on the representations of my friends,”\(^{192}\) several of whom would join him in the unit.

When the First Indian Home Guards was mustered into federal service on May 22, 1862, it contained one thousand and nine men organized into ten companies.\(^{193}\) One source claims eight of the companies were composed primarily of Creeks and the other two (Companies “A” and “F”) mostly Seminoles, (See Table 5.1) but other government records indicate one of the Seminole companies was composed of Uchees.\(^{194}\) The few Seminoles who had left with Opothleyahola responded favorably to army service, and one Union officer estimated that “nearly all of the able-bodied men of the tribe have joined the army.”\(^{195}\) In most volunteer regiments, the men were permitted to select their own officers, and at least thirty-one natives were commissioned, despite efforts of General James G. Blunt, commanding the federal forces in Kansas, to block their appointment. Blunt harbored a bias against the units for most of the war, even attempting to disband them on one occasion, but was repeatedly overruled by the War Department.\(^{196}\)

The Seminoles of Company “A” selected as their captain Holata Micco,\(^{197}\) or Billy Bowlegs, who, as late as 1858, was leading those Seminoles still in Florida against forced removal. Many natives who enlisted in the regiment had also endured forced removal to the territory, and at least sixty of the men who enlisted in the First Indian

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\(^{192}\) Furnas to Secretary of War Stanton, October 17, 1862, Furnas Service Record, CSR.  
\(^{193}\) Annie Heloise Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, (Cleveland: Arthur Clark, 1919), 108.  
\(^{194}\) The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 vols. (Washington: 1880-1901) Series I, vol. 48, 456. (Hereafter referred to as the OR, all citations from Series I unless otherwise noted)  
\(^{195}\) McReynolds, The Seminoles, 306.  
\(^{196}\) OR, v. 34, pt. II, 755.  
\(^{197}\) McBride, Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee, 195.
Home Guards were born in Florida, Georgia or Alabama. (See Table 5.2) In the following months, two more native regiments, the Second and Third Indian Home Guards were raised from among the refugees in Kansas and loyal natives in the Territory, and over three thousand natives served in the Union army during the war.\textsuperscript{198}

The men were armed with .54-caliber “contract” rifles, obtained from Fort Leavenworth. The weapons were made in Belgium and were intended for distribution with the tribes’ annual allotment. In the long term, this weapon probably served the natives well, as they were accustomed to using rifles for hunting and enjoyed the increased range the weapon offered in combat.\textsuperscript{199} Quartermasters struggled to keep the troops supplied with the specialized ammunition the weapon required, as soldiers often treated their rifles as their own personal property. They took their weapons hunting and consumed so many cartridges that the regiment’s quartermaster began deducting the cost of the spent cartridges from the troops’ pay.

Some of those who enlisted had managed to bring their mounts with them, but many more had lost their stock during the flight north and throughout the harsh winter, when little forage was available. Appreciating the necessity of mobility in the vast area he was to control, Colonel Furnas attempted to remount his men before they moved South but was only partially successful. When the unit left LeRoy in May, only 359, or about one-third of the men were mounted. As a result, the command was split into mounted and dismounted elements, with those on horseback engaged in scouting while the men on foot escorted the column. The mounted portion saw combat far more

\textsuperscript{199} Wiley Britton, \textit{The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War}, (Kansas City: Franklin Hudson, 1922), 61.
frequently, especially while pursuing weaker Confederate forces. Furnas had been ordered to mount the remainder of the regiment from the stock of the enemy and, upon reaching the Grand River on July, 15, 1862, reported that he had obtained an additional 205 horses on the march, and mounted roughly half his command, a percentage that remained relatively unchanged throughout the war. Colonel William A. Phillips, who would command a brigade of all three Home Guards regiments for the last two years of the war, also struggled to obtain mounts for his men, believing they “ought invariably to be mounted,” as “they make poor infantry but first-class mounted riflemen.” Phillips later changed his assessment of the natives’ infantry capabilities, noting that in over four hundred miles of marching, his men “did remarkably well.”

Colonel Furnas likewise attempted to attend to the medical wants of his men. He arranged for his “family physician for six years past,” Dr. Andrew S. Holleday, to accompany him and treat the men. Furnas had difficulty obtaining medicine for his surgeon and on one occasion purchased eighty-four dollars worth of medicine from Brownsville on his own account to supply his men. His efforts to secure a surgeon’s commission for Dr. Holliday were less successful, as the doctor’s examiner was unable to report “the result of his examination to the Surgeon general in as favorable light as possible.”

Furnas and his staff labored to indoctrinate the natives in the ways of the army and the white man’s way of fighting. With some difficulty, the officers were able to

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200 Furnas to Weer, July 15, 1862, in Furnas Papers, NHS.
203 Furnas to William P. Dole, May 4, 1862, in Holleday Service Record, CSR.
204 Furnas Papers, NHS.
205 Ibid.
206 Abel, The American Indian as Participant, 123.
drill the regiment in the basic formations and tactics. On June 9, the regiment’s adjutant, Lieutenant A. C. Ellithorpe, reported favorable progress to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

You would be surprised to see our regiment move. They accomplish the feat of regular time step equal to any white soldier, they form in line with dispatch and with great precision; and what is more they now manifest a great desire to learn the entire white man’s disiplin (sic) in military matters.207

Ellithorpe’s estimations of the native’s preference for army discipline may have been premature, but the commander of the assembled troops, Colonel William J. Weer of the Tenth Kansas, felt they were sufficiently trained to accompany the “Indian Expedition” south into the territory. On June 11, he issued orders for the command to depart, preceded by a day of festivities. The activities would begin with an artillery drill followed by “a grand ‘Ball Play’ in the day time and a War dance at night, no Indians to participate in either who are not mustered in as soldiers.”208 Whether the added inducement was necessary to spur enlistment is not clear, but Weer hoped that, “the chiefs of the different tribes will be present during the exercises of Friday the 13th inst. and will encourage their young men to enlist as soldiers.”209 Weer also ordered that “the dance may not continue so late as to unfit the Indians for the next day’s march.”

The First Indian Home Guard wore the same blue uniform coat as other federal forces, but preferred the broad-brimmed “Hancock cap” to the service kepi.210 While the soldiers appreciated the added protection from sun and rain, one observer thought “the Indians with their new uniforms and small military caps on the Hugh Heads of hair made rather a Comecal Ludicrous (sic) appearance.” Despite their appearance, the observer,

207 Ibid., 115.
208 Weer to Furnas, June 11, 1862, Furnas Papers, NHS.
209 Special Orders, Headquarters, Indian Brigade, June 11, 1862, in Furnas Papers, NHS.
Indian agent William P. Coffin, had “little doubt that for the kind of service that will be required of them they will be the most efficient troops in the Expedition.” The natives were anxious to depart and “marched off in Columns of 4 a breast singing the war song all joining in the chourse (sic).”

When the expedition finally left Ft. Scott, it made rapid progress, reaching Baxter Springs, on the Kansas-Indian Territory border on June 26. There two more white regiments, the Ninth Wisconsin Infantry and the Second Ohio Cavalry, augmented the expedition, bringing the total Union strength to over 6,000 effectives. During the advance, the mounted portion of the regiment scouted far ahead of the main body, but the native troops were hindered by the effects of the flinty ground on their unshod ponies.

Aware of the federal movement, Confederate forces in the territory had moved north to oppose them, despite being grossly outnumbered. On July 3, the mounted portion of the Union column surprised a small force of approximately 400 Confederates under Colonel James Clarkson near Locust Grove. The First Indian Home Guards led the attack, which resulted in the capture of over 100 prisoners, including the colonel, and over fifty wagons and an equal number of kegs of powder. For their role in the action, the unit was rewarded with an undetermined number of captured horses, some of which the Indians recognized has having been “stolen from them before and during their flight to Kansas.” It is unclear whether any of the Union white troops were involved, but the Commissioner of Indian Affairs claimed the affair was “a victory gained by the 1st Indian regiment,” and that it would be “the height of injustice to claim this victory for the

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210 Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade*, 387.
212 OR, v. 13, 460.
whites.” The day before the skirmish, Colonel Weer reported: “the Indians are behaving well, with a few exceptions, and seem full of fight.” When faced with the possibility of combat, they likewise “manifested a perfect willingness.”

The expedition proceeded as far as Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation, near the junction of the Neosho and Arkansas Rivers. From this strategic post, Union forces controlled not only the river but also the road from Fort Scott to Texas. If the position could be held, that portion of the territory north of the Arkansas River could be denied to Confederate forces and additional protection provided for southern Kansas. Many Cherokee refugees accompanying the expedition returned to their homes while the Creeks awaited an advance across the river into their nation. Unfortunately for the natives, Confederate forces entered southern Missouri, necessitating a retrograde movement by the majority of the Union forces. Furnas, now in command of all three Native American regiments, was permitted to remain in the territory to protect the refugees who had returned, but, after briefly occupying Fort Gibson, was forced to retreat to Fort Scott, Kansas, a move that thoroughly demoralized his command. Many of the men deserted and returned to their families, who had followed the troops back to the refugee camp at LeRoy. While in command of the reduced forces, Furnas did plan and order the arrest of Cherokee Chief John Ross, primarily to relieve him of his treaty obligations to the Confederacy. Ross had been coerced into aligning his people with the South and had been negotiating with federal forces for some time for protection.

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214 Furnas to Weer, July 15, 1862, Furnas Papers, NHS.
216 OR, v. 13, 461.
217 Furnas to W. A. Phillips, July 31, 1862, in Furnas Papers, NHS.
Retiring along with the nation’s archives and treasury to Kansas, Ross spent the remainder of his years lobbying for his people in Washington.

Tiring of his duties and absent from his business longer than he had anticipated, Furnas resigned on September 1, 1862 and returned to Nebraska. In his resignation letter, he attempted to deal a crippling blow to the unit he had organized and led, claiming:

I have always doubted the propriety and policy of arming and placing in the field Indians. Five months connection with an Indian Regiment only confirms me in the opinion that full-blood Indians cannot be made soldiers and that to attempt it is a useless waste of both time and money.218

Furnas cited language barriers and complained that his troops:

cannot be made to feel the obligations of a soldier and especially the necessity of discipline... …It has been no uncommon occurrence to find half the Sentinels asleep at their posts or leaving them entirely on stormy nights, and Grand [River] Guards and Pickets deserting, or leaving their stations to go hunting!219

Fortunately, Furnas’ recommendations went unheeded, as a reversal of fortunes in Missouri and northwestern Arkansas necessitated every available man to repel a Confederate advance. The following year Furnas organized the Second Nebraska Cavalry, an all-white unit, and spent the last years of the war as agent to the Omaha Indians. He later served for two years as a Republican governor of Nebraska.220

Upon reaching Fort Scott, Furnas was not the only officer to resign his commission. In an attempt to rid the regiments of native officers, General Blunt, commanding the department, ordered the first lieutenants of each company to submit identical resignations.221 The statements, all dated either September 9 or 10, 1862, read:

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218 Furnas to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, September 1, 1862, Furnas Papers, NHS.
219 Ibid.
221 OR, v. 22, pt. II, 57.
I hereby respectfully tender my resignation as First Lieutenant of Company G, First Regiment, Indian Home Guards to make a vacancy for a white Lieutenant, as it is impossible for me as an Indian to do the company business, such as making out Muster Rolls.  

All ten first lieutenants, who signed with an “X,” were replaced by literate white officers who were capable of handling the company’ paperwork. All the native Captains were allowed to retain their commissions, and several led their companies for the duration of the war, but not without conflict with the new white officers. While at Tallahassee mission on March 14, 1865, Lieutenant Francis J. Fox, who replaced one of the resigned first lieutenants, preferred charges against his company commander, Captain Nokoselouchie, for allegedly mocking Lieutenant Fox as he attempted to drill the company. Fox accused the captain of “cutting up in front of the men” and challenging every order Fox issued. Fox worked with the native and on March 16 reported that “Captain Nokoselouchie is getting good. I got him to head his company at dress-parade yesterday evening for the first [time]; also to superintend his roll calls.”

General Blunt later changed his mind about the effectiveness of native officers, realizing they “in some cases have influence no white men have,” and that the policy of dismissing all native officers was “a fallacy into which most new experimenters fall.” One such experimenter was Colonel Phillips, who, after assuming command of the Indian Brigade, recommended white captains and first lieutenants for each company, allowing

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222 Example from Absolan Kanel Service Record, CSR. Similar documents appear in the records of Hopiyemarlar (whose record indicates he was ordered to resign by General Blunt), Konepaahola, Kowassotceh, Nuktekapee, Okganahola, Paskova, Sukkorah, Tustanukemareh, and Yarhollanduy, CSR.
223 Nokoselouchie Service Record, CSR.
225 OR, v. 34, pt. II, 525.
only a native second lieutenant.\textsuperscript{226} Despite his beliefs, Phillips made no overt efforts to remove the native officers in his command, but did fill all vacancies with white men.

In late September, 1862, Confederate forces moved north out of Arkansas and occupied Newtonia, Missouri, just across the border from Fort Scott. Union troops responded to the foray by attacking the town on October 4 and driving out the invaders. The native regiments’ performance in this battle continued to dispel the prejudices felt against them by the white troops. After the battle, a white soldier remarked:

In this Contest the Indians behaved well, the officers and soldiers of our own regiments now freely acknowledge them to be valuable Allies and in no case have they as yet faltered, until ordered to retire, the prejudice once existing against them is fast disappearing from our Army and it is now generally conceded that they will do good service.\textsuperscript{227}

The Federal Indian units followed the retreating Confederates into northwestern Arkansas, where they continued to demonstrate their ability to fight effectively alongside white units, even in a major engagements with strong Confederate forces. In late October, a raid by two Kansas and two native units on Old Fort Wayne, Cherokee Nation, just across the border from Maysville, Arkansas, netted four brass field pieces, which were assigned to a federal battery that would accompany the Indian Brigade.

Union forces in Missouri, under General Francis J. Herron, cooperated with General Blunt’s federal army from Kansas in forcing the Confederates back over the Boston Mountains into the Arkansas River valley. General Thomas Hindman, commanding the Confederate forces, recognized an opportunity to defeat the split Union forces in detail and engaged Herron’s army on December 7, 1862 near Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Hearing the action, General Blunt raced his command to the assistance of the outnumbered Herron

\textsuperscript{226} OR, v. 22, pt. II, 528.
\textsuperscript{227} E. H. Carruth to Coffin, October 25, 1862, in Abel, \textit{The American Indian as Participant}, 195.
and fell on the attacking Confederates’ flank at a critical point in the battle. The First Indian Home Guards was closely engaged, and the unit’s major, A. C. Ellithorpe, claimed he fired thirty-two rounds from his Henry rifle in the engagement, “at very short range.”

Officially, the unit suffered two men killed and four wounded at Prairie Grove, but the regiment’s new commander, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen A. Wattles, noted “the Indians entertain a prejudice against speaking of dangerous occurrences in battle, and report no wounds but such as the necessities of the case demand.”

Wattles also cited several native officers including “Captain Jon-neg, of the Uches, and Capt. Billy Bowlegs, of the Seminoles, and Captain Tus-te-nup-chup-ko,” a Creek, for bravery.

Shortly after the battle, Major Ellithorpe temporarily assumed command of the regiment and attempted to rebuild it, as the numbers had dropped to some four hundred effectives. He was concerned for his command, and professed to take “a deep Interest in the welfare of these loyal refugee Indians who have sacrificed all rather than fight against our flag.”

Ellithorpe preferred charges against two officers, including the absent Colonel Wattles, for misappropriating funds allocated to pay the unit’s interpreters. Interpreters had been employed to relay orders from the white English-speaking senior officers to the native soldiers. Most interpreters were blacks who had lived with the natives and learned the language. During his tenure, Colonel Furnas had complained that:

But one company officer and but few men … can speak or understand a word of English. All communication has been through Interpreters, all of whom are ignorant uneducated Negroes who have been raised among the Indians and possess to a great

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228 Ellithorpe Service Record, CSR.
229 OR v.22, pt. I, 94.
230 Ibid.
232 The Compiled Service Records reveal at least 14 black or mulatto natives serving with the unit.
degree their peculiar characteristics. The commander has but little assurance that orders are correctly given and none that they are understood or appreciated. Without these interpreters, Furnas’ job would have been much more difficult, if not impossible. Fortunately, other officers recognized their necessity and attempted to obtain compensation for them. First Lieutenant George Dobler, another replacement officer, fraudulently obtained $95 from the paymaster and distributed twenty to his black interpreter, who had not been paid since Dobler’s appointment. Dobler attempted to keep the balance for himself but was convicted of fraud and dismissed.\(^{233}\)

Officers were unable to obtain funds to pay their interpreters because the entire amount allotted, over five hundred dollars, had been in the possession of Lieutenant Colonel Wattles, for several months. On December 3, Major Ellithorpe preferred charges against Wattles, who was absent at Fort Scott, but withdrew them two weeks later after Wattles arrived and paid eight different interpreters $83 each. Ellithorpe noted that one of the men was not an interpreter but, in fact, Wattles’ body servant.\(^{234}\) Wattles was also accused of selling government horses for personal profit, but remained in command of the unit for most of the war, except for intermittent periods of illness necessitating lengthy convalescent visits to Michigan.\(^{235}\) Both Ellithorpe and Wattles had been acquaintances of Colonel Furnas in Nebraska.

The First Indian Home Guards remained in Arkansas for several months and pursued Hindman’s defeated forces over the Boston Mountains to Van Buren, Arkansas, where a large quantity of Confederate stores were captured. On December 26, the regiment entered Indian Territory and crossed the Arkansas River as far as the old Creek

\(^{233}\) Dobler Service Record, CSR.
\(^{234}\) Wattles Service Record, CSR.
\(^{235}\) Ibid.
Agency, (present day Muskogee, OK) capturing and burning the Confederate stockade known as Fort Davis along the way. Several men were reported missing in this raid, and may have simply returned to their homes. Both endeavors served to again clear the Cherokee Nation of Confederate forces, opening the way for a spring advance back to Fort Gibson.

The First Indian Home Guards arrived at Camp Curtis, near Maysville, Arkansas on January 11, 1863 and spent the remainder of the winter with a large number of both white and native refugees. One Kansas soldier who wintered with the native regiments described the unsanitary conditions in camp and the efforts of the “Surgeons of the Indian command” to mitigate the suffering. The unit’s chaplain, Reverend Evan Jones, received permission to distribute provisions among the white refugees and several women returned the favor by serving as matrons in the regimental hospital. Jones was a Baptist minister from Georgia who had spent his life with the Cherokees and followed them to their new lands. He remained committed to the Union and, arriving in Kansas at about the same time as the Creek refugees, labored to tend to their needs.238

With the spring thaw came a resumption of active operations, and a year that would prove as decisive in the Indian Territory as it would on the banks of the Mississippi or in the hills of Pennsylvania. The Indian Home Guards departed for Fort Gibson in order to arrive with sufficient time for the Cherokee refugees to plant their crops. On February 18, the regiment broke camp and moved to Bentonville, Arkansas and where it engaged a small party of Confederates forces on February 27. In early March several companies returned to Fort Gibson and rebuilt the fort, which had fallen into disrepair. Despite being

236 Britton, The Union Indian Brigade, 169.
237 Jones Service Record, CSR.
christened Fort Blunt, in honor of the Army of the Frontier’s commander, the structure continued to be known as Fort Gibson. In April, all three Indian Home Guards regiments reoccupied the fort, along with the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, and formed into a brigade under the Third Indian Home Guard’s commander, Colonel William A. Phillips, who received essentially an independent command, with broad authority. His instructions were to protect the area northeast of the Arkansas River and the loyal natives who resided there. As this was essentially only the Cherokee Nation, many Creeks continued to be concentrated in refugee camps around Fort Gibson. Blunt ordered Phillips to assist the refugees in obtaining subsistence and, if possible, to “make peace with the rebel Indians.” Phillips kept his force concentrated, to prevent the capture of small detachments, but was held liable to return to Arkansas or Missouri if necessary to reinforce federal forces there.239 Major Ellithorpe, still in command of the First Indian Home Guards, was confident of their prospects for success but hesitant to serve outside the territory:

This brigade, well equipped and filled, will hold the Indian counties, and I am of the firm opinion that the Indians can be used in no other locality to so good an advantage; in fact, I believe that to divert them to any other field of operations than the Indian counties will tend to demoralize them to dissolution.240

Confederate forces recognized the significance of the new post, but could not muster sufficient forces to expel the Union units stationed there. Instead, they attempted to remove them by severing the garrison’s supply line. Southern forces first attempted to drive off the large herd of beef cattle, used to victual the fort, but failed. Units of pro-southern Indians lingered in the area until the June 16 skirmish on Greenleaf Prairie, in which four men of the First Indian Home Guards were killed and another eight wounded.

238 McBride, Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee, 147, 195.
In the engagement, Colonel Wattles commanded the detachment of 316 men and one howitzer, and sent seventy-five men under the Seminole Captain Bowlegs to flank the enemy while he attacked their front. Wattles left the field when his ammunition was expended, but the Confederates had already retreated back across the Arkansas.241

Unable to destroy the supplies on hand, Confederates next attempted to sever the supply line to Kansas by attacking the critical wagon train that arrived each month from Fort Scott. Aware of their plans from loyal Cherokees, who functioned as a network of spies, Colonel Phillips requested a strengthened escort for the June train. The reinforced column was halted on July 1 near Cabin Creek by a force of Confederates, including pro-Southern Creeks and Cherokees, posted in thick cover behind the flooded creek. Troops from Blunt’s Kansas command, including the First Kansas Colored Infantry and the Second Colorado Cavalry regiments, were augmented by 600 mounted men from Fort Gibson, succeeded in forcing the crossing the next day, escorting the train safely to Fort Gibson. Colonel Williams, commanding the First Kansas Colored, praised the white, black, and native troops involved in “crossing this difficult ford,” for “forming in the face of the enemy, with as much ease and as little confusion as if on parade.”242

Alerted to the possibility of a combined offensive by Confederates through Indian Territory towards Kansas, General Blunt arrived at Fort Gibson on July 11 to coordinate a preemptive attack against the forces marshalling against him. General Douglas Cooper commanded several regiments of Texans, Choctaws and Chickasaws, about 3,000 men, at a camp on Elk Creek, twenty-five miles southwest of the Fort Gibson, where he awaited reinforcement by an equal-sized force from Arkansas. On July 16, Blunt left the fort and

242 Ibid. 381.
spent most of the day crossing the flooded Arkansas River in boats. Early the next morning he encountered the Confederates entrenched on the south side of Elk Creek, and formed his men into a line, with the First Indian holding the left center. After breaking a Confederate attack, the Union forces succeeded in driving their opposites from the field. The second Confederate command arriving from western Arkansas withdrew back to Fort Smith after seeing that Cooper’s forces had been routed. The First Indian Home Guards suffered two men killed and six wounded in what General Blunt named the “Battle of Honey Springs.” Colonel Wattles, commanding the First, reported his men crossed Elk Creek, “under a most galling fire from the enemy,” who were “desperately contesting every foot of ground.” The regiment captured twenty-four weapons from the enemy in their charge and two native officers, Captain Nokosolochee and Sonukmikko, were praised for their gallant conduct. Union forces destroyed Cooper’s supply depot at Honey Springs, permanently removing the threat of a major Confederate offensive north of the Arkansas River.

In the following six months, the native forces at Fort Gibson would face a far deadlier foe than any Confederate force they had engaged. Beginning in June, an epidemic of smallpox swept through the camps. The first case was probably contracted during the winter encampment in Arkansas but by summer whole companies had been exposed to the disease. When surgeons first detected the disease in March, they established quarantine stations and attempted to vaccinate the command, but by mid-summer an epidemic was raging in the concentrated camps around Fort Gibson. As

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243 Ibid., 448-9.
244 Ibid., 455-6.
245 OR, v. 22, pt. II, 162.
246 Ibid., 166.
with most imported diseases, the natives had little protection and suffered fearfully. 178 men of the First Indian Home Guards died from the disease, some taking their lives rather than permit the disease to run its course. On August 26, Private Fashitseecharjo “had the Small Pox and got crazy and cut his throat.” Two days earlier, Private Cat Killer, also afflicted, shot himself. Both men, along with all the others who perished at Fort Gibson that Fall, were buried with all their equipment in keeping with native beliefs in the articles’ utility in the afterlife. Ordinarily, Army regulations required that all personal effects be inventoried and, if serviceable, reissued, but routinely made concessions for deceased members of the First Indian Home Guards.

Even if the men, most frequently the younger soldiers, survived the disease, they still faced the winter with weakened immune systems. A host of ailments plagued the command throughout the following winter, as fevers and lung complications claimed more lives. Of the 425 men who died while in the regiment, 357 succumbed to disease, compared to only forty killed in action (See Table 5.3) Murders claimed another eight lives, as men from different villages and even different tribes often engaged in quarrels with deadly results. The Army court-martialed several members of the regiment for killing members of their own command.

To replenish his losses to disease, Phillips continued to recruit from the natives in the area, especially Cherokees growing dissatisfied with the Confederacy. By the end of the war, Cherokees were well represented in the regiment, but never outnumbered the Creeks. (See Table 5.1) Throughout the war, many Creeks and Cherokees who had initially sided with the South renounced their allegiance, and traveled to Fort Gibson to

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247 Fashitseecharjo Service Record, CSR.
248 Data collected from the CSR.
enlist in the Union army.\textsuperscript{249} Many of the soldiers who had previously deserted returned to their command, and absences of several months were not uncommon. Most were restored to their duties with only a loss of pay, representing another concession to native behavior. White troops occasionally faced death penalties for desertion while natives benefited from several amnesty proclamations.

Despite having his forces decimated by disease, Colonel Phillips still managed to keep patrols out in hostile territory. Occasionally they would intercept bands of guerrillas, such as those led by William Quantrill and others as they passed through the Indian Territory to raid Kansas. After sacking and burning Lawrence, Kansas, Quantrill, by his own admission, “left a trail of murder through the Indian country,”\textsuperscript{250} and his men were accused of “killing outright whatever Indians or Negroes they fell in with,”\textsuperscript{251} as they passed through the territory en route to their winter post in Texas. On October 13 Quantrill’s party met and captured a detachment of twelve men of the First Indian Home Guard near the Creek Agency. All twelve men were reportedly murdered, and five service records list men “murdered by Quantrill” on that date.\textsuperscript{252}

Phillips’s men attempted to maintain order in the territory but were frequently opposed by small bands of Confederates, including General Stand Watie’s regiment of Confederate Cherokees. On December 18, 1863 near Barren Fork, thirty miles east of Fort Gibson, Company “C”, under Captain Tuckabatcheeharjo and Lieutenant William Roberts and their men routed a portion of Watie’s men, killing ten Confederates and wounding thirty more. Captain Oliver P. Willet, of the First Indian was mortally wounded

\textsuperscript{249} McReynolds, \textit{The Seminoles}, 290; Enlistments compiled from the CSR.
\textsuperscript{250} Britton, \textit{The Union Indian Brigade}, 321.
\textsuperscript{251} Abel, \textit{The American Indian as Participant}, 304.
in the affair. The skirmish was of minor significance in the course of the war but was one of many times when white and native officers combined to successfully lead operations against a common foe.

By 1864 a rough pattern was in place that that would continue for the duration of the conflict. Confederate forces, steadily weakened by their isolation from the rest of the South, continued to raid and attack wagon trains, while Union forces at Fort Gibson attempted to intercept these raids and protect their supply line. Since the capture of Fort Smith and Little Rock in late 1863, the Arkansas River had been reopened to navigation but was no more secure than the wagon trains. In early 1864, a steamboat laden with supplies was intercepted by Watie’s men downstream from Fort Gibson and destroyed. Wagons continued to be the primary means of supply, and escorting the cumbersome trains across the plains continued to consume a large percentage of Phillips’ manpower.

In an attempt to drive the Confederates away from their supply line, the Home Guards marched south to destroy the Confederate supply depot at Middle Boggy. In a sharp engagement on February 13, they scattered the defenders, killing forty-nine, and claiming to have driven the rest over the Red River into Texas. If so, the defeated Confederates did not remain there long, for by April rebel forces were again operating along the Arkansas River and threatening the vital Union link with Kansas.

In late summer a force of over one thousand Confederates moved north out of Texas and began raiding Union haying parties on the prairie. On September 16 they surprised and overwhelmed 125 men of the First Kansas Colored Infantry, burned the

\[252\] OR, v. 22, pt. I, 689; Charcalhpanna, John Deerhead, John Steadham, Tahcontla, and Timischechee Service Records, CSR.
\[254\] Record of Events for Company “C”, CSR.
mowing equipment, and allegedly murdered the prisoners of that regiment.\textsuperscript{256} Three days later, at the same crossing of Cabin Creek where a supply train had been ambushed the previous July, Confederate forces attacked a train of 205 wagons defended by 310 Home Guardsmen and 260 Kansas cavalrmen. In the affair, known as the Second Battle of Cabin Creek, Confederates under Generals Watie and Richard M. Gano captured 130 wagons and their supplies, in what was certainly “the most serious disaster the Federal forces met with in the Indian Territory during the war.”\textsuperscript{257} However, the train was the only one of over twenty sent from May 1863 until April 1865 that failed to reach its destination. Without the vigilance of the mounted soldiers from Fort Gibson, Union forces could not have kept such an advanced outpost supplied and would have had to abandon the Indian Territory to the Confederates.

While Union natives were guarding the supplies coming from Kansas, unscrupulous contractors were rounding up all the loose stock in the territory and driving it to Kansas for sale to the government. These animals were the property of natives serving in the both the Union and Confederate armies but the contractors failed to recognize the distinction. In early July, Phillips reported the arrest of “nine men from Kansas, caught with a herd of stolen cattle.”\textsuperscript{258} Phillips held the men for trial but could not prevent the rustlers from despoiling the Creeks and Cherokees, whose lands bordered southern Kansas. Short of draft animals for the trains, the colonel advocated the purchase of animals from “our loyal Creek soldiers … who in turn would be able to support their

\textsuperscript{255} OR, v. 34, pt. I, 111-12.
\textsuperscript{256} Britton, \textit{The Union Indian Brigade}, 439.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid., 444.
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid., 431-2.
families with the money."

By late 1864, the Creek nation had been “largely stripped of the herds that had constituted their main wealth before the war.” Appropriations of Creek property and land began with the rustling raids and continued throughout the Reconstruction period. Both Union and Confederate natives suffered under new treaties that supposedly “punished” the tribes for allying with the South, and granted huge right-of-ways across Indian Territory to two railroad companies.

In May 1865, Federal authorities mustered out the First Indian Home Guards upon expiration of its three-year term of service. Phillips attempted to organize a new regiment to keep the peace in the territory, but most of the men of the First Indian Home Guard were mustered out by May 31. Phillips, at the head of the three regiments, attempted to secure all unpaid pay and allowances for his men, “to which they are justly entitled and which they cannot subsequently collect so easily as other parties.”

Despite some negative estimations of their service, the men of the First Indian Home Guard made meaningful contributions to the preservation of the Union and generally convinced their commanders of their ability. Upon assuming command of the Indian Brigade, Colonel Phillips was concerned about the unit but later recorded:

First Indian Regiment, which I had almost despaired of after it was added to my command, is now being drilled and taught every day, and is learning rapidly. They go through the common evolutions by company and battalion very creditably.

The unit remained an effective fighting force and held both Confederate regulars and lawless irregulars at bay during the latter half of the war. The men endured devastating epidemics, constant danger of attack, inadequate equipment and medical care, and

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259 OR, v. 34, pt. II, 524-5.
261 Ibid. 165-7, 174-5.
incompetent and racist commanders to deny Confederates control of their homeland. For their efforts, they received little more than their pay and were physically and economically much worse off for their service. One author estimates that the Civil War “losses of the Seminoles, Creeks and Cherokees were heavier in percentage of total population than the losses of any southern or northern state.”\textsuperscript{265} Whether the men fought consciously to preserve the Union, or, as one author suggests,\textsuperscript{266} simply to preserve their way of life, they were a significant part of the success enjoyed by Federal forces in the Trans-Mississippi theater.

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid, 384.
\textsuperscript{264} OR, v. 22, pt. II, 166.
\textsuperscript{265} McReynolds, \textit{The Seminoles}, 289.
\textsuperscript{266} In their book, Christine and Benton White argue that Opothleyahola was simply attempting to preserve the traditional lifestyle against white encroachment. Christine Schultz White and Benton R. White, \textit{Now the Wolf has Come: The Creek nation in the Civil War}, (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1996)
Table 5.1. Tribal Affiliation of 309 of the 1773 Soldiers of the First Indian Home Guards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample (309)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creek</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickasaw</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Birthplaces of 341 of the 1773 Soldiers of the First Indian Home Guards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample (341)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creek Nation</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. Causes of Mortality for 425 of the 1773 Soldiers of the First Indian Home Guards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Sample (425)</th>
<th>% of Regiment (1773)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smallpox</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Disease</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Illnesses</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Disease</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6

ARKANSAS: THE FIRST ARKANSAS CAVALRY

Among all the seceded states of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi, few were as
divided over secession as Arkansas. Throughout the war partisan conflict plagued the
state, as small bands favoring either side committed or retaliated for outrages at the hands
of their opponents.\footnote{See Daniel E. Sutherland, “Guerrillas: The Real War in Arkansas” in Anne J. Bailey and Sutherland, eds., Civil War Arkansas: Beyond Battles and Leaders, (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 133-153.} The state provided an unofficial total of 13,815 soldiers for the
northern armies, fourth behind Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi among the seceded
states.\footnote{Officially, 8,289 white and 5,526 black soldiers enlisted in Arkansas units. Given the proximity to
federal bases in Missouri where units from other states were stationed or forming, the actual number is
probably somewhat higher. Numbers from R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, editors, Battles and Leaders of
the Civil War, (New York: Yoseloff 1956 [1887]), 767; and Ira Berlin, Joseph Reidy and Leslie Rowland,
editors, Freedom’s Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War, (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 17.} As in Louisiana, federal troops entered Arkansas early in the conflict, and by the
war’s end roughly half the state was in Union hands, including the capital, Little Rock.

During the secession crisis, pro-Union sentiment was strong throughout the state and
prior to President Lincoln’s call for volunteers to aid in suppressing the rebellion, two
separate motions to secede were voted down at the state convention. In a final vote on
May 6, 1861, after considering the possibility of fighting against neighboring states, the
reconvened convention voted for secession with one Unionist, Judge Isaac Murphy of
Huntsville, refusing to change his vote, thereby preventing a unanimous decision.\footnote{Albert W. Bishop, Loyalty on the Frontier, or, Sketches of Union men of the South-west; with Incidents}
whom fled north and sought service in the federal armies rather than submit to the new
Confederate government.

Union attempts to preserve Missouri brought Union and Confederate forces into
immediate conflict. While pro-southern authorities attempted to bring the slave state into
the Confederacy, the pro-northern contingent was able to hold St. Louis and began
mustering forces to drive the secessionists from the state. The first engagement, in
August 1861 at Wilson’s Creek, near Springfield, resulted in a federal withdrawal and
left the southern half of the state in Confederate hands. A second push in the spring of
1862 was more successful, resulting in the Union victory near Pea Ridge, Arkansas in
March. Confederate forces withdrew south, into the Arkansas River valley, where many
were sent across the Mississippi River to bolster the beleaguered forces at Corinth. The
victorious Union forces remained in southern Missouri, providing a potential refuge for
loyal Arkansans. The intervening year had not been kind to those who retained their
Unionist sentiments, and as they reached the federal camps, northern authorities first
became aware of the hardships they had endured.

Confederates had attempted to prevent the removal of loyal Arkansans to northern
states, especially after the April, 1862 passage of the Conscription Act, requiring all able-
bodied males between 18 and 45 to serve in the army. Union men who initially declined
to volunteer were placed under suspicion and often harassed by their pro-southern
neighbors. Many, including a number of those who would later serve in the First
Arkansas Cavalry, attempted to resist, either individually or in “Union Leagues” but were
eventually driven from their homes, and streamed northward into Missouri.

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The first to recognize the refugees’ potential as source of manpower was the quartermaster (supply officer) at Cassville, Missouri, Captain M. La Rue Harrison of the 36th Illinois Infantry Regiment.270 Harrison was the Yale-educated son of a New York minister and was working as a civil engineer in Illinois when the war began. Wanting to serve in the cavalry, Harrison received permission to organize these men into a company for the Sixth Missouri Cavalry, then forming at Forsyth, Missouri.271 As more men joined Harrison’s company, he realized he could raise sufficient troops for an entire regiment (with himself as colonel) and telegraphed the provisional governor of Arkansas, John S. Phelps, then at St. Louis, for permission. On June 16, 1862, the War Department formally authorized Harrison to “raise a regiment of cavalry from the loyal men of Arkansas.”272

Thomas Wilhite, a native of Washington County, Arkansas, had joined a company of Unionists and determined to avoid Confederate service if at all possible. His politics became known locally, and southern sympathizers occasionally visited at his farm and attempted to place him in custody. During the summer of 1861, Wilhite allegedly plowed his fields with a rifle slung on his back and slept with a pair of pistols strapped to his waist. After several altercations, in which he always managed to bluff or elude his pursuers, Wilhite was eventually forced to retire to a cave in the Boston Mountains where stockpiled provisions helped him pass the winter. In May 1862 Wilhite and another man, William Zinnamon, made their way to Springfield and enlisted in the First Arkansas Cavalry. Returning to his home county to recruit in July, Wilhite was constantly pursued

272 Ibid.
and even hunted with bloodhounds but managed to help several men reach federal 
lines.  

Another Arkansas Unionist who eventually joined the regiment was John Morris, 
a Tennessee native and pre-war resident of Searey County, Arkansas. Like many 
Unionists, Morris joined a “Peace Organization Society” to resist service in the 
Confederate Army but was arrested in October 1861 at Burroughville, the county seat. 
Morris and seventy-six other men were marched in chains over 100 miles to Little Rock, 
where they were given the choice between Confederate service or a hangman’s noose. 
Morris chose the former but resolved to desert to the Federals at the first opportunity. 
After being transferred across the Mississippi, Morris left his command near Bowling 
Green, Kentucky in an attempt to reach Federal lines, but was recaptured. With ten other 
conscripts, he was placed in the front rank of his unit at the battle of Shiloh, Tennessee, 
under the assumption that he “would probably be of some service in warding off Federal 
bullets from loyal southern men.”  

Morris was indeed wounded, in the foot, and sent 
home on furlough. While there he again attempted to reach federal lines, succeeding at 
Springfield in July 1862. Morris “aided materially in raising Company H” of the First 
Arkansas and was commissioned a first lieutenant.  

Men like Wilhite and Morris would 
form the nucleus of the First Arkansas Cavalry. 

The overwhelming majority of the soldiers in the First Arkansas Cavalry were 
southerners by birth. Seventy-one percent were born in states that had left the Union; 
including the border states of Kentucky and Missouri brings the total to ninety percent. 
(See Table 6.1) The remainder of the men were Midwesterners by birth, although it is

273 Bishop, Loyalty on the Frontier, 89-104.  
274 Ibid., 131.
difficult to determine whether they were immigrants or transfers from Union infantry regiments stationed in the area. Arkansas natives made up over thirty-one percent of the regiment, more than from any other state. Most of these men were from the counties along the state’s northern and western boundaries, where pro-Union sentiment was strongest. Washington County, in particular, is well represented, but the regiment was stationed at the county seat, Fayetteville, for most of the war, skewing the numbers towards Washington and the adjacent counties. (See Table 6.2 and Map 3) A large number of men enlisted in Washington and the adjacent counties in both Arkansas and Missouri. (See Table 6.3) Early in the war it was far easier for men in border counties to reach safety in Missouri than those in the interior of the state but later, as federal forces pushed south, the Second, Third and Fourth Cavalry regiments were filled with men from these areas.276

Once mustered in, the new soldiers lost little time returning to their home state, paying their respects to their former oppressors and assisting potential recruits who sought to join them. On June 27, the post commander at Springfield reported the return of three different “scouts” from Arkansas with “about 100 recruits of the First Arkansas Regiment.”277 The expeditions also brought in an estimated 25,000 pounds of lead and

275 Ibid., 127-132
276 Michael A. Hughes, “Statistical Study, completed in 1984, of Arkansas Union Army Volunteers, including ages, occupations, birthplaces and place of enlistment,” Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
277 U. S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 volumes, (Washington: GPO 1880-1901) v. 13, 452.(hereafter referred to as OR, all citations from Series I unless otherwise noted)
powder, 120 enlisted prisoners and fifteen officers engaged in conscripting. Colonel Clark Wright, commanding of one of the patrols, reported on Confederate activity:

They are enforcing the conscript law, and a majority of the citizens north of the Boston Mountains are very indignant and much opposed to the law. Much suffering prevails among them. 278

The suffering was likely caused by the bands of Confederates, as Wright observed:

These forces have been committing unheard-of depredations in the various neighborhoods through which they have passed. They have plundered and murdered Union citizens until forbearance ceases to be a virtue. 279

Several officers had advocated the establishment of a permanent outpost in Arkansas to assist refugees and deter raids by Confederate guerrillas. Accordingly, at Springfield on July 5, General Brown ordered the first three companies of the First Arkansas, along with the Tenth Illinois Cavalry, to “make a camp at Fayetteville.” Brown listed as his reasons: “There is plenty of forage, flour and meat at that place. The position at Fayetteville will enable the regiment forming to fill up rapidly.” 280 Unfortunately for the Arkansans, their departure was delayed by the tardy arrival of their equipment. Some had managed to bring their personal stock out with them, but the majority would have to be mounted at government expense. The availability of mounts limited operations of the First Arkansas throughout the war, as logistical difficulties plagued the command. Food, ammunition and supplies were frequently detained at posts further north or completely unavailable. Initially, the men were armed with smoothbore muskets but later obtained

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278 OR, v. 13, 462.
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid., 463.
more satisfactory Whitney rifled carbines, but on July 14, Brown described the
embryonic regiment as “320 men on foot” and “armed with muskets.”

On July 25, the arms and equipment arrived, and a shipment of horses was en
route from the railhead at Rolla, Missouri. By this time, a second battalion (four
additional companies) had almost completed its organization, prompting Brown, on
August 10, to ask his commanders if arms and equipment for the men could be shipped in
advance, “so that they may be armed as fast as they are mustered. The First Arkansas and
Eighth Missouri will be completed before the arms can get here if forwarded
immediately.” Captain John Worthington received permission to recruit a company for
the regiment on July 21, and had his 100 men by August 7. None of the men received
any formal training and “had never been one hour in a camp of instruction,” a
contributing factor in the regiment’s questionable reputation in discipline.

In September members of the regiment moved with federal forces into Southwest
Missouri to repel a Confederate advance, and were engaged at the battle of Newtonia on
September 13. Several of the men in the regiment hailed from this corner of Missouri and
“being familiar with the country, made valuable scouts and guides, and through their
families frequently advised Federal officers of the movements of secessionists in their
neighborhoods.” The unit’s success in this campaign led to similar employment as
Federal forces followed the defeated Confederates into Arkansas.

281 Ibid., 471, Bishop, Loyalty on the Frontier, 54.
282 OR, v. 13, 554.
283 Bishop, Loyalty on the Frontier, 51.
284 Ibid., 63.
285 Wiley Britton, The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War, (Kansas City: Franklin
Hudson, 1922), 108.
By October, two of the regiment’s three battalions had moved from Cassville to Elkhorn, Arkansas, the site of some of the most intense fighting during the Pea Ridge battle the previous March. The unit made the tavern (the town’s only building) their headquarters, and were assigned to “keep the country thoroughly reconnoitered,” a task made easier by the men’s familiarity with the area but aggravated by their small numbers and the large expanse of country committed to their care. The unit’s second in command, Lieutenant Colonel Albert W. Bishop, commanded the post at Elkhorn and coordinated the operations. In his spare time, Bishop, a transfer from the Second Wisconsin Cavalry, recorded the experiences of several of the unit’s officers and had the journal published in St. Louis the following year. Bishop also attempted to feed the refugees pouring into his small outpost, wiring Springfield for “a small surplus of rations” to feed the “several families, wives and children of Union men” who arrived “in a state of great destitution.” Bishop was ordered to keep “one-half of the command” on “distant scouts all the time; the other portion should be constantly employed” in the immediate neighborhood. Bishop claimed the men were poorly supplied, had not been paid since they entered the service, and were too few to accomplish their mission. He pleaded for reinforcements, or at least the final battalion of the First Arkansas, which was then still organizing at Cassville.

Bishop eventually got his reinforcements, as Colonel Harrison arrived on December 3 with the remainder of the regiment. On the 5th he was ordered forward, and, leaving only two companies to garrison the tavern, took the regiment south. The entire
Second and Third Divisions of the Army of the Frontier, under General Francis J. Herron, followed the Arkansans down the Telegraph Road. General James G. Blunt, commanding the First Division at Cane Hill, was threatened by a superior force of Confederates under General Thomas Hindman and had appealed to Herron for assistance. Hindman believed the Union forces he was facing to be composed of “Pin Indians, free Negroes, Southern Tories, Kansas Jayhawkers and hired Dutch cutthroats,” revealing the level of affection southern troops had for the loyal Arkansans.²⁹⁰ Herron’s men never reached Blunt, as Hindman had slipped his army between the two Federal forces, attempting to defeat Herron before returning to deal with Blunt’s isolated command. Herron’s and Hindman’s forces collided on the morning of December 7, near Prairie Grove, just southwest of Fayetteville. On the evening of Saturday, December 6, Harrison reported to Blunt that his 500 men were eight miles short of their objective, but so fatigued that they would be unable to continue until the following Monday. Harrison was censured in Blunt’s report of the engagement for being completely unaware of the situation’s urgency, a fact his fatigued command would become acquainted with before daylight.²⁹¹

Previous histories of the regiment have painted the unit’s role in the engagement in a less than favorable light, but a further examination reveals that, under the circumstances, the unit did not behave badly. On the morning of December 7, Hindman’s advance of 3,000 cavalry commanded by General John S. Marmaduke, surprised two Federal Missouri cavalry regiments and forced them back towards the camp of the First Arkansas. As the routed Federals, followed closely by a numerically superior

Confederate force approached the camp, the Arkansans attempted to make a stand to protect their wagons, but were forced back in disorder. After a pursuit of several miles, they reached a position occupied by the First Missouri cavalry, supported by an artillery battery. These units attempted to halt the fleeing Missouri and Arkansas men but were no doubt informed of the size of the Confederate advance. The retreating Federals did rally briefly in the rear of this position but eventually “broke and fled,” according to the commander of the First Missouri. That regiment was likewise routed, having several men captured, before retreating in a direction perpendicular to the road towards a mountain three miles distant, “in order to divert the enemy from coming down on the infantry before they were prepared for it.” The commander of the First Missouri recorded: “when we arrived at the foot of the mountain, we met about 200 stragglers from the First Arkansas and Seventh Missouri Cavalry.”\textsuperscript{292} If these units were already at the new position, it is likely that the First Arkansas and Seventh Missouri initiated the perpendicular retreat that gave the infantry time to form.

In his report of the battle, General Herron reported meeting the remainder of the First Arkansas and Seventh Missouri Cavalry coming back in great disorder…It was with the very greatest difficulty that we got them checked, and prevented a general stampede of the battery horses; but after some hard talking, and my finally shooting one cowardly whelp off his horse, they halted.\textsuperscript{293}

Although the victim has been attributed to the First Arkansas, Herron did not mention to which command the “whelp” belonged. In the engagement, the unit lost four killed, four wounded and forty-seven captured, all in the early morning contact. The First Arkansas remained on the army’s flanks and was not further engaged at Prairie Grove. The numbers captured indicate that the unit was in immediate danger of being swallowed up.

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 137.
by a larger force, necessitating their flight, but it did offer some resistance, and may even have diverted the brunt of the Confederate cavalry attack from the vanguard of Herron’s column. The general reported that he “formed a battery and two regiments of infantry and checked Marmaduke,” before advancing to Prairie Grove, and joining the battle.

After Prairie Grove, the combined Army of the Frontier pursued the defeated Confederates across the Boston Mountains to the Arkansas River, but finding its advanced position untenable, moved back north, leaving the First Arkansas to garrison Fayetteville. In an attempt to divert Hindman’s attention from the thrust southward, a scouting party was sent east to Huntsville, Arkansas, arriving on December 22. The men were four days too late to catch a Confederate force that had:

committed depredations on all the union families in that vicinity, more especially that of Judge Murphy [the lone dissenter in the secession vote] the ladies of whose family they stripped of everything but what was on their bodies, leaving them in a destitute condition.294

The patrol captured fifteen men before returning to Fayetteville. On January 23, another force of 130 men crossed the Boston Mountains to Van Buren where they captured a Confederate steamer with over 200 wounded men, whose paroles could be exchanged for Union captives.

Colonel Harrison attempted to strengthen his post by recruiting an Arkansas Infantry regiment to garrison it, freeing more of the cavalymen for active patrolling. On March 9, He received “Captain Brown, a Union man from Arkadelphia,” in southwestern Arkansas. Brown brought in 83 men who had been hiding in the Ouachita Mountains near Arkadelphia for service in the First Arkansas Infantry, despite being attacked in mid-

293 Ibid., 102-3.
294 Ibid., 165
February by a much larger force of Confederates.\textsuperscript{295} By mid-1863 that region of the state was in open rebellion against the Confederacy, with bands like Brown’s repeatedly and often successfully engaging Confederate troops sent to suppress them.\textsuperscript{296} That same month, a party of the First Arkansas Cavalry under Captain Galloway again marched to the Arkansas River, where it met and routed a force of 180 Confederates. The next day a detached a party of seven men impetuously attacked thirty bushwhackers barricaded in a house near the mouth of the Mulberry River, and forced them to flee without their horses or equipment. Colonel Harrison described the attack “the most daring one of any I have heard of since the commencement of the war.”\textsuperscript{297} Another joint raid with the Second and Third Indian Home Guards was aborted when it became mired in mud in the White River valley, but two more patrols, one on March 23 to Frog Bayou and another on April 2 to Carroll County, inflicted thirty-nine casualties on the enemy and suffered only one in return.\textsuperscript{298}

The constant scouting was taking its toll on the command. On April 1, Harrison reported only 154 serviceable horses in the entire command, for only 850 troopers. The regiment had received no new issues of clothing in three months, “so that a large part of the men are in a destitute condition.” The First Arkansas Infantry, forming at Fayetteville, was even worse off. “They are totally without transportation, clothing or tents, or equipments of any kind, except the arms picked up on the Prairie Grove battle-ground, which are of all patterns and calibers.”\textsuperscript{299} The 830 men had never received any clothing,\textsuperscript{295} Ibid., 229.
\textsuperscript{296} For a detailed description of the events in Pike, Polk, Hempstead, Columbia and Montgomery counties, see Carl H. Moneyhon’s “Disloyalty and Class Consciousness in Southwestern Arkansas, 1862-1865” in Bailey and Sutherland, Civil War Arkansas.
\textsuperscript{297} OR, v. 22, pt. I, 224.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid., 242, 249; OR, v. 22, pt. II, 140
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid., 192.
and were still clad in their homespun, making them indistinguishable from the
Confederates. Harrison was increasingly concerned about his tenuous supply link, and
forced to devote most of his mounted men to escort his forage trains. Even a shipment of
800 revolvers at Springfield could not be forwarded due to the lack of transportation. The
Federal hold on northwestern Arkansas was tenuous at best, but Harrison’s report must
have come as quite a surprise to Major General Herron at Springfield, who a day earlier
had reported that with the First Arkansas Infantry and Cavalry regiments at Fayetteville,
he believed “that section of the country to be perfectly secure.” Federal commanders
repeatedly failed to grasp the nature of the conflict in northwestern Arkansas and were
slow to devise tactics to deal with the situation.

After months of bringing the war to the enemy, in April the enemy brought the
war to Fayetteville. On the morning of April 18, a numerically equal Confederate force
under General W. L. Cabell attacked the city from the east. Pickets from the First
Arkansas Cavalry gave sufficient warning, and the garrison formed in the center of town,
just in time to receive the first Confederate attack. Most of the First Arkansas Infantry
was sent to the rear, to avoid confusion with the attackers. The Confederates had one
initial advantage, two cannon emplaced on a commanding hill just east of the town, but
Harrison’s men succeeded in driving the cannoneers from their guns with several volleys
of well-aimed rifle fire. Losing the advantage, Cabell launched a desperate mounted
charge at the heart of the Federal lines, which was easily broken, and then withdrew his
forces. Union losses were four killed, twenty-six wounded, and fifty-one captured or
missing. Nine of the captured men were at a wedding celebration outside of the town.
Confederate losses were estimated at twenty killed and between thirty and fifty.

300 Ibid., 196.
wounded. The set-piece battle at Fayetteville was a rare occurrence for the First Arkansas Cavalry, and the last they would be engaged in during the war.

Despite issuing several laudatory orders to his troops and superiors, Harrison and his men remained on edge. On April 22 the men spent the night under arms, expecting another attack, and were unable to replenish their expended ammunition or food supplies from the depots in Missouri. Harrison begged for reinforcements, stating, “we can never hold this place without artillery and horses,” and reported “we have no stores here; we have nothing to eat,” and did not expect any for almost a week. He was likewise concerned for the fate of his men, who he was certain would be shot as deserters if captured by the enemy. In response, Federal commanders ordered Harrison to abandon the town, a task the men accomplished on April 25. Held in battle, the town succumbed to supply failures, and would not see another permanent federal occupying force for almost six months. While most Union arms won significant victories in the summer of 1863, the First Arkansas passed the summer in Missouri, making frequent patrols into Arkansas but unable to establish a firm grip on the state.

Throughout the summer, the regiment’s forays into Arkansas were limited due to a Confederate buildup in the area. In September, Confederate General J. O. Shelby moved north out of Arkansas on a two-month raid that reached the Missouri River. The operation temporarily cleared the country of southern partisans, who joined the raid, but after Shelby’s return in late October, the irregulars returned to their haunts. After a sharp engagement at Pineville, Missouri, on August 13, a portion of the First Arkansas traveled

across the Indian Territory to join an advance in that area. With the Army of the Frontier, under General Blunt, the detachment marched down the Arkansas River valley and reentered the state from the west at Fort Smith on September 1, 1863. From there the command returned to Missouri, having traveled 700 miles in six weeks without tents or a change of clothing. While at Fort Smith, the command scouted the surrounding mountains, bringing out the “oppressed loyal men, who had been forced into the rebel ranks,” who, with their horses and arms, enlisted in the U.S. Army. At Fort Smith, Blunt likewise noted “Union men who had been driven to the mountains to save their lives are coming in by scores and enlisting in various regiments.” In the same correspondence, the general recommended returning the First Arkansas Cavalry to Fayetteville, as “they understand the country thoroughly, and would be of great service in ridding that part of the country of guerrillas, of which there are numerous bands in that locality.”

At Springfield, General John McNeil ordered the regiment to return to Arkansas, recognizing that the “officers and men, from their knowledge of the country and their zeal inspired by their strong interest in restoring peace to Arkansas, are peculiarly fitted to this service.” In the subsequent controversy over the partitioning of Arkansas between the forces in Missouri and at Fort Smith, McNeil requested that the First Ar Arkansas remain in his command. If it did not, he asked that at least:

304 Ibid., 554.
306 Ibid., 526.
307 Ibid., 518.
Capt. D. C. Hopkins, with his company, may be detached and directed to report to me as scouts. I have everywhere in this state found our information of the enemy’s movements defective, and military scouts the most reliable. Captain Hopkins and his company are peculiarly fitted for this service.\footnote{308}

The benefits gained by using local troops who were familiar with the local area were sometimes offset by their propensity to return to their homes, with or without authorization. The nine men captured before the battle at Fayetteville had left camp without permission and were not the first to do so. When Colonel William A. Phillips, commanding the district, visited Fayetteville and inspected the regiment on March 6, 1863, he noted:

I was, in the main, pleased with their appearance, but the disposition to go home is too general, and I found it necessary to check it. This has given me a good deal of trouble in the Indian command, but I find the Arkansas command worse than they are.\footnote{309}

Local soldiers sometimes used their new status to settle personal scores with the Confederates. Many members of the First Arkansas had been roughly treated as Union sympathizers in a seceded state, and zealously repaid their former oppressors. One member of the regiment recalled returning northward into Missouri and passing, on the same road, unarmed and paroled Confederate prisoners headed South. At intervals, men left the Union column and rode to the rear, where an occasional gunshot testified to the savagery of partisan warfare.\footnote{310}

On an expedition in southwest Missouri in September, 1863, an officer of the Second Kansas Cavalry reported that in a body of seventy-five men of the First Arkansas attached to his command, “one-third of the escort were drunk, whooping and hallooing,” as they left Cassville. In an engagement on September 5, near Maysville, Arkansas, the

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{308}{Ibid., 692.}
\item \footnote{309}{Ibid., 149.}
\end{itemize}}
commander reported, “about 50 of our men broke and ran.” Twenty-five men attempted to stand and fight but, unsupported, were eventually captured. All the men obtained paroles and returned to Cassville on September 9.\textsuperscript{311}

The following week the regiment left Cassville and, after several weeks of hard campaigning in Missouri, finally returned to Fayetteville, arriving on September 22.\textsuperscript{312}

On October 11, a Confederate force impetuously demanded the town’s surrender, claiming to have the town surrounded, but Major Hunt, Commanding in Harrison’s absence, replied that no surrender would be made without a fight. While the men frantically constructed a breastwork in the town square, Hunt appealed for reinforcements and urgently requested more ammunition, estimating that the town could not be held with the limited stores brought down from Missouri. After five tense days and nights, the Confederate force withdrew to the south, pursued by Federal forces from Missouri.\textsuperscript{313}

Upon returning to Fayetteville on October 18, Harrison again found his supply situation critical and forwarded requisitions for 20,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition and “2,250 rations each of hard bread, coffee, sugar, salt, and candles, and 900 rations of bacon.”\textsuperscript{314} In the next several months, his command would need all the rations and ammunition it could get, as it was busily engaged in sweeping bushwhackers from the country.\textsuperscript{315} Losses from these operations began to mount. Five men of Captain Hopkins’ company were killed on October 16 near Duroc, Arkansas, in an engagement with a

\textsuperscript{310} Mahan, \textit{Federal Outpost at Fayetteville}, 37.
\textsuperscript{311} OR, v. 22, pt. I, 612.
\textsuperscript{313} OR, v. 22, pt. I, 661, 701-4.
\textsuperscript{314} OR, v. 22, pt. II, 633.
\textsuperscript{315} OR, v. 22, pt. I, 615.
portion of Shelby’s retreating command. On October 26, Lieutenant Robinson was killed in another encounter with Shelby’s rear guard.316 In addition to the personnel losses, the stock was again worn down, and Harrison reported 100 men unfit for duty as a result of the previous month’s exertions. In an eighteen-month period, 2,600 horses had been forwarded to the First Arkansas Cavalry and several units of the Missouri State Militia, yet the former regiment was never fully or even adequately mounted.317 Harrison’s frequent testimonials of the broken-down condition of his stock indicate the high consumption rate was likely due to overuse and not careless loss.

In spite of the difficulties, operations continued in November, as the 412 mounted men of the command fought several engagements near Huntsville and Kingston. A patrol of 112 men under Captain John Worthington left Fayetteville on December 16 and lost four men killed and six wounded in fifteen straight days of fighting in Carroll, Marion, and Searcy counties. Worthington did note that the area had enjoyed a productive summer, and estimated in Marion County, “there are corn and oats enough to supply a regiment of cavalry for twelve months. Flouring mills, wheat and pork are also obtainable to an extent sufficient for the same purpose.”318 Effectively controlling these resources would prove to be a far more difficult undertaking.

Federal authorities in Missouri earnestly desired that these areas be occupied to prevent their use as haven by bushwhackers ranging into Missouri. By February, the First Arkansas Cavalry had detachments at Bentonville and Huntsville, in addition to Fayetteville, while other commands held Berryville and Yellville. Occupying the land was much easier than pacifying it, but Union troops endeavored to defeat Confederates

316 Ibid., 651, 661.
317 OR, v. 34, pt. II, 453.
and guerrillas alike, wherever they encountered them. The regiment had obtained two small cannon, twelve-pounder mountain howitzers, to assist them in dislodging their enemies from fortified positions, but was chronically short of ammunition for the pieces.\[^{319}\]

In addition to protecting the road and telegraph between Fayetteville and Cassville, the First Arkansas was now responsible for the extension of that line from Fayetteville over the Boston Mountains to Fort Smith. The nature of the country the road passed through made it easy for guerrillas to sever the line and then ambush patrols sent to repair it. The First Arkansas established posts along the route and by early April had as many as five companies at the southern terminus at Fort Smith.\[^{320}\] Harrison complained:

> The duties devolving upon my command (eleven companies of cavalry), which was the only one in a country 110 miles broad and 250 miles long have been so arduous that with from 100 to 300 horses (the greatest number at any one time on hand during the summer and autumn) it has been impossible to carry mails to Cassville and Van Buren, fifty-five miles each way, to keep the telegraph in repair, forage for the post, escort supply trains, and at the same time do the amount of scouting necessary to keep the country rid of the roving bands of the enemy.

Skirmishes increased in intensity, and the days of capture and parole were fading into the past. On April 7, 1864, twenty-two guerrillas attacked a corral near Prairie Grove, used as a way station on the road to Fort Smith, and murdered all nine soldiers of the First Arkansas stationed there.\[^{321}\] One source claimed the Confederates approached the post wearing blue federal uniforms captured in previous engagements, a common tactic for bushwhackers.\[^{322}\] On June 24, a force of 200 men captured the regiment’s entire mule

\[^{319}\] Ibid., 651.
\[^{320}\] OR, v. 34, pt. III, 442, 821.
\[^{321}\] OR, v. 34, pt. I, 876-7
\[^{322}\] Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade*, 417.
herd, about 240 animals.\textsuperscript{323} The loss paralyzed the regiment’s wagon train and hampered the collection of forage from the surrounding countryside, but by early August the herd had been rebuilt from enemy captures and a fresh shipment from St. Louis. Still, on August 8, the regiment numbered only 561 men and 104 horses fit for duty.\textsuperscript{324}

During his tenure as commander of the post at Fayetteville, Harrison made several forays into the realm of domestic policy. The first came on the eve of the Fayetteville battle, when he brokered and signed an agreement with Confederate authorities, then at Fort Smith, allowing families to “remove without the lines of either force, provided that, when an election has been made to so remove, such removal shall be deemed permanent.”\textsuperscript{325} Colonel Phillips, Harrison’s immediate superior, invalidated the agreement and chastised Harrison for entering into negotiations. Phillips believed such a contract, aside from recognizing the Confederacy as a belligerent entitled to “lines,” would result in the removal of southern sympathizers and their property to Texas, where they would “strengthen their tottering cause” while Union citizens from southern Arkansas and Texas would be detained “in an iron despotism.”\textsuperscript{326} Given the ample evidence of Confederates preventing refugees from traveling north, Phillips seems to have had the clearer view of the situation.

Harrison’s second effort, initiated in the summer of 1864, was much broader and somewhat more successful. By this time a torrent of refugees had turned Fayetteville into a large civilian camp with a small military garrison, while southern guerrillas almost exclusively controlled the surrounding countryside. To extend his control, Harrison

\textsuperscript{323} OR, v. 34, pt. I, 1053.  
\textsuperscript{324} OR, v. 41, pt. II, 1096.  
\textsuperscript{325} OR, v. 22, pt. II, 170.  
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid., 171
proposed the organization of “post colonies,” where loyal families farmed cooperatively on adjacent tracts while all eligible males formed militia companies to defend the posts. Similar in concept to the “fortified hamlets” of a later conflict, the colonies were designed to remove a burden from Harrison’s commissary by raising foodstuffs for both the refugees and his command from the fertile fields lying fallow around Fayetteville.

As a corollary to the post-colony plan, Harrison began a systematic destruction of many of the grain milling facilities in the area, a tactic pioneered by Confederates during the Pea Ridge campaign in March, 1862. Harrison surmised the mills were far more valuable to his opponents than the loyal Arkansans, especially if the latter resided in colonies with their own mills. Harrison would find that even economic warfare could be ineffective, noting, “the disabling of mills causes more writhing among bushwhackers than any other mode of attack; but they threaten to stay and fight me on boiled acorns.”

The First Arkansas Cavalry destroyed several mills in late 1864, including one burned near Pineville, Missouri on August 28, “none but rebels living in its vicinity.” The same raid missed Williams’ Mill at Spavinaw, Seneca Nation, when a guide led the column astray. The next day, the regiment destroyed two more mills on Sugar Creek near Bentonville, and concluded their foray by disabling two mills on the Illinois River. Lieutenant Colonel Bishop, who led the raid, reported, “the mills destroyed or disabled were of very little or no service to Union people.”

July 1864 found the companies still at Fort Smith engaged with numerous bands of guerrillas in the mountains south of that post. In two separate affairs, detachments of

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329 Ibid., 269.
the First Arkansas captured over fifty horses and mules, but the post commander reported that his men were still “almost useless as cavalry for the want of serviceable horses.” 331

The Fayetteville garrison was likewise busy, killing four guerrillas and capturing fifty horses near Richland Creek on August 16, with a loss of two wounded, one of them accidentally. 332

In the autumn of 1864, the Confederates in Arkansas planned a repeat of their 1863 raid to Missouri on a much larger scale. On September 2, General Sterling Price led his army of an estimated 12,000 men across the Arkansas at Dardanelle and turned north towards St. Louis. Exactly three months later less than 6,000 men would straggle back into the state, having crossed Missouri from east to west along the Missouri River, but broken by constant pursuit. 333 As Price’s command passed to the west of Fayetteville, the defeated general detached a column of cavalry to “sideswipe” the post. The estimated 1,200 Confederates shelled the town from the same hill where the attack had been launched two years before. Colonel Harrison, who had returned with a supply train from Cassville only three days earlier, returned the enemy’s fire and immediately dispatched a force to seize the hill, a task it accomplished with the loss of only two killed and five wounded, while killing twelve Confederates and wounding twenty-five. The town’s garrison closed the day by fending off another foray on the west side of town.

On November 3, the initial force, reinforced by the remainder of Price’s command, renewed their shelling of the town in preparation for an assault. The First Arkansas was again equal to the task, dropping seventy-five attackers at a cost of nine

330 Ibid., 269-70.
331 Ibid., 24.
332 Ibid., 261-3.
wounded. On the approach of the pursuing Army of the Frontier that evening, the
Confederates resumed their retreat to the south, having unsuccessfully laid siege to the
town and its 1,100 defenders for nine days. The First Arkansas Cavalry joined the
pursuit, following a trail “sharply defined and strewn with arms, half-burned wagons,
dead mules, abandoned horses, and all the debris of a routed and demoralized army” until
it ended at the Arkansas River near Webber’s Falls, Cherokee Nation, a point the
regiment reached on November 12. Harrison was incensed that the St. Louis papers
ignored his regiment’s contributions and begged his superiors to make it known that his
own regiment fought both engagements at Fayetteville, and that “our own spades and
rifles gained the victory.”

In the war’s closing months the colony system prospered but Harrison was
increasingly criticized for militia’s extralegal activities. By March 15, sixteen colonies
containing almost 1,200 men and their families were in operation; ten in Washington
County, four in neighboring Madison county to the east and two in Benton county to the
north. One colony, on the site of the battle at Pea Ridge, had “4,000 acres under fence,
and will cut 800 acres of wheat in July.” In early February, General Cyrus Bussey took
command of the federal forces at Fort Smith and, as Harrison’s superior, became a strong
opponent of the colony system. Bussey falsely believed that colonies were manned by
companies of the First Arkansas rather than independent militia, and accused the
command of committing “the most outrageous excesses, robbing and burning houses

*River to Appomattox*, 574-586.
335 OR, v. 41, pt. IV, 631.
indiscriminately,” especially in Madison and Carroll counties. Meanwhile, the First Arkansas Cavalry, augmented by the militia companies, continued to wage a war of extermination against the bushwhackers and killed eighteen men in the first half of March. Their actions earned praise from the federal commander at Springfield, who feared another guerrilla onslaught in that state once enough forage was available.

On May 3, Bussey complained to the state adjutant general of the colonies’ “oppressive” nature, and accused Harrison of “compelling every male person above the age of fourteen to join a colony or be considered a bushwhacker and suffer accordingly.” Bussey claimed to have been visited by “numerous delegations of old men of loyalty and good character” who protested against the system but was unable to provide any verification, making it difficult to determine whether these men were in fact loyal citizens or simply southern sympathizers suffering from their exclusion from the colonies and the destruction of their mills. Harrison, who had been in the region almost three years (compared to Bussey’s two months) claimed the colony system had been enthusiastically embraced, and the numbers seem to support his opinion. Bussey likewise noted that in March, Harrison had issued 16,000 rations to men “able to work,” ignoring the fact that early spring, before crops could be planted or winter wheat harvested, was the most critical time for foodstuffs depleted by the long winter. The same month, Bussey begged for rations to feed the refugees gathered at Fort Smith and should have understood Harrison’s predicament. Bussey further accused Harrison of endeavoring to open a trade store in Fayetteville, and of organizing the post-colonies purely for the

337 Ibid., 1008, 1120, 1139.
338 Ibid., 1185, 1193.
purpose of “controlling the vote of seven counties to elect him to Congress next fall.”

Harrison did serve as mayor of Fayetteville after the war, but was never elected to state or federal office.

The First Arkansas remained in service until August 22, 1865, when the entire regiment was formally mustered out. The mostly untrained men had been poorly supplied with horses, equipment and rations and grossly overextended for much of their time in the service. Despite these difficulties, the regiment repeatedly earned accolades for its anti-guerrilla tactics and, for better or worse, made northwestern Arkansas a contested area for the Confederacy. Before the war, Fayetteville had been the economic, cultural and population center of the state but by 1865, the conflict had economically devastated and virtually depopulated northwestern Arkansas. After the war, the state’s economic and population center shifted to the Arkansas River valley around Little Rock. During the war, at least 285 men, or over twenty-two percent of the regiment died while on active service. Ninety of the deaths occurred in action while disease claimed another 158 lives. (twelve percent) 174 men (fourteen percent) deserted the regiment during the war. The men of the First Arkansas Cavalry were but a small sample of a disloyal populace that contributed to the Confederacy’s demise.

340 Ibid., 369.
341 In March 1865 Colonel Harrison related to Provisional Governor Isaac Murphy that “my territory (seven counties) is too large for the eleven companies stationed in it.” (OR, v. 48, pt. I, 1177)
Table 6.1. Birthplaces of the 1273 Soldiers of the First Arkansas Cavalry\textsuperscript{343}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Regiment</th>
<th>% of All Arkansas Troops\textsuperscript{344}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total South</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Border States</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Midwest</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total East Coast</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foreign-Born</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{343} From Regimental Record Books.

\textsuperscript{344} From Hughes, “Statistical Study, completed in 1984, of Arkansas Union Army Volunteers.”
Table 6.2. Counties of Birth for the 393 Arkansas-born Soldiers of the First Arkansas Cavalry\textsuperscript{345} (See Map 1 for a graphical representation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample (393)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izard</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulaski</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Francis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searcy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>393</td>
<td>99.5% (due to rounding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{345} From Regimental Record Books.
### Table 6.3. Top Counties of Enlistments for the First Arkansas Cavalry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Regiment (1273)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington, Co., AR</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Co., MO (Cassville)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene Co., MO (Springfield)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll, Co., AR</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton Co., AR</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Co., MO</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searcy Co., AR</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford Co., AR</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 3. Theater of Operations for the First Arkansas Cavalry.
(Circled numbers show numbers of soldiers born in that county)
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Having explored the when, where and how of Southerners’ service in the U.S. Army, the only remaining question is “Why?” In his treatment of the same question for all Civil War soldiers, James McPherson divines several possible motives, including comradery, idealism, fear of reproach, honor, and revenge. McPherson notes that Southerners were more often compelled to defend their homes from invasion while northern soldiers tended to emphasize their ideological purpose. Southern Unionists were in the unique position of doing both and therefore could be said to be “doubly motivated.”

In his only mention of southern Unionists, McPherson notes, “among East Tennesseans, whose homeland was occupied by Confederates until the fall of 1863, the motives of hatred and revenge burned with white-hot intensity.” The same could be said for the majority of Union soldiers from the Trans-Mississippi South. Unionists in Arkansas suffered harsh treatment similar to their compatriots in East Tennessee (a region where many Arkansas Unionists were born). Albert Bishop, lieutenant colonel of the First Arkansas, recorded the following collective description his men:

Their love for the Union was strong, and their alacrity to enlist could not be surpassed. The idea having been prosecuted of enlisting them into the United States service, not many months thereafter a regiment stood up to swear lasting vengeance upon the men who had so cruelly robbed and persecuted

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347 Ibid., 153.
them, and theirs were no idle threats.\textsuperscript{348}

Paris G. Strickland, an Alabama-born lieutenant in the same regiment, was a founding member of the “Peace Organization Society” in the days following secession. The group passed a resolution asserting that, “rather than submit to the high-handed oppression now going on, we will defend ourselves by force of arms, and die, if necessary, in the assertion of our liberties.”\textsuperscript{349}

Creeks and Cherokees were likewise persecuted for their beliefs and expelled from their homes in the Indian Territory. Their desire to return to their homes, with protection from their former oppressors, was probably a strong motivating factor in their decision to enlist, though the possibility of discontinued aid to the refugees also contributed. In an unsigned letter to the president, several Creeks of the First Indian Home Guards reminded their “Great Father” of his promise to “help us in clearing out our country so that we could bring back our families to their homes,” and stated, “we have enlisted as home guards to defend our country.”\textsuperscript{350} After their poor treatment in Kansas, many undoubtedly desired only the means to return home and take their chances with their neighbors. Many of the Cherokee soldiers likewise had similar motives, although the large number of defections from Confederate arms indicates a willingness on the part of those not strongly attached to the federal government simply to be on the winning side. Delawares in Kansas had been exposed to depredations by guerrillas

\textsuperscript{348} Albert W. Bishop, \textit{Loyalty on the Frontier, or, Sketches of Union Men of the Southwest; with Incidents and Adventures in Rebellion on the Border}, (St. Louis: R. P. Studley, 1863) 12.

\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{350} Annie Abel, \textit{The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War}, (Cleveland: Arthur Clark, 1919) 273.
crossing over from Missouri and were therefore “unusually eager to enlist,” to protect their homes.351

Without a strong desire to remain attached to the Union, either to maintain treaty obligations or as a means of opposing other factions within their own tribe, the native soldiers would never have had their homes attacked and likely would never have entered the army. Their commitment to the Union was the root of their military service. Evan Jones, the Methodist minister who had lived among the Cherokees and served briefly as chaplain of the First Indian Home Guards, noted that the loyal natives wished only to “stand by their ‘Old Treaties.’ And they are as persistent in their adherence to these Treaties, as we are to our Constitution.”352 In November 1861, a delegation of four Creek, two Seminole and two Chickasaw chiefs traveled to Leroy, Kansas to meet with Creek Agent George Cutler. In his report to Commissioner Dole, Cutler offered a “verbatim” transcription of the chiefs’ entreaties. The men reported on the activities of the Confederate agent, Albert Pike, and his success among portions of their nations. They then asked for arms and supplies so that they could arm their followers and return to their homes. Oktahashaharjo, a Creek chief, stated that “the secessionists have compelled us to fight and we are willing to fight for the Union.” Cholofolopharjo, a Seminole, echoed this sentiment, stating, “all Seminole warriors will fight for the Union.” One of the signatories, Miccohutka, or White Chief, made good on his promise, enlisting in the First Indian Home Guards the following spring and remaining in the army for the duration.

351 Ibid., 91, 207, 216.
352 Jones to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 14, 1861 in Able, The American Indian as Participant, 62.
Texas Unionists waged similar battles with their secessionist neighbors. In his resignation letter of March 1865, Captain Henry D. Bonnett cited the destitute condition of his family and seven children, still in Texas, as his reason for leaving the service. Private Jacob Claus suffered similarly, reporting, “All my property, which I left in Texas, has been taken or destroyed by the rebels and my poor family, which I had to leave behind, lives now suffering under such circumstances for about 3 years.” Captain Cesario Falcon’s family was forced to seek refuge in Mexico after Falcon’s father was murdered in retaliation for his son’s federal service. Several other soldiers were able to remove their families to New Orleans, where they often arrived in destitute condition. Colonel John L. Haynes, of Rio Grande City in Starr County, gave as his reason for enlisting his “desire to do my whole duty in the restoration of the authority of the nation in Texas,” a sentiment shared by many in the unit, including Second Lieutenant John Strong. In his resignation, the French-born Strong cited “an earnest desire on my part to do all that I could towards the suppression of a rebellion which was devastating the Government and its institutions,” as his reason for enlisting.353

Given the high illiteracy rate among soldiers of the First Corps d’Afrique Cavalry, it is difficult to determine their precise motivations for enlisting. Still, there is no reason to believe that their motivations would differ markedly from other black troops, especially those raised in Louisiana. Captain James H. Ingraham of the First Louisiana Native Guards gave evidence of both ideology and revenge, as well as his attachment to his native land: “We are still anxious as we have ever been to show the world that the latent courage of the African is aroused, and that, while fighting under the American flag,
we can and will be a wall of fire and death to the enemies of this country, our birthplace. Some central Louisiana Unionists like Dennis E. Haynes lost everything during the war. Haynes, a forty-five year-old native of Ireland, was a schoolteacher from Rapides Parish who earned an appointment as the captain of Company B, First Battalion, Louisiana Cavalry Scouts. Confederate authorities hunted Haynes with dogs, confined him in an iron cage, sentenced him to be hung, and shot him in the arm as he escaped, all as punishment for his political views. His wife was captured while attempting to join him in Alexandria and “despoiled of all she possessed.” Haynes’ trials continued after the war. In 1866 he was attacked on the streets of Alexandria but “could not obtain the services of any lawyer” to sue his attackers, and “was cursed and damned by a rebel juror” when he tried to prosecute the case before the Rapides Parish Grand Jury.

Even the First Louisiana Cavalry’s Catholic chaplain was not immune from persecution. Reverend Charles Lemagie, a Belgian immigrant, ministered to Union soldiers in the camp and hospital at Camp Parapet, near his parish in Carrollton. The regiment’s commander, Col. Harai Robinson noted that, for his efforts, Rev. Lemagie was “feeling the oppression of the higher dignitaries of his church in this diocese for his loyalty to the U. S.”

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355 Haynes to Sheridan, May 25, 1866, in Haynes Service Record, Compiled Service Records of Union Volunteers from the State of Louisiana (Washington: National Archives) Record Group 94, Microfilm M396. (hereafter refereed to as the Louisiana CSR)
356 Ibid.
As a result of their experiences many Southern Union soldiers became strongly motivated by revenge. While visiting Louisiana in 1863, George Hepworth, a Massachusetts minister interviewed several members of the First Louisiana Infantry and recorded his observations:

There may be that a few of them are fired with as warm enthusiasm for the cause as Northern soldiers: still they all meet on one platform, - implacable hatred of the rebels. It is a feeling which arises greatly from the fact, that they have suffered impressment; which has been increased by the other fact, of desertion … They have been kept down by the usages of society. They have chafed at it; and now the chance is offered, not only of successful resistance, but of revenge. My own feeling is, that they will fight like tigers.”358

The regiment’s commander, Colonel Richard Holcomb, noted that his men “are not so careful about stepping on the toes of rebels as some others,” indicating revenge may have been a primary reason for the enlistments of many of his men.359 Several of the soldiers echoed the sentiments of Private John Price of the First Louisiana Cavalry. In a letter to Secretary of War Stanton, Price stated, “I have always been a loyal man. I then exhibited my love for the Union by enlisting and it was my firm intention to fight to support the ‘dear old flag’. ”360

Despite their hatred, soldiers did not fight for revenge alone. Many would never have been persecuted by their neighbors had they not had the courage to express their ideological convictions, even in the face of repeated harassment and persecution. The strength of their idealism was the seed of their military service. Many doubtless would

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357 Robinson to Maj. G. B. Drake, Sep. 22 1864, Charles Lemagie Service Record, Louisiana CSR.
have preferred to remain at home and allow northern Unionists and southern secessionists settle the issue but when forced to choose, they embarked on a path that jeopardized their economic and even their physical well-being. Casualties from both combat and disease were relatively high in southern units, due in part to their proximity to the action and their inferior status in the supply system. Many soldiers were ruined economically, having what little they possessed destroyed in the war. Most were not paid for long periods and then, in the case of black soldiers, at a rate lower than their peers.\textsuperscript{361} Few soldiers left the war with improved finances. Additionally, the stigma of federal service was likely to affect an individual’s postwar earnings. While some enjoyed brief prosperity during Reconstruction, the reality of living under the government of former Confederates soon became apparent.

Several contemporary and modern sources have dismissed the native recruits as either deserters from the Confederacy or mercenaries left destitute from the South’s crumbling economy. Louisiana Civil War historian John Winters believes that “most of the paroled men from Forts Jackson and St. Phillip who returned to New Orleans and found themselves without means of support enlisted in the Army.”\textsuperscript{362} Winters also notes “large numbers of Union men – Germans, Irish, French and Americans – feeling the pangs of hunger begged to enlist” suggesting that economic reasons provided the primary motivation. He further concludes “nearly all the early enlistments were men of foreign birth,” ignoring the large numbers of native southerners who served.\textsuperscript{363} A rapid resumption of commerce with the outside world restored employment opportunities in

\textsuperscript{360} Price to Stanton, 10 March 1865, in Price Service Record, Louisiana CSR.

\textsuperscript{361} Many service records in the Fourth U.S. Colored Cavalry indicate the men were paid only seven dollars per month, while their white counterparts received thirteen.

New Orleans, and many options were available to residents besides the rigors of active service in the army. Despite the assessments of some authors, it is clear that the southerners who enlisted were not starving mercenaries or simply eager to improve their lot in life. The few enlistees, primarily substitutes and bounty-jumpers, who were motivated by financial gain did not stomach the three years of continuous hard service and quickly found less demanding occupations.

Given the localized prevalence of Unionism among white Southerners and military service among black Southerners during the Civil War era, it is not surprising that members of both groups entered the army. It is somewhat surprising that they did so in such numbers, indicating the strength of their attachment to the United States and the causes it advanced in the war. As Carl Degler noted, “The severest test of unionism in the South was willingness to serve in the invading army,” a test thousands of Trans-Mississippi southerners passed.364

The individuals who served came from many different groups representing almost every social division found within the states of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Wealthy planters and yeoman farmers fought alongside German and Irish immigrants, Acadians, and Mexican-Americans. While a small number of freed slaves served in the white units, the vast majority were segregated in the U. S. Colored Troops, and included men who had been free anywhere from several months to several decades. Native Americans from Indian Territory were likewise segregated and discriminated against by white units, but willingly entered federal service and remained there throughout the war. This group as a whole contrasts sharply with the more homogenous

363 Ibid.

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Confederate army and is far more representative of the diverse composition of the Trans-Mississippi region. The contributions of all these groups contributed noticeably to the success of federal arms in the Trans-Mississippi.

The Trans-Mississippi southerners in the Union army were strongly motivated by a combination of revenge and deep personal convictions to assist in the restoration of U.S. flag over their homes. With few exceptions, these men formed effective military units, wisely accepted by an Army desperate for manpower. Over 50,000 Trans-Mississippi southerners sought federal service; a number in excess of the total Union strength in the theater at any one time. The activities of these southern Unionists tied up thousands of Confederate regulars who were desperately needed on other fronts and deprived the Confederate armies of sorely needed manpower. Aside from quantitative contributions, these men were invaluable assets to northern commanders because of their familiarity with the locale and inhabitants. The decision to trust former Confederates, freed slaves, recent immigrants, disaffected Tejanos, and illiterate natives paid huge dividends in the Trans-Mississippi department. While federal control was never completely restored in the Trans-Mississippi during the war years, by July, 1865, the entire area was once again occupied by the armed forces of the United States.

As is frequently recognized for black soldiers, each southerner in blue represented an effective doubling of federal strength. Each southern soldier who enlisted in the Union army, reduced Confederate reserves by one and added one man to Federal forces, representing a net change of two. The almost 50,000 southern Union soldiers from the Trans-Mississippi represent an advantage of almost 100,000 men in the theater. Lost to

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history and eradicated from the collective southern memory, their efforts are gradually
gaining notice, from both amateur and professional historians alike. The efforts of these
southerners who offered their lives and their livelihood to oppose a southern Confederacy
offer compelling evidence of the existence, of a vital and vibrant “Other South.”

365 See Appendix.
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**APPENDIX**

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOUTHERN STATES TO THE UNION ARMY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>3) Mississippi</td>
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<td>54,137</td>
<td>3,530</td>
<td>151,209</td>
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</table>

366 Numbers are official estimates compiled by the War Department. Obviously, some white soldiers volunteered from Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, and some of the Native American troops were black. Despite the errors, the estimates are probably fairly accurate.
VITA

Christopher M. Rein was born in Panama City, Florida, and grew up near Pearl River, Louisiana. He graduated from St. Paul’s High School in Covington, Louisiana, in May 1988 and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts in June, 1992, with a B.S. in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. Upon graduation, he was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy and assigned to Naval Flight Officer training squadrons in Pensacola, Florida, and San Antonio, Texas where he earned his wings in September, 1994. His Navy assignments included duty as a Navigator with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron THREE (VQ-3) at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma and as an Assistant Professor of Naval Science with the Naval ROTC Unit, Southern University, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was during this assignment that this work was completed. In July, 2001, he completed an inter-service transfer to the U.S. Air Force and was assigned to the 16th Airborne Command and Control Squadron (16th ACCS), Robins AFB, Georgia. During this time, he was deployed three times to Southwest Asia in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, and flew 37 combat missions over Iraq and Afghanistan in the E-8C Joint STARS. He is married to the former Miss Beth Aline Daze, of Napoleonville, Louisiana, and is the proud father of three daughters, Krista, Madeleine, and Alexandra.