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Southern Apologetic Themes, as Expressed in Selected Ceremonial Speaking of Confederate Veterans, 1889-1900.

Howard Dorgan

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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VETERANS, 1889-1900.

The Louisiana State University and
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SOUTHERN APOLOGETIC THEMES, AS EXPRESSED IN SELECTED CEREMONIAL SPEAKING OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS, 1889 - 1900

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Speech

by Howard Dorgan B.A., Texas Western College, 1953 M.F.A., University of Texas at Austin, 1957 August, 1971
PLEASE NOTE:

Some Pages have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation is to examine selected ceremonial addresses delivered at convocations of Confederate veterans between 1889 and the close of 1900. Analysis is made first of the numerous apologetic rationales employed by these ex-Confederate orators, second of the apparent motivations of these speakers in advancing such rationales, and third of the effect of these rationales upon the creation of a Confederate myth. Furthermore, the study discusses the historical background to the development of a Confederate apologia, 1865-1889; examines the occasions for Confederate veteran ceremonial oratory between 1889 and the close of 1900; briefly reviews the contributions of ten representative orators; analyzes selected speeches for rationales relative to the causes of the Civil War, the character of Confederate soldiers, Confederate leaders, and Southern women, and the meanings of Confederate defeat; and, finally, draws conclusions concerning the nature and consequence of the emerging Confederate myth.

In general, this study reveals that Confederate veteran ceremonial orators, between 1889 and 1900, spoke of the true cause of the Civil War as being misunderstood. They argued that slavery had not been a meaningful issue, but that the true cause had been, first, a basic dichotomy
in constitutional interpretations and, second, an inherent
disparity in the philosophical, cultural, and religious
natures of the two sections. They further proclaimed that
Southerners had fought for principles of state sovereignty
and individual rights, and that in doing so they had upheld
the original principles of the American Founding Fathers.

Next, this study indicates that these speakers
charged the war had not been lost due to any imperfections
in Southern character, that, to the contrary, the Confeder­
ate soldier, the Confederate leader, and the Southern woman
had courageously sacrificed for the cause and that Southern
character had been vindicated by their heroic struggles.

In addition, this study reveals that these orators
proclaimed the Confederate cause not to be lost, arguing
that principles of state sovereignty and individual rights
had emerged—or were emerging—victorious. They further
asserted that the Confederate struggle had stemmed the tide
of centralism and that Northerners would eventually praise
the South for having preserved the integrity of state and
local governments. Furthermore, speakers implied that Con­
federate defeat had been divinely inspired, that the Con­
federacy had been sacrificed in order to dramatize the
correctness of its cause, thereby precipitating the eventual
victory of that cause.

Finally, this study indicates that Confederate
veteran ceremonial oratory was instrumental in promulgating
a Confederate myth, that this myth depicted the Southern people and their cause with romanticized and heroic images, that these glorified images served to re-establish regional pride, and that this rebirth of regional pride in turn served to alleviate that sectional humiliation resulting from Confederate defeat. Furthermore, the study reveals that the myth promoted an image of a totally unified people who had allegedly fought in one accord to preserve the essence of constitutional freedom and who afterwards maintained this sectional unity as a bulwark against encroachments on constitutionally guaranteed state sovereignty and individual freedom.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Numerous historians have noted the deep disturbance of mind and the general despondency into which the South was cast at the close of the Civil War. Thomas D. Clark and Albert D. Kirwan observe that "even the desolate countryside failed to tell the full story. . . . Aimless young men in gray, ragged and filthy, seemed to have lost all object in life."\(^1\) Clement Eaton describes this immediate post-bellum attitude as being a "profound mood of discouragement and pessimism,"\(^2\) and Paul H. Buck states succinctly that "the spirit of the South seemed dead in the dreary summer of 1865."\(^3\)

The low ebb in Southern spirit appears to have resulted as much from a wounding of a self-image as from the more substantive damage to property, to the economy, and to the political order. This self-image had been seriously

\(^1\) The *South Since Appomattox* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 22-23.


\(^3\) The *Road to Reunion* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), p. 34.
scarred in two major areas, (1) in the South's evaluation of herself as a region of great military capability, and (2) in the South's confidence in the rightness of her cause.

Richard M. Weaver observes that "the Southern people entered the war feeling that they had every prerequisite of a great military people." He further observed that these Southerners had viewed themselves as possessing several attributes needed for martial superiority:

"... a great tradition of victory on the battlefield, political soldiers who had proved themselves capable of being first in war and first in peace, and a population accustomed to the horse and the gun and disposed to follow tenaciously its chosen captains."

Therefore in the immediate post-bellum period the South saw her defeat through eyes of horror and disbelief. What had happened to her great military tradition? Where had been the advantages gleaned from her record in the field and in the forum? Had not the heroes of three American wars come from within her borders? Consequently, was the martial genius which had produced Washington, Jackson, and Taylor no longer a part of her regional character? Had the Confederate soldier been less of a fighting man than the South had believed he would be?

Weaver argues that in 1861 the seceding states viewed themselves as being "in the position of a professional

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5Ibid.
expecting easy defeat for an amateur," and he further observed that "one should not wonder at the shock and humiliation experienced when the amateur won." But not only had the amateur won, but his cause had emerged victorious. This circumstance was more perplexing to the South than even the military issue. How could such righteous and constitutional principles have been wrong? Had Providence been on the side of the Union? Or had this Providence purposely allowed wrong to triumph over right, having in mind some larger and yet enigmatic objective?

Efforts to provide answers to these questions were not long in coming. Former Confederate leaders seemed compelled by a passion to record the reasons why they had fought and to justify in detail their defeats. No attempt will be made to survey this veritable library of memoirs, reminiscences, political disquisitions, and literary palliatives. Such an effort would be beyond the province of this study. Nevertheless, a brief mentioning of some of the more significant works seems appropriate.

The works of Southern apology, published between 1865 and 1889, fall broadly into two major categories, (1) those which dealt primarily with the actual fighting of the war, and (2) those which dealt primarily with the issues of the conflict, the principles for which the South fought. A

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6Ibid., pp. 177-178.
representative list of volumes from this second category would include Robert Taylor Bledsoe's *Is Davis a Traitor?*; Edward Albert Pollard's classic, *The Lost Cause*; Alexander H. Stephen's two-volume work, *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States*; Jefferson Davis's *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, also in two volumes; and Bernard Sage's *The Republic of Republics*. All of these works sought to justify the Confederate cause via a particular understanding of the American Constitution. As has been demonstrated by Weaver, these writers did not always employ the same constitutional arguments; nevertheless, they were all in agreement in asserting that not only was the South legally justified in her ante-bellum stance but that she was unavoidably drawn into a defensive war against radical Northern policies.

A representative list of works from the first category should include Basil Duke's *History of Morgan's Cavalry*, Jubal Early's *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence*, Joseph E. Johnston's *Narrative of Military Operations*, Raphael Semmes's *A Memoir of Service Afloat*, and

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8 *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, pp. 116-138.
John Esten Cooke's *The Wearing of the Gray.*

Like their former civil leaders, the ex-Confederate military commanders sought to justify what had transpired during the conflict. However, they could do little with the fact that Lee had surrendered; therefore, they were forced to seek evidence of Southern military superiority either in the way that the war was fought or in the character of the Southern combatants.

In seeking this evidence they asked several questions: Had the Confederate soldiers and their commanders exhibited any marked superiorities when compared with Northern counterparts? Were there any forces at play which created undeniable advantages for the North? Was there any criterion by which the South could actually be judged as victorious or at least by which the confrontation could be rated as a standoff? The general consensus among these apologists was that all of these questions could be answered with at least a qualified affirmative. As Weaver pointed out,

it was hard for the ex-Confederate to understand why he, who had fought in almost every battle against odds and who had routed superior numbers on more than one field,

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should be demoted to the position of failure by the mere technicality of surrender. 10

Something should now be said about the general spirit in which these works were written. The South's immediate post-bellum mood of stunned disbelief and despondency changed sharply as the region moved into the Reconstruction era. A North that could not forget Andersonville and a South which still viewed the ruins left by Sherman found few grounds for amenities, and the bitterness which lay between the two sections created a highly emotional environment for the writing of an apologia. The Southern states certainly were afflicted with their share of this mood of acrimoniousness. Merton Coulter has noted that during these years "the South was not supinely cringing in the dust of shattered hopes. It was still manly and could hate lustily." 11 Eaton also made frequent reference to the widespread bitterness in the South, 12 and Buck remarked that "wounds remained unhealed festering their poison of unforgiveness." 13

10 The Southern Tradition at Bay, p. 179.
12 The Waning of the Old South Civilization, pp. 114-120, passim.
13 The Road to Reunion, p. 48.
This first wave of Southern apologists did not escape this environment of bitterness. Buck has charged that "it was impossible for moderation to flourish in such an atmosphere. The man of vindictive bias and recriminating taste commanded more than normal influence."\textsuperscript{14} Weaver also noted this tendency towards acrimony and recrimination, but seemed to place much of the responsibility for this "bitter accusatory tone" upon Bledsoe and his editorship of the \textit{Southern Review}. The \textit{Review} had been first published in January, 1867, and its pages, according to Weaver, soon demonstrated the marked rise in acerbity.\textsuperscript{15}

The point being made here is a simple one: the first chapter of the Southern apologia was written in an environment of profound regional bitterness. As a result, it mirrored and perhaps inflamed this bitterness. Consequently, there is little evidence in the works of this initial wave of apologists that the South was seeking economic, political, or ideological reconciliation with her recent foe. It is in this characteristic that the second chapter of the apologia sharply differs from the first.

In one sense it is perhaps a misnomer to call men such as L. Q. C. Lamar, Henry Grady, Atticus Haygood, and Henry Watterson apologists. They usually are designated as

\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{Road to Reunion}, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{15} The \textit{Southern Tradition at Bay}, p. 136.
reconciliationists, and this latter title seems particularly appropriate when only certain addresses are considered, Lamar's "Eulogy on Charles Sumner," Grady's "The New South," Haygood's "The New South, A Thanksgiving Sermon," and Watterson's "The New South." Nevertheless, regardless of whether one chooses to label them as apologists or not, the important thing to note is that a new defense for the South began to be employed. New virtues were emphasized, and a revised Southern image was promoted. These orators praised the ex-Confederate for his quickness in adjusting to the new order, for his industry in rebuilding, for his acceptance of abolition, for his renewed dedication to the Union, for his special virtues of Christian character, and for his love of constitutional freedoms. In fact, there were several characteristics of this new breed of apologists which placed them in sharp contrast to men such as Bledsoe, Pollard, and Cooke. For example, the scathing attacks upon Northern character were now passe. Confederate virtues were still praised, but quite frequently "Yankee" virtues were also lauded. In addition, these new apologists devoted little of

their energy to a reamplification of that old issue, the constitutional rightness of secession. Instead, they simply glorified the ex-Confederate for sacrificing for a cause he believed to be right.

This second chapter of the Southern apologia was written, therefore, by men who wanted to escape much of the ugliness of extreme sectionalism. There was, of course, a reason for their spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation: the New South apologists wanted to attract Northern capital into the region, and they wanted to rebuild the South's political fortune. However, their enthusiastic efforts to achieve this new spirit of unification generated a rhetoric which C. Vann Woodward has called the "Great Recantation."\textsuperscript{17} Woodward was referring to some of the more extreme declarations of renewed national loyalty. For example, the Louisville \textit{Courier-Journal}, Watterson's paper, went so far as to state:

\begin{quote}
The "Bonny blue flag" is the symbol of nothing to the present generation of Southern men. . . . The Southern Confederacy went down fifteen years ago. Its issues and ensigns went down with it.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Woodward noted that the idea expressed by this quotation would have been "well-nigh unthinkable" ten years later.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Origins of the New South}, p. 155.
The newspaper editorial was published September 7, 1880. Ten years later the third chapter of the apologia was being written. On July 3, 1890, the United Confederate Veterans held their first annual reunion.

THE SUBJECT OF THE STUDY

During the last decade of the nineteenth century the writing and promotion of a Southern apologia received additional impetus from the ceremonial oratory of Confederate veterans, and the point of origin of this new stimulus might be set at June 10, 1889, the day that the United Confederate Veterans' Association was founded. Until this date no successful effort had been made to coordinate the workings of the various restricted societies of old Confederate soldiers. One of the purposes of the U.C.V. was to bring together under one organizational roof all of the veterans of the Lost Cause who wished "to cherish the ties of friendship that should exist among men who had shared common dangers, common sufferings and privations." Therefore, the organization would, according to Article 1 of its constitution, "endeavor to unite in a general federation all associations of Confederate veterans, Soldiers and Sailors,

now in existence or hereafter to be formed."\(^{21}\)

There were numerous functioning veterans' associations in the South prior to June 10, 1889. A representative list of some of the local and state groups active at this time would include such societies as the Confederate Survivors' Association of Augusta, Georgia; the Tennessee Association of Confederate Soldiers; the Survivors' Association of South Carolina, the Chaplains' Association of Jackson's Corps; the Association of the Survivors of the Confederate Surgeons of South Carolina; the Veteran Confederate States Cavalry Association; and the several state divisions of both the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee.\(^{22}\) Nevertheless, these restricted Confederate groups fell far short of encompassing all the "old Vets" within their collective membership. Therefore, when the U.C.V. was organized the opportunities for involvement in veterans' activities were considerably expanded. Under the leadership of John B. Gordon, whom C. Vann Woodward describes as the "living embodiment of the [Confederate]

\(^{21}\)Ibid.

\(^{22}\)A few published proceedings of these associations may be found among the papers of the Louisiana Historical Association, Tulane University Library, Special Collections Division, New Orleans, Louisiana. In addition, some proceedings were published in Southern Historical Society papers. For additional information concerning activities prior to 1889 see William W. White, *The Confederate Veteran*, Confederate Centennial Studies, Number 22 (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 9-26.
legend, the U.C.V. achieved a rapid and phenomenal growth during the 1890's, and, as a result, much of the increase in Confederate veteran rhetoric may be attributed to this organization.

Nevertheless, all of the oratory delivered by Confederate veterans between 1889 and the close of 1900 was not necessarily associated with the functions of U.C.V. and its affiliate groups. For example, this study examines numerous addresses which were part of the ceremonies for the unveiling of monuments, for Memorial Day services, or for the dedication of battlegrounds. Frequently a U.C.V. affiliate group would sponsor such events, but perhaps just as frequently the ceremonies were organized by women. These ladies formed themselves into Confederate memorial societies and engaged in such activities as the annual decoration of graves, the preservation of relics, the raising of monuments, and the general glorification of the Lost Cause. Female-sponsored events, however, were widely attended by veterans, and the orators for the occasions were inevitably chosen from the ranks of former Confederate chieftains.

During the 1890's opportunities for Confederate veteran ceremonial oratory were numerous. No proud Southern community could maintain its self-respect without a marble, granite, or bronze symbol of the Lost Cause and of the

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"martyred" sons of the South. No cemetery which had already been honored by the presence of Confederate dead could remain unconsecrated and uncrowned by its own special dedicatory structure. Such neglect would have relegated the spot to the plebian status of being an ordinary cemetery where martyrs did not sleep. By the same rationale, no small battleground, already made holy by its immersion in Confederate blood, could be allowed to slip back into the unhallowed sameness of ordinary ground. Nature was seldom allowed to reclaim completely these spots into the normal fabric of a landscape. A marker, humble or majestic, was usually raised to insure perpetuity of reference. Finally, no proud Confederate military unit could ignore the compelling bonds of camaraderie and fail to stage a reunion. Therefore, when these reunions were held, when the markers were raised, when the cemeteries were consecrated, the monuments unveiled, the resulting ceremonial events became the occasions for oratory.

Confederate veterans who delivered these speeches usually took advantage of the occasions to express views on (1) the causes of the war, (2) the character of the Confederate soldier, the Confederate leader, and the Southern woman, and (3) the meanings of the South's defeat. Therefore, these addresses, including those delivered to reunions of U.C.V. and its affiliate groups, comprise a sizable body of apologetic rhetoric.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study will examine selected ceremonial addresses delivered at various convocations of Confederate veterans between 1889 and the close of 1900. The main objective of this investigation will be to determine what prominent themes and rationales were used by these speakers and to analyze why these themes and rationales were employed. How, for instance, did these orators explain the war in terms of its beginning, its prosecution, and its outcome? How did they, if at all, use this ceremonial oratory to reassert Confederate principles and to rebuild regional pride? Did this rhetoric create or foster any regional myths? Furthermore, the C. Vann Woodward statement quoted earlier implied that a basic change occurred in the mood of the South between the 1880's and the 1890's, that there was a shift away from recantation and toward a reaffirmation of Lost Cause principles. Was such a shift demonstrated in this body of rhetoric? If so, what was the motivation for this shift? These are the questions which the following study will attempt to answer.

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The year 1889 has been chosen as the bottom time-limitation for this study because, as has been previously mentioned, this was the year the United Confederate
Veterans' Association was organized. In addition, the late 1880's marked the beginning of the greatest period of growth in Confederate veteran activities. The annual reunions of U.C.V. attracted attention from all corners of the South and provided platforms for many orators: J. L. M. Curry, Senator John W. Daniel, General John B. Gordon, Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer, John H. Reagan, Senator William B. Bate, and others. Furthermore, and perhaps more important, local activities directed toward the memorialization of the Confederate cause also proliferated, in number and in enthusiasm.

After 1900 the activities of the U.C.V. did continue, and it was not until 1941 that this organization held its final annual reunion. Nevertheless, the nature of the accompanying rhetoric began to change as the veterans moved further into the twentieth century. The original Confederate leaders were quickly disappearing from the scene. Those who were left were growing old, and few of them remained after 1905. The secessionist minister-orator Benjamin Morgan Palmer died in 1902; J. L. M. Curry, former member of the Confederate Congress, died in 1903; General John B. Gordon, patriarch of the U.C.V., died in 1904; and John H. Reagan, the last surviving member of the Davis cabinet, died in 1905. As these men moved from the U.C.V. platforms their places were usually taken by younger veterans or by sons of veterans. As a result, the orators after 1900 were less and
less likely to have been in positions of influence either during the war or during those thirty-five years from 1865 to 1900 when the South struggled to rebuild an economy, an ideology, and a regional spirit.

Additional limitations have been placed upon the study. First, attention has been given to only those speeches which treat one or more of the following themes: (1) the causes of the war, (2) the character of the Confederate soldier, the Confederate leader, and the Southern woman, and (3) the meanings of the South's defeat. This limitation has, for example, excluded those addresses which served primarily to review the history of the war itself or the history of individual battles and military units. Second, an attempt has been made to select orations representative of the entire South, of the varied ceremonial occasions, and of the major ideological points of view. However, it should be emphasized that the major limitation on this study has been that the occasional addresses which are examined are those which were delivered by Confederate veterans before audiences comprised, to a significant degree, of other Confederate veterans. Exceptions to this limitation have been made only in the case of two non-veteran orators, Benjamin Morgan Palmer and John H. Reagan, both of whom were invited to deliver major addresses before reunions of the U.C.V. or its state divisions.
SOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORY STUDIES

Ceremonial addresses delivered by Confederate veterans between 1889 and the close of 1900 may be found in several sources. Perhaps the most important of these sources is the published proceedings of meetings, special services, and reunions. Numerous such proceedings have been used in the course of this study. For example, beginning with its organizational meeting in 1889, the U.C.V. published not only the minutes of its reunions but also all or its official orders. In addition, some of the state divisions of U.C.V., notably Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee, printed in pamphlet form the minutes of their annual reunions. Furthermore, many of the various survivors' associations also published their minutes. Some of these miscellaneous groups have already been mentioned. Moreover, the proceedings of women's Confederate memorial societies have occasionally provided addresses for study. Two such sources will be given here for examples: (1) in 1898 the Ladies' Memorial Society of Columbus, Georgia, published in pamphlet form "A History of the Origin of

24 Minutes of the U.C.V., 6 vols. (New Orleans, Louisiana: Published by the Association); and Orders of U.C.V., 2 vols. (New Orleans, Louisiana: Published by the Association).

25 See p. 11 of this study.
Memorial Day" and included in this publication the proceedings of one of their Memorial Day services and the oration of the day; 26 (2) earlier, in 1896, the ladies of the Confederate Memorial Society of Richmond, Virginia, published In Memoriam Sempiternam, 27 a volume which included the dedication ceremonies for a Confederate museum in Richmond. The work also included the address delivered for the occasion.

A second major source of oratory which has been of interest to this study is the periodical, Confederate Veteran, 28 a monthly magazine which began publication in 1893 and which soon became the unofficial organ of all Confederate veteran groups. Its editor welcomed the inclusion of oratory, and many addresses delivered at the various ceremonial events were printed in the periodical. The pages of Confederate Veteran also have provided numerous descriptions of the ceremonial events, since readers were encouraged to report the activities of local associations.

26 "A History of the Origin of Memorial Day" (Columbus, Georgia: Published by the Ladies' Memorial Association, 1898).


28 During this study examination has been made of Confederate veteran oratory published in Vols. I-VIII of this periodical.
Ceremonial addresses delivered by Confederate veterans frequently were published in *Southern Historical Society Papers*. For example, the following list is a sample of the various veterans' associations and memorial societies whose events were occasionally reported in this source: Memorial Association of Fairfax County, Virginia; Survivors of Company D, First Regiment, Virginia Cavalry; The Ladies' Memorial Society, Raleigh, North Carolina; The Ladies' Memorial Association, Montgomery, Alabama; and the Survivors of the Second Rockridge Dragoons of Company H, Fourteenth Virginia Regiment. Some of these ceremonial events were described in detail, including observations relating to the nature of the audience and to the audience's reactions.

During this study Confederate veteran oratory has also been uncovered in special collections in the archives of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and Tulane University, New Orleans. The papers of the United Confederate Veterans' Association are housed at Louisiana State University. The Tulane University archives have become the depository for the Louisiana Historical Association Collection, a valuable source of printed minutes of various Confederate veteran associations.

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29 Examination has been made of Confederate veteran oratory published in Vols. XVII-XXVIII.
Newspapers have constituted the only other major primary source utilized in this study. Heavy use has been made of press accounts of the annual reunions of U.C.V., and some use has also been made of newspaper coverage of those events which were of more local interest. 30

There have been no studies within the discipline of rhetoric and public address which have treated the oratory of Confederate veterans; however, several works in the field of Southern history have dealt briefly with the veteran and his activities. Eaton, 31 Cash, 32 Woodward, 33 Coulter, 34 and Odum 35 have all touched on some aspects of the Confederate-veteran mind, but Weaver, 36 Buck, 37 and White 38 have been

30 Newspapers used in the study are: The Daily Picayune (New Orleans), The Times-Democrat (New Orleans), The Richmond Dispatch, The Times (Richmond), The Daily Times (Chattanooga), The Daily News (Birmingham), The Atlanta Constitution, News and Courier (Charleston), Daily Post (Houston), and The Nashville Banner.

31 The Waning of the Old South Civilization, pp. 113-115, 166-168.
32 The Mind of the South, pp. 124-125, 130.
34 The South During Reconstruction, pp. 177-180.
36 The Southern Tradition at Bay, pp. 177-230.
37 The Road to Reunion, pp. 236-262.
the most valuable because of the extensiveness of their treatments. Neither of these critics, however, dealt pointedly with the oratory of these ex-Confederates. Therefore, a justification appeared to exist for a more specialized and complete study of this oratory.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SPEECH TEXTS

No evidence exists to establish the complete authenticity of the speech texts which have been used in this study. Although many of these texts have been obtained from official minutes or proceedings, no guarantee can be provided that these texts represent, with total verity, the words which were delivered. In addition, some of the orations recorded in Confederate Veteran provide the researcher with no clear indication of who reported them. In other words, were they submitted to the Veteran by the orators themselves, or were they reported by members of the magazine's staff?

Nevertheless, it should be noted that this study is not directed toward a detailed analysis of the style employed by any of the speakers. Instead the study analyzes the thematic content of the addresses. It is not likely that this thematic content could be substantially altered by minor variations in grammar and word choice. Therefore, it appears that the texts are sufficiently authentic for the purpose of this study.
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This dissertation is composed of seven chapters. In Chapter One an attempt has been made to introduce the study in terms of the historical background, the subject of the study, the problem, the limitations of the study, the sources, and the plan.

Chapter Two treats the occasions for Confederate veteran oratory, and in doing so discusses characteristics of such representative events as reunions, dedications, and Memorial Day services.

Chapter Three then deals specifically with Confederate veteran orators. No attempt is made to discuss all of these speakers. Instead, only a few are treated, the choices being made on the basis of prominence or representativeness.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six concentrate on rhetorical analysis. Each of these chapters analyzes what the Confederate veteran speakers had to say in reference to a specific theme. Theme number one is "The Causes of the War"; theme number two is "The Character of the Confederate Soldier, the Confederate Leader, and the Southern Woman"; and theme number three is "The Meanings of Defeat." Chapter Seven develops the conclusions of the study.
Chapter 2

THE OCCASIONS

The occasions for Confederate veteran ceremonial oratory delivered between 1889 and the close of 1900 may be broadly classified into two major categories: (1) the reunions and regular meetings of Confederate veteran associations, and (2) the ceremonies for memorial and dedicatory services. This chapter begins by treating the first of these categories.

In the following pages much emphasis is placed upon the activities of U.C.V. reunions, and an examination is made of the phenomenal growth and development of these annual encampments. The purpose of this examination is twofold: (1) to gain an understanding of the significance of the oratory involved, and (2) to gain an understanding of the emotional and psychological environment which surrounded these occasions.

THE ORIGIN, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT OF U.C.V. REUNIONS

Confederate veterans were slow to form themselves into a region-wide association representing all of the old "rebels." Twenty-four years elapsed before the South produced a counterpart to the Grand Army of the Republic. Buck
speculated that this lateness was due, in part, to Northern hostility which usually confronted the formation of "rebel societies." However, he also suggested that the Southern veteran, humiliated by defeat, was inclined "to withdraw from public gaze." Therefore, it took time for this veteran to re-emerge with a recharged self-confidence and pride in being an ex-Confederate. He needed to reassess humiliating defeats, turning them eventually into individual and regional triumphs.

The idea for the United Confederate Veterans' Association apparently was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, sometime in early 1889. A committee representing the Louisiana Division of the Army of Northern Virginia, the Louisiana Division of the Army of Tennessee, and the Veteran Confederate States' Cavalry Association distributed a circular letter to Confederate veteran societies, calling an organizational meeting for June 10, 1889. On that date sixty veterans, delegates from ten organizations, met in New Orleans to adopt a constitution and to extend an invitation to John B. Gordon, then serving as governor of

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2 There has been some disagreement concerning the origin of this idea. See Confederate Veteran, XII (September, 1904), 425.

Georgia, to become their first Commander in Chief. Gordon accepted, and a little over a year later, July 3, 1890, the newly formed association held its first annual reunion.

Chattanooga, Tennessee, was the site of this first reunion, and much of what occurred in this city became, on a small scale, the model for the convocations which were to follow. The festivities included a parade, a visit to a battleground, an entertainment which dramatized a famous battle of the war, a special edition of the city's newspaper, devoting numerous pages to biographical sketches of ex-Confederate leaders, much display of bunting, and an equally bountiful display of regional eloquence.

Nevertheless, this first reunion was very small in comparison to those yet to come. Just nineteen camps sent delegations, and the total number reached only sixty-five. In addition, the festivities and ceremonies attracted a scanty 4,000 visitors, and only an estimated 80,000 spectators viewed the parade. Finally, the official business of the convention occupied less than a day.

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4 This figure includes the N. B. Forrest Camp which was the host camp. See "Minutes of the First Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," pp. 6-7.

5 No official count was given, but in the minutes only sixty-five names appear as delegates or officers.

6 Daily Picayune (New Orleans), July 5, 1890, p. 1.

7 Chattanooga Daily Times, July 5, 1890, p. 5.
For contrast, all of the above may be compared with what transpired six years later at the Richmond reunion. Here, in the capital of the Confederacy, some 150,000 spectators viewed the veterans as they marched, and the entertainments attracted an estimated 65,000 visitors to the city, among whom there were over 10,000 veterans. In addition, there were delegations from 850 camps, and the official activities were extended to cover three days, with unofficial activities occurring for several days before and after the reunion.

These comparisons between the Chattanoogan and Richmond reunions imply, however, that expansion of the association and its activities occurred more rapidly than was actually the case. In truth, the growth of U.C.V. during the first two years of its existence was not nearly so phenomenal as it was later to become. For example, by the time that the 1891 reunion opened in Jackson, Mississippi, no new camps had been added to the roster, and those already organized were located predominantly in the state of

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8Richmond Dispatch, July 3, 1896, p. 2.
9Richmond Times, July 3, 1896, p. 11.
10"Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 3.
11One such unofficial event was the laying of the cornerstone for the Jefferson Davis monument which occurred the day after the reunion closed and which encouraged many veterans to remain in the city one more day.
Louisiana. In addition, of the nineteen camps which had sent delegations to Chattanooga, only fourteen answered roll call at Jackson. Twelve of these were from Louisiana. Tennessee and Alabama were represented by one camp each. 12

Nevertheless, during the opening session at Jackson thirteen new camps were admitted to the association, thereby bringing the total number at that time to thirty-two, four of which did not have delegations present. Then, although the official minutes make no mention of when they were added, there were four more groups which apparently affiliated during this second reunion. Their names appear on the official roster included in the 1891 minutes. 13

The establishment of only thirty-six camps in two years can hardly be described as phenomenal growth, and it would be difficult to find in these figures indication that the U.C.V. was sweeping the South. Nevertheless, during the next year very measurable expansion began to occur. The activities of Gordon in promoting the association apparently increased, 14 and by the 1892 reunion the list of camps had

12 "Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 3.
13 Ibid., p. 1.
14 Between June 10, 1889, and June 2, 1891, Gordon issued only fifteen general or special orders, and only seven of these may be found in official documents of the association. During the next year he issued a total of forty orders, most of these relating to the affiliation of new Camps and to his appointment of Division Commanders and other officers.
grown to 188. Spurred on by the organizational abilities of General W. L. Cabell, Texas had now become a center of activity with seventy-eight camps affiliated. Louisiana followed with twenty-three camps, Florida with nineteen, Mississippi with eighteen, Tennessee with fifteen, and Kentucky with thirteen. The remainder of the 188 camps were spread over eleven additional states and territories, including the District of Columbia.

The 1892 reunion, held in New Orleans, marks the beginning of the association's rise to bigness. At this third annual encampment the Committee on Credentials reported an attendance of only 557 voting delegates, but the total number of visiting veterans allegedly numbered into the thousands. In fact, the *Times-Democrat* described this total influx of old veterans as being in the "thousands upon thousands." This same newspaper noted that the Trans-Mississippi Department alone supplied the city with over 10,000 veterans and other visitors. One railway line, the Texas and Pacific, deposited over 6,000 passengers in the

15 Gordon had appointed Cabell as Commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. One of Cabell's responsibilities was to promote the association in Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and the Indian Territory.

16 "Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V." See "Lists of Camps."

17 *Times-Democrat* (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.

18 *Times-Democrat* (New Orleans), April 8, 1892, p. 1.
city in one day. Special trains were frequent on the day before the reunion opened, and the Southern Pacific and the Illinois Central also unloaded thousands of passengers.\(^19\)

On April 9, 1892, the city of New Orleans was described as being in a state of siege with the streets utterly swarming with old veterans. An enthusiastic reporter painted the following picture of the emotional environment which ensued:

The strains of martial music are heard resounding on all sides. The war whoop of the dashing cavalryman, the thrilling shout of the legions of the gray, the hoarse harrah of the men who once plowed their way amid shot and shell, through solid phalanxes of bayonets and sabres, are heard thundering in the air . . ., as stirring in their intensity and enthusiasm as in the grand old days of '61-65.\(^20\)

Official events covered two days, April 8-9, and two new features were added which are of importance to this study. First, oratory was given a more significant role in the proceedings. Senator John W. Daniel of Virginia was invited as the featured orator, and his address was scheduled in the French Opera House, a structure which could accommodate the delegates plus a considerable number of the non-veteran public. During the two previous encampments the oratory directly connected with the official proceedings had consisted only of the speeches of welcome, the responses,

\(^{19}\)Ibid.

\(^{20}\)Times-Democrat (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.
and the miscellaneous addresses in support of resolutions. This is not to say that there had been no major speaking at Chattanooga and Jackson, but rather that the main oratorical events at these encampments were only peripheral to the U.C.V. proceedings. For example, the big oratorical event at the Chattanooga reunion had been an address by Dr. O. C. Kelly on the "Life and Character of General Nathan Bedford Forrest," part of ceremonies sponsored by the Forrest Memorial Association of that city. Then at Jackson the main oratorical attraction had been a speech by Senator Edward Cary Walthall at the unveiling of a Confederate monument. Neither occasion was officially part of the U.C.V. reunion in question. In contrast, the New Orleans reunion established precedence by including a major oration in these proceedings and by arranging for an expanded public attendance. Most of the ensuing convocations would follow this precedence, with some of them having more than one major orator.

The second feature added to the New Orleans reunion was one primarily of a social nature. This was the practice of having sponsors. These young ladies, frequently of high social prominence and often daughters or granddaughters of U.C.V. officers, were chosen by the various state and territorial divisions to be their representatives in many ceremonial and social functions. During official sessions the sponsors were placed in prominent positions on the stage or
in boxes near the platform. In addition, they were often involved in dramatic recitations and musical presentations. Occasionally a night was set aside especially for these entertainments, and the program—usually under the direction of the ladies of the Reunion Committee—would be comprised of elocution, tableaux, musical events, and oratory.  

One important consequence of this second new feature was that the Southern woman moved more positively into the official proceedings of U.C.V. reunions. Women had always played a significant and perhaps controlling role in other Lost Cause activities such as Memorial Day ceremonies, but up to this time their involvement in U.C.V. activities had been minimal. Henceforth, women would be present at all U.C.V. convocations. C. Vann Woodward has charged that it was only "when the movement was taken into custody by Southern Womanhood . . . [that] the cult of the Lost Cause assumed a religious character."  

A break occurred in the chain of annual reunions after the New Orleans encampment. Birmingham had been

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21 An interesting description of one of these programs is provided in Confederate Veteran, II (May, 1894), 131.


selected as the site of the fourth encampment, and the
dates had been set for July 19-20, 1893. However, on May
8, 1893, Major General John C. Underwood, a resident of
Chicago and Commander of the Division of the Northwest,
circulated a letter to all camps announcing that arrange­
ments had been made for those veterans attending the
Birmingham reunion to proceed, at greatly reduced railroad
rates, to Chicago. Here they would attend the Chicago World
Fair and ceremonies for the unveiling of the first Confeder­
ate monument in the North. During the round trip they would
also visit several battlefields and the Confederate cemetery
on Johnson's Island. The entire ten-day excursion to
Chicago was anticipated to cost each veteran only twenty or
thirty dollars, and therefore Gordon had fully endorsed the
idea, being eager to insure a large representation at the
Chicago monument unveiling.  

However, work on the monument progressed slowly, and
this factor, combined with other problems which arose,  
produced a postponement. The dates for the Birmingham

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24 See John C. Underwood, a circular letter distrib­
uted to all camps of U.C.V., May 8, 1893; and "General

25 One of the perennial problems related to the dif­
ficulty of setting dates for the reunions was that most of
the veterans were farmers and the dates had to be set such
that neither harvesting nor planting were disturbed. This
became almost impossible since seasons varied sharply be­
tween Virginia and Texas.
reunion were now set as the 15th and 16th of September, 1893. But no sooner had these new dates been established than demands arose for a third postponement, and the reunion was rescheduled for the 2nd and 3rd of October. Finally Gordon was forced to cancel all plans for an encampment during 1893, and the Birmingham reunion did not take place until April 25-26, 1894.

Nevertheless, this series of postponements did not deter the rapid proliferation of U.C.V. units. On July 1, 1893, General Gordon announced that three hundred camps had been enrolled in the association and that nearly one hundred more were applying for affiliation. Then on April 14, 1894, eleven days before the fourth reunion opened, Gordon released the news that five hundred camps had been organized. Two years without a reunion had not stifled the desire of ex-Confederates to join ranks with their old comrades.


27 Confederate Veteran, I (August, 1893), 227.


When the Birmingham reunion finally did convene it was hailed as "the greatest success of any gathering of the South's heroes since the war."\(^{31}\) Certainly it was the largest of the U.C.V. convocations to that date. The city prepared for an influx of 60,000 visitors\(^{32}\) and built a convention hall especially for the occasion. This new hall would seat 10,000 spectators and was named the Winnie Davis Wigwam in honor of the younger daughter of Jefferson Davis.\(^{33}\) An estimated 8,000 old veterans marched in the parade,\(^{34}\) and, according to the Birmingham Daily News, the convention sessions were attended by the largest number of spectators in the history of the association. The same paper also noted that "the average number of delegates at each session was 5,000 to 6,000."\(^{35}\)

Apparently the old veterans felt that these reunions were giving them their long-deserved recognition, for they formed themselves into U.C.V. camps in ever-increasing numbers. As the organization approached its fifth annual reunion, Gordon proudly announced: 

\(^{31}\)Birmingham Daily News, April 26, 1894, p. 3.

\(^{32}\)Birmingham Sunday News, April 15, 1894, p. 1.

\(^{33}\)Birmingham Daily News, April 15, 1894, p. 1.

\(^{34}\)Birmingham Daily News, April 27, 1894, p. 3.

\(^{35}\)Ibid.
reached in the enrollment of camps in our noble federa-
tion."  

This fifth reunion was held in Houston. The Texas weather was uncooperative. It rained throughout the conven-
tion, but the Daily Post still claimed the meeting to be the "most notable of the five great encampments," and further observed that "the crowd has been beyond any question the largest seen at any event in Texas." Again the host city constructed a new auditorium, and the veterans in attendance at the sessions were usually estimated at 5,000, with another 1,000 non-veterans present.  

The organization was now experiencing its most rapid growth. In its first six years it had enrolled 600 camps. This, perhaps, is impressive in itself, but in the next two years this rate would double. On August 24, 1895, Gordon informed the veterans that the association now included 700 camps, and by April, 1896, this count had grown to 800. Gordon addressed an order of the camp and division commanders

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37 Houston Daily Post, May 24, 1895, p. 2.

38 Houston Daily Post, May 24, 1895, p. 3; and May 26, 1895, p. 2.


congratulating them for this rapid expansion and expressing his confidence "that the number . . . [would] easily reach 1000 by the date of the Richmond reunion . . . if the Division commanders . . . [would] actively push the organization of camps in their respective divisions." This goal was not obtained as soon as Gordon had hoped, but by the sixth annual reunion the association had achieved a membership of 851 camps.

Reference has already been made to this sixth reunion. It was staged in Richmond, and the old ex-Confederates were eager to visit the city which had been their capital. The crowds for the convocation surprised even those who had previously offered optimistic predictions regarding attendance. One indication of the size of this reunion crowd, and of the problems thus engendered, can be seen in the situation which resulted concerning accommodations. For both the New Orleans and the Houston reunions the practice had been to provide free lodging and meals for those indigent veterans who otherwise might not have been able to attend. Such a service was established for the Richmond meeting, and plans were made to accommodate 5,000.

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41 Ibid.


43 Richmond Dispatch, July 1, 1896, p. 10.
However, the demand for free lodging far exceeded the supply. Over 7,000 requests were made for this service the first day of the encampment, and while a reunion committee was hurriedly trying to find additional quarters hundreds of the veterans bivouacked in the park at Capitol Square. The Richmond Dispatch even noted that "Not only did veterans sleep in the park . . . but also many visitors." In addition, the paper observed that Capitol Square was not the only place where open-air lodging was sought: "In all the parks, on roofs, or doorsteps, in yards, and even in the streets were sleepers."\textsuperscript{44}

Richmond did not build a new convention hall for the veterans, but she remodeled and greatly enlarged an existing structure. The Music Hall on the Exposition grounds was expanded to accommodate an audience of 10,250.\textsuperscript{45} The stage itself was designed to seat 300,\textsuperscript{46} and according to the Richmond Dispatch, the hall was "far larger than that in which the veterans met in Houston." The same Dispatch article added that the acoustics were so good that "not more than twice . . . [during the opening session] did anyone have to yell out to the speaker, 'Louder.'"\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44}Richmond Dispatch, July 1, 1896, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{45}Richmond Dispatch, June 30, 1896, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{46}Richmond Times, June 30, 1896, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{47}Richmond Dispatch, July 1, 1896, p. 1.
The official and unofficial activities of a U.C.V. reunion were now covering about a week's time. The Richmond convocation held its opening session June 30, 1896, but many veterans had arrived in the city several days before. One way in which these early arrivals occupied their time was to hold smaller reunions. By now it had become the custom for local, divisional, or regimental associations to stage their annual meetings at the same time that the U.C.V. encampment was being held. Such a practice had obvious advantages in economy of time and ease of scheduling.

Advantages in scheduling also partly accounted for events being added at the close of reunions. The Richmond conveners, for example, were given the opportunity to witness the laying of a cornerstone to a monument to Jefferson Davis. The event took place on July 2nd after the close of the official U.C.V. proceedings, and the annual parade was arranged so that the veterans marched to Monroe Park where this ceremony was held. In fact, one of the agreements by which Richmond obtained this reunion was that the cornerstone for the Davis memorial would be laid at the same time. Altogether, the 1896 program covered six days, and some form of ceremonial oratory was a part of each day's activities.

48 Richmond Dispatch, June 30, 1896, p. 2.

49 Richmond Dispatch, July 3, 1896, p. 10.
During the next year the U.C.V. continued its extraordinary growth, and on June 9, 1897, Gordon issued the following statement: "With pride the General Commanding announces that one thousand camps have been registered in the United Confederate Veteran Association, with applications in for over one hundred more." 50 Thirteen days later, when the seventh reunion convened in Nashville, Tennessee, it was announced that this number had grown to 1,031. 51

Five days before this seventh reunion opened the Nashville Banner predicted that the city would host ten to fifteen thousand ex-Confederates. 52 The prediction was not an extravagant one. Attracted by the color and excitement of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition and by the abundant publicity which Confederate Veteran gave this encampment, 53 the old soldiers poured into the city by the thousands. Reunion headquarters had initially printed 12,000 identification badges. These were given out the first day, and 4,000 more were printed. The Banner noted that 3,000 were distributed the second day and estimated that at least 1,000


52 Nashville Banner, June 17, 1897, p. 1.

53 Confederate Veteran was published in Nashville, and the editorial enthusiasm for the Nashville reunion was obvious.
veterans did not bother to secure badges. Therefore, the attendance was assumed to be between fifteen and sixteen thousand. When the non-veteran visitors were considered, it was then estimated that 56,000 to 70,000 persons attended the encampment. With a degree of understatement the *Banner* observed that "these reunions are big things," and further remarked that "Nashville feels proud to have captured this one." 

At this point perhaps it would be appropriate to examine the complete program of the Nashville reunion, using it as an example of the extent to which these convocations had grown as occasions for oratory. First, the veterans were convened on June 22, 1897, in the Gospel Tabernacle, a structure which could accommodate 7,000 people. There was one aspect of this opening session which was atypical: Gordon was late. He had been wired in error that the first meeting would be called to order two hours later than the hour which had actually been set. By the time that Gordon arrived most of the audience had been in the hall for almost three hours. Nevertheless, this overflow crowd had completely enjoyed the moments of delay, occupying themselves by cheering the First Regimental Band's frequent renditions

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54 *Nashville Banner*, June 23, 1897, p. 8.
55 *Nashville Banner*, June 19, 1897, p. 1.
56 *Confederate Veteran*, V (June, 1897), 243.
of "Dixie," by singing Confederate war songs, and by gustily voicing rebel yell after rebel yell. In addition, the veterans freely granted ovations to virtually every ex-Confederate leader who entered the hall, the most volcanic ovation being reserved for General Joseph Wheeler.\footnote{57} When Gordon finally arrived, sometime after 11:30 A.M., he called the first session to order by requesting that the seven thousand or more voices join in the singing of the "Doxology." The Chaplain General, Rev. J. William Jones, then delivered the invocation, beginning the prayer with what became his traditional opening petition:

> God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. God of the centuries, God of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Jefferson Davis, Sidney Johnston, Robert Edward Lee, and Stonewall Jackson—our God—we bring Thee, as we gather in our annual reunion, the homage of humble, grateful hearts. \footnote{58}

At the close of this invocation the main oratorical segment of the reunion began. Gordon first introduced the governor of Tennessee, Robert Love Taylor, who spoke for the state. He was followed by Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who had been commissioned to speak for the city. The third welcome was voiced by Judge John G. Ferriss who represented Davis County, and finally Colonel J. B. O'Bryan, Chairman of the Reunion Committee, expressed sentiments in behalf of the local


\footnote{58}"Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 15.
committees who had organized the reunion activities. Following this oratory of hospitality, Gordon responded in kind for the association, lavishing praise upon the state of Tennessee for her part in that struggle for the Confederacy.  

After his response Gordon then gave the floor to Colonel A. S. Colyar, the dignitary who had been appointed to introduce the main orator of the sixth annual encampment, John H. Reagan, whose address consumed the remainder of the opening session. Gordon then adjourned the meeting until 9:00 A.M., June 23. The afternoon and evening were devoted to smaller convocations and to the numerous social events.

With one exception, the morning session of the second day provided little opportunity for speaking. Officer and committee reports were heard, with the main emphasis being placed upon the statement by the Historical Committee. The exception arose when it came time to elect officers for the ensuing year. On this occasion Gordon attempted to step down from his post as Commanding General. His intended speech of resignation and the dramatic scene which followed were high points in this convocation. The veterans let it be known that they would accept no other person as their commander as long as Gordon was physically able to hold the post. In fact, it was only after much difficulty that

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59 Ibid., pp. 16-25.
Gordon was even allowed to deliver his would-be speech of resignation, and then he did so only to have it completely rejected by the veterans. He was immediately renominated and elected unanimously.  

After a report by the Committee on Credentials which noted that 1,031 camps were represented at the reunion by 2,061 delegates, this morning session adjourned.

The afternoon session provided no opportunity for significant public address but was devoted to the passage of several resolutions, including one which proclaimed the 3rd of August, the birthday of Jefferson Davis, as a day demanding appropriate ceremonies of tribute in all camps. Several final reports were heard, and then action was taken to determine the place of the next reunion. Atlanta, Louisville, and Baltimore became the leading contenders, with Atlanta receiving the decision. After Gordon had voiced some final words and Rev. Jones had pronounced the benediction, the official sessions of the 1897 reunion came to a close.

Nevertheless, this seventh annual encampment was not over. For several events were yet to occur. First, on the

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60 For a more complete description of this scene see the Nashville Banner, June 23, 1897, p. 2.

evening of June 23 the old veterans were entertained by a "concert." The Banner publicized the event by saying that "Patriotic and soul-stirring airs . . . [would be] rendered by two bands, while war songs and other selections . . . [would be] sung by the best local and visiting talent."62 The following morning the parade was staged, and an estimated 10,000 veterans, augmented by bands and various military units, marched before a crowd of spectators described as numbering more than 100,000.63 Then that afternoon a "Jubilee" was staged. According to the advance publicity given this affair, each of the states represented at the reunion would provide a speaker for the program. The speeches would be short, but the Banner promised "a rare medley of wit, humor, pathos, and sentiment."64 The Jubilee was followed, later that evening, by a lecture, John B. Gordon's "The Last Days of the Confederacy." With this event the 1897 reunion finally ended.

The growth of U.C.V. camps was now beginning to level off. By July 9, 1898, the number of these units had increased to only 1,150,65 and just five more were added

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62 Nashville Banner, June 23, 1897, p. 8.

63 Ibid., p. 1.

64 Nashville Banner, June 19, 1897, p. 1.

Nevertheless, enthusiasm for these convocations did not diminish. Even after the sinking of the Maine generated war fever throughout the United States, thereby easing some of the sharp feelings of sectionalism which still prevailed, no serious consideration was given to cancelling the 1898 reunion. In fact, Gordon issued the following order squelching all such thoughts:

There is not a single reason why the [1898] reunion should not be held and there are multiplied reasons why it should. The presence of actual war will tend to increase rather than diminish the interest of the veterans in our great annual convention. . . . The reunion in its influence will give substantial aid to the Government, and will be a direct benefit to the development of the martial spirit of the nation.

On this note the opening of the 1898 reunion was sounded.

Gordon's arguments proved to be valid, at least to the degree that they forecast martial moods which were to develop in Atlanta during the encampment. By July, 1898, the Spanish-American War had already produced some veterans of its own, and many of the wounded had been stationed at Fort McPherson. Then when the ex-Confederates arrived in town a mutual admiration quickly developed between the two groups. The Atlanta Constitution noted that "the new

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veterans were a source of constant interest to the grizzled old timers" and that "the Santiago veterans were delighted at the opportunity to exchange experiences and anecdotes with the veterans of the 60's . . . ." In addition, Atlanta demonstrated a great warmth for both groups, and the U.C.V. spokesmen voiced complete support for the nation's war efforts. In fact, not only did the U.C.V. orators find frequent opportunity to point to the current military contributions of two ex-Confederates, Generals Joseph Wheeler and Fitzhugh Lee, but Stephen D. Lee introduced a resolution "pledging the loyal support of Confederate veterans . . . to the prosecution of the war with Spain and declaring the willingness of Confederate veterans to serve the government in any capacity in which they might be needed, whether in the army or in the navy." The Constitution noted that "When the vote was taken upon the resolution it was found to be well-nigh unanimous and the results was greeted with loud acclaim in which the shrill note of the rebel yell could be heard."

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68 Atlanta Constitution, July 21, 1898, p. 4.

69 Atlanta Constitution, July 13, 1898, p. 7; and July 20, 1898, p. 44.

70 Atlanta Constitution, July 22, 1898, p. 1.

71 Atlanta Constitution, July 22, 1898, p. 1.
Although the *Constitution* claimed that this eighth annual reunion was the "largest ever held,"\(^{72}\) there is no evidence that this was the case. In fact, no reunion of ex-Confederates ever topped fifteen to sixteen thousand, the estimated attendance at the Nashville encampment. In addition, apparently no reunion attracted a larger total influx of visitors than the 65,000 who were estimated to have attended the Richmond affair.\(^{73}\) The eighth reunion did draw into Atlanta an estimated 60,000 visitors; nevertheless, the evidence indicates that by 1898 the U.C.V. convocations had grown as large as they would ever grow.

Atlanta followed the example set by Richmond and adapted an existing structure to house the meetings of the reunion. This structure, an agricultural exhibition building on the Exposition grounds, was cleared and equipped with raised seats which would accommodate ten to twelve thousand spectators,\(^{74}\) and a stage was constructed which could seat an additional 250 people. The *Constitution* claimed that the resulting auditorium was "the most perfect hall for large

\(^{72}\) *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1898, p. 5.

\(^{73}\) A broad estimate was made for the Nashville reunion which placed the total attendance of visitors at between 56,000 and 70,000, but these figures were largely unsupported. The Richmond estimate was based on reported arrivals by train.

\(^{74}\) *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1898, p. 7; and July 16, p. 5.
gatherings that had ever been placed around Atlanta. 

All of the veterans were not pleased with the Atlanta reunion. The Louisiana division charged that accommodations had been poor and that local press statements concerning the size and the quality of the affair had been exaggerated. Furthermore, letters to Confederate Veteran claimed that insufficient attention had been given to the old soldiers who arrived in town with limited funds and little knowledge of the city. Allegedly some veterans left Atlanta "on homeward-bound trains as soon as possible," and those who remained did so only to encounter exorbitant prices for many services. The Veteran deplored the "spirit of Atlanta to gush and to permit extortion," and also charged that the city took "extraordinary effort to make the occasion noted by social distinction." 

These adverse factors, nevertheless, did not seem to affect the overall attendance and the general success of the Atlanta reunion or of the subsequent encampments held at Charleston (1899) and at Louisville (1900). For the most part these three reunions experienced no marked increase or

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75 *Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1898, p. 7.

76 *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1898, p. 5.

77 *Confederate Veteran*, VI (August, 1898), 354. (The Veteran demonstrated a bias for the Nashville reunion, claiming it to be the best ever staged. The *Constitution* exhibited the same type of bias for the Atlanta affair.)
decrease in the total influx of visitors. The number of actual veterans did decrease, however, probably due to natural attrition. As was noted earlier, the headquarters for the Nashville reunion claimed an attendance of between 15,000 and 16,000 veterans. Four years later at Louisville the registration figures showed approximately 12,000 ex-Confederates to be present. This decrease in veterans, when compared with the slight increase in total attendance, seems to indicate that while the old soldiers were experiencing losses, Southern enthusiasm for these convocations remained consistently strong. Furthermore, the desire for expansion did not die within the association, and the roster of camps continued to grow. Gordon announced, December 16, 1899, that the new total was 1,240, and then on May 26, 1900, he noted that this figure had risen to 1,274.

Although the period of tremendous growth was beginning to wane, Charleston and Louisville still strove to make their respective reunions the greatest ever held. Each built new structures to house the conventions, and each

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78 Estimations of the total attendance for these years ranged between 60,000 (Atlanta) and 62,000 (Louisville).

79 Louisville Courier-Journal, June 1, 1900, p. 3.


tried to surpass previous efforts to entertain the veterans. Charleston spent $34,000 in constructing her new auditorium, and the result was a permanent brick and iron structure designed to seat 7,000 people. 82 Louisville's new hall had a "holding capacity" of 10,000 people, 83 but must not have been as richly equipped since it cost the city only $15,000. Nevertheless, the Kentucky city, not to be outdone, spent $3,000 to construct a triumphal arch under which the old veterans would march in their annual parade. 84 In addition, the city entertained the ex-Confederates with a stirring re-enactment of the battle of Fort Donelson. 85 The year before Charleston had staged a re-enactment of the Battle of Manassas, but an admission had been charged for this spectacle, a practice which the old veterans always disliked. 86

For the purpose of this study, however, the most important aspect of these two reunions was the amount of oratory which was delivered, and it is in this area that these convocations demonstrated a definite increase of activity. At Charleston, for example, in addition to the

82 Charleston News and Courier, May 10, 1899, p. 20.
83 Louisville Courier-Journal, May 29, 1900, p. 3.
85 Louisville Courier-Journal, June 3, 1900, p. 2.
86 Charleston News and Courier, May 5, 1899, p. 3.
traditional speeches of welcome and response, there were four major addresses. On the afternoon of the first day the veterans staged a memorial service for all the Confederate dead. George Moorman, Adjutant General of U.C.V., delivered this oration. 87 Then on the second day General Joseph Wheeler was the featured orator, 88 and Colonel Bennett H. Young, Adjutant General of the Kentucky Division, was the main speaker in a memorial service for Winnie Davis. 89 Finally, during the third day J. L. M. Curry delivered a short but significant address on the topic of Confederate history. 90

A similar increase in oratorical activity was evidenced in Louisville. Here Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer's speech was the major oratorical attraction of the opening session. 91 Then during the second day Senator James H. Berry of Arkansas, a great favorite because he had lost a leg at Shiloh, delivered a major address on "The Valor of the Trans-Mississippi Soldier." 92 Finally, on the fifth day,

88 Ibid., pp. 111-123.
90 Ibid., pp. 134-158.
92 Ibid., pp. 58-64.
June 3, 1900, a memorial service was held in honor of Jefferson Davis' birthday. In addition to a brief contribution by Stephen D. Lee, there were three orators for the occasion, General Clement A. Evans, John H. Reagan, and Chaplain General Rev. J. William Jones. Evans and Reagan contributed preliminary addresses, and Jones delivered the memorial sermon. Therefore, like the Charleston reunion, the Louisville convocation provided abundant ex-Confederate rhetoric.

Some attention should now be given to certain factors which contributed to the emotional and psychological environments of these reunions. One such factor was the decorations employed in the various halls. Several traditional items were usually included in these decorations. First, there were pictures of Confederate military and civilian leaders, usually including Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and John B. Gordon. Second, there were flags of the Confederacy, the Stars and Bars, the familiar Confederate battleflag, and the two banners which had been adopted by the Confederate Congress. Third, there were placards bearing names of famous battles, names of prominent generals, and names of the states of the Confederacy. And finally, there was an abundance of red and white bunting and streamers. The national colors were also

\[93\] Ibid., pp. 95-109.
employed, but amid the profusion of Confederate symbols the red, white, and blue was frequently lost.⁹⁴

One interesting aspect of these decorations is that their design was determined by local reunion committees; consequently, the total decor varied in the degree of Southern bias which it would express. The auditorium decorations for the 1892 and the 1896 reunions will be used as examples.

During the New Orleans convocation (1892) the Daily Picayune described the dominant decoration in the French Opera House as follows:

Over the stage was hung a spreading stand of colors; the central shield bore the initials "U.C.V." On one side stretched the furled flag of the Union, on the other the folded flag of the Confederacy. Over the two was draped the Stars and Stripes, clasping and crowning the parted banners, crowning and clasping the shield of the survivors of the South.⁹⁵

The symbolism here is obvious: The proud, heroic, but loyal South has returned to the compassionate fold of the Union. The Confederacy is dead, but all is brighter for its having lived. This symbolic message should be compared with the thematic image presented by the decorations for the Richmond reunion (1896). In this second instance the Richmond Dispatch provided the description:

⁹⁴One marked exception to this was the decorations for the Chattanooga reunion. Here the few Confederate symbols were lost amid the profusion of national colors. However this first reunion gave evidence of a concerted effort to remind the old "Rebels" that they were back in the Union.

⁹⁵Daily Picayune (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.
On the rear wall, immediately behind the stage, is the coat of arms of Virginia. To the left of this is a large painting, on canvas, of General R. E. Lee on horseback, while to the right is one of Stonewall Jackson, on his charger. Just above these, and in the centre, is a Confederate battle-flag, on one side of which is the first flag of the Confederacy, and on the other, the last. Only two United States flags are among the decorations—one each hanging from the corners of the ceiling at the back of the stage. 96

The remainder of the Richmond auditorium was festooned with "thousands of feet of red-and-white bunting," to which was added thirty-two large placards, each bearing the name of a Confederate general. Similar placards bore the names of the more prominent battles. With the exception of the two previously mentioned flags, no other national symbols were displayed in the hall.

More interesting than these decorations, however, was the general emotional environment which prevailed, particularly during the opening sessions. The old soldiers, an impassioned lot, were quick to express their unbridled enthusiasm for everyone who supported the Lost Cause. They reserved their greatest demonstrations of admiration, however, for (1) their former military chieftains, (2) the family of Jefferson Davis, and (3) the traditional symbols of the Confederacy such as "Dixie" or a tattered old battle-flag.

Gordon seldom entered without receiving at least a

96 Richmond Dispatch, June 30, 1896, p. 2.
five minute ovation,\textsuperscript{97} and similar receptions were given to General Joseph Wheeler;\textsuperscript{98} Governor of Virginia, Charles T. O'Ferrall;\textsuperscript{99} John H. Reagan;\textsuperscript{100} and Generals Kirby Smith, Longstreet, and Beauregard.\textsuperscript{101} In addition, the widow of Jefferson Davis and her younger daughter Winnie Davis--known to the veterans as "The Daughter of the Confederacy" because she was born during the secession years--could not make an entrance without causing a temporary cessation of all official activity.

The appearances of Winnie Davis, the old veterans' favorite, would generate such enthusiasm that even Gordon had difficulty in controlling the audience. At the Houston reunion she made her entrance during Stephen D. Lee's reading of the report of the Historical Committee. Lee was

\textsuperscript{97} For examples, see descriptions of Gordon's entrance at the reunions at Houston, Nashville, and Atlanta: Houston Daily Post, May 23, 1895, p. 2; Nashville Banner, June 22, 1897, p. 1; and Atlanta Constitution, July 21, 1898, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{98} See description of his reception at Charleston: Charleston News and Courier, May 12, 1899, p. 8.


\textsuperscript{101} See description of their reception at New Orleans: Daily Picayune (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.
forced to stop and for some time was unable to continue due to the deafening mixture of applause, cheers, and rebel yells. Finally he was allowed to finish, but the *Daily Post* observed that "there were few indeed who could hear his voice."\(^{102}\) After Lee was seated, Gordon abandoned all hope of continuing the meeting and announced that Miss Davis had agreed to remain on stage and shake the hand of any old veteran who desired to come forward. The scene which followed was described by the *Daily Post*:

> Immediately after the adjournment the immense crowd began surging forward to grasp hands with General Gordon and Miss Davis, and soon the utmost disorder prevailed. General Gordon stood upon the reporters' table down in front of the stage and the veterans passed him, proceeding to the north side of the stage, intending to cross the stage toward the south. ... But somebody on the stage started the line of march northward, and as the two masses met there was a tangle that it seemed impossible even to straighten out.

> People clambered onto the stage from the front by hundreds, tearing away the plants and destroying the decorations, intent upon just one thing—touching the hand of the daughter of their great chieftain of thirty-four years ago. . . .

> The crowd kept pouring upon the stage, and Miss Davis stood there for more than an hour, both hands being wrung by thousands. It seemed impossible that she could have withstood the terrible strain upon her physical strength. . . .\(^{103}\)

When given the opportunity the old soldiers also demonstrated their impassioned enthusiasm for any Confederate symbol, songs such as "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag,"

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\(^{102}\) *Houston Daily Post*, May 23, 1895, p. 3.

\(^{103}\) Ibid.
and the old Confederate banners. At the Louisville convocation one aging ex-Confederate from Georgia excited a stir when he started waving the old battleflag of the Third Georgia Infantry. One of the two bands began to accompany his march with "Dixie," and then came the always expected rebel yell. The Daily Picayune noted that this yell "came from a fire and vigor that never was surpassed during the war." It further observed:

Again and again the cheers rang out. Old men sprang to their feet, waved their hats and arms wildly, and gave the yell again and again. Scarcely had the first band ceased its work when another ... struck up "The Bonnie Blue Flag," and then the enthusiasm came on fresh and strong as though there had been none that went before.104

On this particular occasion several old war songs had to be played before emotions subsided.

The veterans were not always careful to choose appropriate moments for their patriotic fervour. During the 1895 reunion a resolution had been passed inviting J. L. M. Curry to address the veterans at their next encampment. Curry accepted and came to Richmond prepared to deliver a scholarly address on the themes which the veterans had requested, Slavery, Nullification, and Secession. But no sooner had Curry begun this speech than he was interrupted by a loud and lengthy ovation which the old soldiers tendered to Governor O'Ferrall. Nevertheless, Curry recovered

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from the confusion and continued his address, only to be stopped a second time. In this instance the entire Maryland delegation marched into the hall to the martial airs of "Maryland, My Maryland," played by the Jas. R. Herbert Camp Band of Baltimore. After this boisterous behavior, Gordon rose and spoke to the old soldiers, asking them to allow Curry to be heard:

I do not wonder that you shout over "Maryland, My Maryland" and "Dixie," ... but we have a great lesson being taught us for ourselves and our children, and I want these old men before they go to their long homes to know these American truths. ... Now hear them, my countrymen, and be silent that you may hear.\textsuperscript{105}

Curry was finally able to continue his address without further interruption, except for frequent enthusiastic applause.

All of the session of U.C.V. reunions were not quite so filled with amicability. There were rare moments of real division which demonstrated that the old ex-Confederates were capable of being sharply critical of the views of other old ex-Confederates. During the Louisville convocation, for example, Colonel W. H. S. Burgwyn of North Carolina rose to propose a resolution calling for "expressions of fraternal regard and respect for their former antagonists."\textsuperscript{106} The resolution, proposed in response to a similar one adopted

\textsuperscript{105} "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 56.

\textsuperscript{106} "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 110.
by Northern veterans, stated, among other things, that there was "no sectionalism in the glorious achievements of the American soldier." Nevertheless, sentiment was not shared by many of the ex-Confederates, and the Courier-Journal noted that "in an instance after the Resolution was read the vast gathering was thrown into a tense state of excitement." The newspaper went on to observe:

The auditorium resounded with cheers and cries which swept back and forth through the long hall without abatement. The air was filled with waving hats and handkerchiefs; the veterans rose in their seats. . . . Above the clamoring throng stood Gen. Gordon, rapping for order with all his might and trying to speak. . . . It was apparent that there was a division of sentiment concerning the resolution.108

After Gordon finally succeeded in restoring order, Captain Joseph F. Shepherd of Virginia rushed to the speaker's table and further excited the crowd by declaiming:

On the battlefield of old Virginia it was my ambition . . . to run to earth the marauding Bluecoats, and I do not intend to coquette with, or in any way offer compliments to the Yankees now. I believed I was right then, and I believe so now.109

The resulting uproar was more severe than the initial one. Many veterans cried out for the resolution's defeat, while a sizable body pushed toward the stage demanding its adoption. In the midst of the pandemonium Burgwyn

107 Ibid.


regained the floor and delivered an impassioned plea in support of his resolution, but a large portion of the audience was still negative. Finally, Stephen D. Lee indicated that he wanted to speak on the issue, and cries arose for him to be given the floor. Lee's statement was heavily in support of the resolution, and in his conclusion he stated:

The recent Spanish war has done what little was left to foster the kindly spirit between the North and the South. Under alien skies your boys and their boys struggled side by side against a foreign foe. . . . Let us do nothing to hinder the good feeling which should exist all over this land.110

Finally, turning the gavel over to General Cabell, Gordon spoke for the resolution: "I trust the day shall never come when I shall refuse to send a message of cordial greetings to an enemy gallant enough to greet a foe of thirty-five years ago."111

This statement seemed to turn the tide of opposition. Shepherd tried to regain the floor but was shouted down. Cabell then called for a vote, and the resolution carried, though certainly not unanimously. Meanwhile Shepherd continued his attempts to speak, until he was forced to resume his seat. Gordon and Lee had demonstrated their powers of leadership, but the old veterans had demonstrated their abilities to engender life into even the most routine of sessions.

110 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 112.
111 Ibid.
Before completing this discussion of the emotional and psychological factors present in these occasions one additional observation should be made: The U.C.V. reunions were usually surrounded by and impregnated with a deep spirit of militarism. A student of these great convocations can hardly overlook the profoundly martial spirit which prevailed. To a large degree this martial spirit was established by three factors; (1) the very nature of the conventions themselves--the fact that the conveners were ex-Confederate soldiers and sailors; (2) the pervasive presence of military symbols such as battleflags, uniforms, and other soldierly paraphernalia; and (3) the marked emphasis upon martial displays and re-enactments.

The annual parades were the most obvious of these martial displays. From the very beginning of U.C.V. the old veterans had found these marches extremely satisfying. The processions--usually held the last day of the reunion--gave the veterans the opportunity to unfurl the fading battleflags of their respective regiments, to don the remnants of aging uniforms, to march with infirm but proud steps behind venerated chieftains, and to receive the plaudits which they now believed had always been theirs to command. Suggestions were periodically advanced to make this annual affair less physically arduous, but in general the veterans did not

112 See the dispute over the line of march for the Richmond parade: Richmond Dispatch, June 25, 1896, p. 6; and Richmond Dispatch, June 30, 1896, p. 9.
look favorably upon any proposal which threatened to mini-
mize this yearly event. In fact, during the 1900 reunion 
action was taken, via a decision by Gordon, to cancel the 
parade because of inclement weather, but many of the old 
veterans refused to accept the decision and marched any-
way.113

The old soldiers were not the only military influ-
ence present for such occasions. The practice developed of 
innundating the host city with various military units. Of 
course this was not to protect this city from the aging 
veterans but was for the purpose of providing various forms 
of military entertainment. State militias, special rifle 
brigades, and units from military schools combined with 
regimental bands to give the convocations a distinct martial 
atmosphere. Aspects of the military seemed to be everywhere. 
For example, at Chattanooga three regiments of the Tennessee 
State Guard were camped near the city for the duration of 
the reunion,114 at Houston units of the Texas State Militia 
were quartered at Camp Culberson,115 and at Richmond more 
than 3,000 members of various military groups were brought 
into the city to participate in the reunion's color and 
martial pagentry.116

113 Louisville Courier-Journal, June 3, 1900, Sec. 

114 Daily Picayune (New Orleans), July 5, 1890, p. 1.
115 Houston Daily Post, May 22, 1895, p. 2.
116 Richmond Dispatch, June 28, 1896, p. 5.
As a final example of this martial spirit the Atlanta encampment should again be mentioned. During this encampment a large degree of enthusiasm for military topics and attitudes was exhibited. The factors contributing to this have already been noted: (1) the fact that at that moment America was involved in a war with Spain, (2) the presence in Atlanta of the Santiago veterans, (3) the mutual curiosity and admiration which developed between the two groups of veterans, (4) the statement by Gordon concerning the role to be played by U.C.V. during the war, (5) the resolution passed by the association indicating a willingness on the part of the old soldiers to again take up arms, and (6) the frequent praise bestowed upon the post-bellum military careers of Generals Joseph Wheeler and Fitzhugh Lee.

OTHER REUNION OCCASIONS

Other Confederate reunions were held during the period covered by this study. These were convocations called by divisions and camps of U.C.V., by single Confederate military units, or by soldiers who had fought in a particular battle. For the most part these were smaller versions of the U.C.V. encampments and lasted no more than one or two days. Nevertheless, they frequently attracted several thousand veterans and visitors to the events.
A brief examination will now be made of the oratorical formats of two representative reunions from this group, one held in Waxahachie, Texas, and the other held in Hico, Tennessee. First, at Waxahachie the survivors of Parsons Brigade held their fourteenth annual reunion in conjunction with the Winnie Davis Camp of U.C.V. On August 1, 1894, the two groups gathered to hear a welcome delivered by Mayor DuBose of Waxahachie and a response by the commander of Parson Brigade, W. H. Getzendaner. Addresses were then delivered by B. F. Marchbanks and A. A. Kemble of the Brigade, and an ex-Union soldier was introduced "who made a few remarks appropriate to the occasion and read a short poem of fraternal greeting to the blue and the gray." Then the old veterans listened to the "sweet voice of Miss May Boyce, as she recited a thrilling war poem." After a memorial service "in honor and in memory of fallen comrades," the annual reunion was brought to a close.

The Stonewall Jackson Bivouac held its fifth annual reunion July 20, 1895, at Hico, Tennessee. The McKenzie, Tennessee, Cornet Band provided the music, and after an invocation by Rev. G. W. Rogers, Captain W. J. Puqua delivered the opening address, followed by the orator of the day, Honorable A. G. Hawkins. A dinner under the trees,

117 "Parsons Brigade in Reunion," Confederate Veteran, II (August, 1894), 233.
"abundant in quantity and excellent in quality," was then served by the ladies, after which followed several entertainments:

"Wearing the Gray" was recited happily by Miss Brooxie Nowlin, . . . and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" was sung by young ladies assisted by young men and veterans, and then was played by the band. "Recollections of the War" was given in fine voice and spirit by Miss Madge Cannon. . . . "The Dying Soldier" was another excellent recitation by Miss Lee Beck. . . .

Then after these performances, Major Cooper, Dr. Wingo, and Captain Fuqua delivered short speeches. They "entertained the immense crowd for an hour or more with a recital of some of their experiences during the war." Captain Fuqua also delivered what was described as "a peroration to woman."118

Reports of literally scores of reunions such as these are found in Confederate Veteran, and often fragments of the oratory have been preserved. The reunion programs do not vary greatly: the bands play the same tunes, and the young ladies recite the same poems, the most popular being "The Wearing of the Gray." Nevertheless, some of the rhetoric which sprang from these smaller convocations is interesting and worthy of study.

MEMORIAL AND DEDICATORY SERVICES

As promised earlier, an examination will now be made of occasions catalogued under the following headings:

118"Reunion at Hico," Confederate Veteran, III (August, 1895), 233.
Memorial Day services, unveiling of monuments, dedication of battlefields. One problem, however, is that such events were so prevalent—especially in the case of Memorial Day services and monument unveilings—that it seems unwise to attempt an examination of any major part of these occasions. Instead the critic has chosen to describe only one event under each heading.

A service conducted in Charleston, South Carolina, April 26, 1894, has been chosen to represent the Memorial Day occasions. In this instance the ceremonies were conducted partly in Washington Square and partly in Magnolia Cemetery, and the program was jointly sponsored by the Ladies Memorial Association and the Confederate Survivors' Association. The procedure apparently was traditional. Young ladies from the Confederate Home School, accompanied by a committee from the Washington Light Infantry, marched to Washington Square to place wreaths at the foot of a monument to the Washington Light Infantry's dead. All participants then reconvened at Magnolia Cemetery where three military groups, the Sumter Guards, the Carolina Rifles, and the Citadel Cadets, acted as escorts for young ladies and the dignitaries. Colonel Asbury Coward delivered the memorial oration. This was the twenty-ninth such service, so the tradition must have begun immediately after the war.  

119 "Memorial Day Services at Charleston," Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 213.
The next example is a ceremony performed at a monument unveiling. The event in question took place in Owensboro, Kentucky, September 21, 1900, on the anniversary of the battle of Chickamauga. In this instance the activity was sponsored by the Daviess County Confederate Association and assisted by the Rice E. Graves and W. T. Aull Camps of U.C.V., and the Daughters of the Daviess County Confederate Association. Attendance for the affair was estimated at seven thousand, and the Honorable W. T. Ellis delivered the main address. He was followed by Judge Lockett of Henderson, Kentucky, who paid "a most touching tribute to the Confederate soldier." Then the monument was unveiled:

a bugle call was sounded . . . , and Mrs. Sarah S. Moorman, the venerable mother of Gen. George Moorman, . . . mounted the platform. Four beautiful little girls . . . , each with a Confederate flag, stood on the four corners of the pedestal, and Mrs. Moorman drew the white silk ribbon that held the drapery and it fell away, leaving the heroic figure of the soldier in bold relief. There was a great cheer, the cannon . . . roared, and the exercises were over.120

All of the events which involved ceremonial oratory by ex-Confederates did not occur in the South. Mention has already been made of the Confederate monument which was raised in Chicago, and now a ceremony memorializing a Confederate cemetery at Camp Chase, near Columbus, Ohio, will be used as the representative example for that third category of memorial and dedicatory occasions.

120 "Confederate Monument at Owensboro," Confederate Veteran, VIII (September, 1900), 387.
During the war Camp Chase had been used as a prison for Confederate captives, and a cemetery within the camp became the final resting place for many of these Southern soldiers. Then for many years after the war the graves were left unattended. The result was that most of the wooden markers decayed into dust. Finally in 1896 a movement was initiated by an ex-Union officer, Colonel William H. Knauss, to restore the cemetery to a respectable condition. Money was collected for restoration of the grounds and for proper markers, and on June 5, 1897, a memorial and dedicatory service was held at the site. Veterans from both the South and the North were present. 121

The ceremonies were opened by the firing of a salute, and then taps were sounded for the dead. Colonel Knauss was the first speaker, relating the history of the prison, the cemetery, and the recent efforts towards restoration. The Honorable D. F. Pugh of Columbus, Ohio, then delivered an address as the representative of the North, and he was followed by Colonel Bennett H. Young of Louisville, Kentucky, who spoke for the South. At the close of his oration, Colonel Young recited a portion of "The Wearing of the Gray" and unfolded before the audience a faded gray jacket. The crowd responded with considerable emotion. Following this,

121 "Confederate Memorial, Columbus, Ohio," Confederate Veteran, V (September, 1897), 455.
Samuel L. Black, Mayor of Columbus, delivered a short speech and also closed with a recitation, "The Blue and the Gray." The *Confederate Veteran* observed that "there has been no more touching ceremonials than that displayed at Columbus." 122

Both Union and Confederate veterans were also involved in the next ceremonial occasion to be considered. This event, the dedication of a National Military Park on the Chickamauga battlefield, will be used as the representative example for the final category of memorial and dedicatory occasions.

In August, 1890, the United States Congress took action to establish a National Park at Chickamauga. Funds were appropriated, and in March, 1892, work began on this project. Three years later the park was ready for dedication. On September 19, 1895, representatives from the North and the South joined forces for the dedication. 123

Groups of old veterans converged on the park from both directions. There were numerous camps representing the U.C.V., and there were even more representing the Grand Army of the Republic. The program for these ceremonies had been arranged so that a balanced representation was given the two sections. There were four main orators; two from the North

122 "Confederate Memorial, Columbus, Ohio," *Confederate Veteran*, V (September, 1897), 458.

and two from the South. General John M. Palmer of Illinois spoke first for the Union side. He was followed by a Confederate military representative, General William B. Bate, then serving as United States Senator from Tennessee. Governor Woodbury of Vermont was the next Northern representative, and he was then followed by Governor Turney of Tennessee. Editorial comments in Confederate Veteran seemed to indicate general pleasure for the spirit of the affair, but observation was made that General Palmer's address "was not as magnanimous as his friends expected in its relation to the cause of the war, and to his part in the battle."124

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions relative to these occasions for Confederate veteran oratory appear to be warranted. These conclusions may be grouped under four headings: (1) physical environments, (2) general attendance, (3) nature of audiences, and (4) emotional and psychological environments. First, the general physical environments in which this oratory was delivered can only be described as being varied. As has been noted, many of these events occurred in outdoor settings, cemeteries, courthouse squares, old battlefields, and the like. On the other hand, a large

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124 Confederate Veteran, III (October, 1895), 289.
number of the occasions were acted out in elaborately decorated auditoriums or convention halls. No profound implications developing from this diversity of settings has been found. For a large degree these settings were determined simply by accidents of circumstance: a monument was raised here, and a battle was fought there. This is not to say, however, that the individual physical environments had no influence whatsoever upon other aspects of the total rhetorical act. For example, this critic suspects—with little in the way of proof other than what he judges to be common sense—that an oration delivered on the very spot where internecine activities occurred would have greater emotional appeal than an equally skillful address delivered in other locales. By the same token, it seems reasonable to assume that the profuse decorations present in the U.C.V. reunion halls played at least some small role in establishing an overall mood for this sectional oratory.

In reference to the attendance at these oratorical occasions it seems justifiable to say that it was always excellent. After the New Orleans reunion in 1892 the audiences at the U.C.V. convocations were estimated at being between 6,000 (Houston) and 12,000 (Atlanta). And even for some of the smaller reunions the audiences were often estimated as ranging between 8,000 and 10,000. In outdoor

125 See Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 209.
settings one of the problems which occasionally developed was that parts of the large audiences could not get close enough to the speakers. This was particularly true when the settings were structurally congested areas such as cemeteries and city parks. 126

As to the exact nature of these audiences it might first be noted that they were not composed purely of old Confederate veterans. The oratorical events were very popular and consequently attracted large gatherings generally representative of the entire populace. Certainly women were always present, and for some of the Memorial Day services the ladies may have been in the majority since they played such a large role in promoting and organizing these events. In addition, females were abundantly present at the U.C.V. reunions, particularly after the New Orleans encampment.

Undoubtedly these audiences were highly partisan, since the very nature of the events in which they participated required such a partisan outlook. Nevertheless, these groups were not as monolithic in viewpoint as one might imagine, and, as was illustrated by the Louisville disturbance, the old veterans were capable of dividing over issues  

126 See for example the problems which developed in Richmond at the laying of the cornerstone for the Jefferson Davis monument: Richmond Dispatch, July 3, 1896, p. 1.
which they considered to be of great importance. The ques-
tion of how they should respond to their former foes was
always one of the touchy ones. In fact, prior to the
Nashville reunion one of the U.C.V. camps even distributed
a circular letter which called for an end to practices which
the letter described as "the custom of having some persons
received as visitors from the Grand Army of the Republic,
and giving to them, amidst much gush and hypocritical cheer-
ing, an ovation . . ." As was mentioned earlier, the old
veterans were not in complete accord when discussing the
desirability of renewed amenities between the two sections.

For the most part, however, the audience members for
all these occasions were fully in tune with each other. As
a result they probably felt few of those inhibitions which
arise out of subtle and awkward disunity. They were usually
one in emotion. They wept, they cheered, they sang, they
waved hats and handkerchiefs, and they even jumped from
their seats and marched at the slightest provocation. As a
consequence these occasions frequently challenged the abili-
ties of orators not for the arousing of emotions but for
keeping them in bounds.

These emotions were often intense, and it seems
reasonable to assume that even the most ardent of New South

127Addison F. McGhee, Adjutant of Camp Pelham of
U.C.V., in a circular letter to all camps, Anniston,
Alabama, June 1, 1897.
reconciliationists might have occasionally been swept along by the fervour generated for the Lost Cause. On the other hand, there were emotive moments when—as might be illustrated by the Louisville debate—the reconciliationists won the day. The point here is simply that the emotional pitch of all these occasions—both the reunions and the memorial and dedicatory events—was usually very high and probably played a significant role in the outcome of events.

When one considers all of the emotional and psychological factors which were present—the martial music, the Confederate colors, the old battleflags, the tattered uniforms, the aging comrades, the venerated leaders, the general mood of nostalgia for an earlier day—then one experiences little doubt that these occasions of Confederate veteran oratory were ideally designed for myth building. The question of whether this actually happened must be considered in later chapters, but for now it seems reasonable to conclude that the opportunities were present.
Chapter 3

THE ORATORS

Between 1889 and the close of 1900 there were literally hundreds of ex-Confederates who at one time or another found themselves upon a platform addressing an audience of their former military comrades. No attempt is made in this study to examine all of these orators or even a significant number of them. Such a task would be formidable. Instead, an effort is made, by an examination of ten speakers, to capture some general impressions of these men, their official positions during the war, their involvement in the Confederate veteran movement, and their post-bellum professional and political careers. The ten speakers have been chosen primarily on the basis of their prominence in the movement or on the importance of their oratory to this study. The order in which they are considered has been determined by the rank or position which they held in the Confederate military or civilian government.

John Henninger Reagan

During the period which this study treats, John H. Reagan held the honor of being the only surviving member of Jefferson Davis' cabinet. In such an esteemed position he became a popular figure on the U.C.V. platform, and three of
his ceremonial addresses are examined in this study. One of these is a speech delivered in Nashville at the seventh annual reunion of U.C.V.\textsuperscript{1} The other two were delivered at annual convocations of the Texas division of this association.\textsuperscript{2} His favorite theme was "The Causes of the War," and all three of these orations dealt with this question.

During the war Reagan had functioned as the Confederate postmaster general,\textsuperscript{3} and immediately after Appomattox he was taken prisoner along with other Confederate leaders. While incarcerated at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor Reagan wrote an open letter to the people of Texas, his home state, advising them to accept Confederate defeat, to acknowledge the abolition of slavery, to grant the Negro civil rights, and to co-operate fully with the Federal authorities. He hoped his state would, by so conducting herself, avoid the extreme harshness of military rule. Nevertheless, the letter and its ideas met considerable opposition, and Reagan's prestige in the state suffered.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{enumerate}
\item See "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.\textquoteright ," pp. 26-36.
\item See Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75-79; and "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion of U.C.V., Division of Texas," pp. 9-20.
\item In this capacity he was a controversial figure and was frequently criticized for the great uncertainties of the Confederate postal system. See Rembert W. Patrick, Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 284.
\item Dictionary of American Biography, XV, 435.
\end{enumerate}
The ex-postmaster general, however, returned home, entered Texas politics, and soon rebuilt that prestige and political influence. He did so, primarily, by waging a fight to establish state and national regulatory agencies to control the railroads. Such a cause was popular in those agrarian states where farmers had been hurt by rail monopolies. While serving in the United States Congress, 1875-1887, Reagan was instrumental in obtaining passage of the 1887 Interstate Commerce Act, a measure which provided some federal control over the railroads, even though these controls were not particularly strong and did not cover the small lines which operated only within state boundaries.5

In 1887 Reagan also advanced to the United States Senate where he served until James Stephen Hogg, Governor of Texas, convinced him that he should resign in favor of accepting the chairmanship of the newly instituted Texas Railroad Commission. Hogg wanted a chairman for his commission who could convince the farmers of Texas that neither he nor Hogg were in the pay of the railroads. Reagan's previous efforts in behalf of national regulatory legislation made him an excellent choice, and he eventually served twelve years in that position, 1891-1903, successfully fighting off attempts to weaken the powers of the

commission.  

Mention is made of this struggle against the railroads because in this respect Reagan seemed to be out of the ideological mainstream of most of these Confederate veteran orators, many of whom served the rail interests in some capacity. Furthermore, the railroad issue provides an excellent example of a phenomenon common to this Confederate veteran movement: orators of widely divergent political interests could function together in the movement. The developing Confederate myth belonged not to any particular faction, but to the entire region. The symbols, shibboleths, and sacred principles were free to all who wished to champion them, regardless of political leanings. Consequently, Reagan, as chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission, could share the platform at the 1894 reunion of the Texas division of U.C.V. with George Clark, a railroad attorney-lobbyist who was Reagan's most powerful political enemy. He could also function in the state U.C.V. association while it was headed by General William L. Cabell,


7 The following Confederate veteran orators, for examples, were all involved with the railroads as attorneys or as stock holders and administrators: William L. Cabell, Texas; George Clark, Texas, Basil Duke, Kentucky; John B. Gordon, Georgia; Bradley T. Johnson, Maryland and Virginia; Thomas G. Jones, Alabama; E. C. Walthall, Mississippi; and Joseph Wheeler, Alabama.

8 Cotner, James Stephen Hogg, A Biography, p. 168.
president of the Texas Trunk Railway, one of the corporations which fought the commission.9

Stephen Dill Lee

From 1889 until his death in 1908, Stephen D. Lee was one of the most active leaders in the United Confederate Veterans. During the period which the study covers he was the commander of the Army of Tennessee Department of U.C.V., and he also served several years as chairman of the Historical Committee of the association. In addition he was popular as an orator and on two occasions was chosen to deliver the major address at the laying of a cornerstone for an important Confederate monument. The first such event occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, April 26, 1894. On this occasion Lee was the orator of the day at the laying of the cornerstone for Birmingham's monument to the Confederate dead. The ceremony coincided with the fourth annual reunion of U.C.V., and thousands of old veterans gathered for the

9 William Lewis Cabell, a minor orator in this movement, served for several years as commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department of U.C.V. In addition to being involved with the railroads, Cabell was also, from 1893 to 1907, one of the "supervisors" for the Louisiana Lottery and for the Honduras Lottery, that organization which resulted when the parent lottery was banished from Louisiana. For additional information see Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 42; and William B. Hesseltine, Confederate Leaders in the New South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), p. 118.
event. The second address was delivered in Richmond, Virginia, July 2, 1896. On this date the cornerstone was laid for the Jefferson Davis monument. This ceremony coincided with the sixth annual reunion of U.C.V., and the old veterans were again present in full force.

During the war Lee held the distinction of being the youngest lieutenant general in the Confederacy. After Appomattox he returned to his home state of Mississippi and tried to become a planter. Although he was not particularly successful in his own efforts at farming, he did develop an interest in the problems of agriculture. He supported many of the reforms advocated by the Grange and the Farmers' Alliance, and some of his speeches gave clear indication that he was not a traditional Southern Bourbon. For example

12 Lee entered the Confederate army as a captain and was assigned as aide-de-camp to General Beauregard. However, he quickly advanced to the rank of brigadier general and was in command of General Pemberton's artillery during the siege of Vicksburg. When that city capitulated Lee was taken captive but was soon exchanged, reassigned to duty, and promoted to the rank of major general. Upon this promotion he assumed command of the Confederate cavalry operating in the Department of Mississippi, Alabama, West Tennessee, and East Louisiana. Then on June 23, 1864, he was advanced to the rank of lieutenant general and placed at the head of General Hood's old infantry corps. See Warner, Generals in Gray, p. 184.
the following quotations are taken from a speech which he delivered in Columbus, Mississippi, in 1889:

Enormous fortunes have been amassed; the rich have grown richer, and the poor poorer, and the lines have been drawn between these two classes very strongly, and to the advantage of the rich.

Nine-tenths of the people are engaged in agriculture in this State, and yet most of the laws that have been passed have been for the benefit, directly or indirectly, of the capitalists.14

Such statements did not make Lee a Populist, but they voiced sentiments which the Populists applauded.

Lee entered public life in 1878 when he was elected to the Mississippi senate. While he was serving in this capacity, legislation was passed creating the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College, later Mississippi State College. Perhaps because he was well established with the farming interests in the state, Lee was appointed to the presidency of this institution. He remained at this post for nineteen years, 1880-1899, and during his tenure placed great emphasis upon the development of programs in the sciences and in progressive farming. Lee's involvements with the Mississippi Grange and with the Farmers' Alliance kept him a popular figure with the farmers of the state and caused him on two occasions to consider running for governor.15


15Ibid., p. 272.
It might again be noted—this time in reference to Lee's connections with the Farmers' Alliance—that the Confederate movement was sufficiently broad to encompass a variety of regional leaders. The next orator, John B. Gordon, may stand as further illustration of this point.

**John Brown Gordon**

As commander in chief of the U.C.V., Gordon was undoubtedly the most popular personality in the Confederate veteran movement. He served in this position of leadership from the date of the association's beginning until his death in 1904, and his unsuccessful effort, at the Nashville reunion, to resign indicates that the old veterans were very satisfied with their leader. Since he presided at all of the annual reunions from 1890 until his death he was constantly in the position of addressing the veterans. In addition, he frequently delivered speeches for other Confederate veteran events, as may be illustrated by the lecture, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," which became part of the auxiliary program for the Nashville reunion.  

Gordon received considerable recognition during and after the war as a dashing and heroic military figure. Warner has stated succinctly that this eloquent Georgian

16 A copy of this lecture and a brief discussion of it may be found in Modern Eloquence (Philadelphia: John D. Morris and Company, 1901), V, 471-494.
"had one of the most spectacular wartime and post-bellum careers of any civilian who fought for the Confederacy."\textsuperscript{17} His conduct in battle apparently was not only daring but also possessed a touch of the dramatic, and the general image which he projected fit well the Homeric ideal of valor in battle and eloquence in oratory. For example, his biographer, Allen P. Tankersley, asserted that "Usually Gordon addressed his troops before he led them into battle, but unlike most orators his actions outdid his exhortations."\textsuperscript{18}

In 1861, as a young lawyer and as a coal mine developer in Georgia, Gordon helped to organize the colorful "Raccoon Roughs," a mountaineer company from Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. After being elected to their command he rose rapidly through the ranks and in less than two years was promoted to brigadier general. Then in May of 1864 he advanced to the rank of major general.\textsuperscript{19}

After the war Gordon returned to Georgia and soon found himself involved in politics. Elected to the United

\textsuperscript{17} Generals in Gray, p. 111.


\textsuperscript{19} There has been dispute over whether Gordon ended the war as a major general or as a lieutenant general. Warner has observed that many early "unofficial" lists of Confederate officers placed Gordon in the higher rank; however, Warner argues that Gordon was never confirmed to this rank. Generals in Gray, pp. xvii-xviii.
States Senate in 1873, he remained in Washington until 1880 when he resigned his senatorial post and became an employee of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, allegedly receiving a salary of $14,000 a year as a legal counsel for this concern. However, he was still very politically active and in 1886 became governor of his state, serving until 1890. Then in 1891 he returned to the Senate where he remained until 1897. Throughout this period Gordon was a fervid advocate of Old South images and New South Principles. In addition, he was an active reconciliationist and traveled extensively in the North making speeches in support of the New South. However, Woodward argues that the most revealing characteristics of Gordon's postwar career as a Redeemer were his business interests, which included financial involvements not only in railroads but in insurance, mining, publishing, manufacturing, and real estate. Gordon and Stephen D. Lee apparently worked well together in the Confederate veteran movement and both served the cause of sectional reconciliation, as indicated by their performances at the Louisville reunion, but ideologically the two seem to have been far apart. Gordon was the

21 Ibid., p. 46.
22 Ibid., p. 17.
supporter of industry and the railroads; Lee was the supporter of agrarian interests.

William Brame Bate

William B. Bate\textsuperscript{23} apparently was not particularly active in the organizational work of U.C.V. He held no office in the association, and his name is seldom found in the official minutes. Nevertheless, he was popular as an orator, and in his post-bellum position as United States Senator from Tennessee he was often asked to speak for or to Confederate veterans. His most notable oratorical accomplishment in this regard occurred on September 19, 1895, when—as was requested by the Secretary of War—he spoke for the South at the dedication ceremonies for the Chickamauga National Military Park.\textsuperscript{24} The address which he

\textsuperscript{23} Bate is the second former major general in this group. Prior to 1861 he had served in the Mexican War and then had become a newspaper editor and a lawyer-politician. He entered Confederate service as a private, but soon after his enlistment he was elected colonel in the Second Tennessee Infantry. In this capacity of leadership he commanded a regiment at Shiloh and was seriously wounded. However he recovered to fight at Murfreesboro, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, and in the Atlanta and Tennessee campaigns. Bate was promoted to brigadier general on October 3, 1862, and to major general of February 23, 1864. In addition to his wounds, he claimed to have had six horses killed under him. See Dictionary of American Biography, II, 42. Additional biographical information taken from Generals in Gray, pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{24} For a copy of this oration see Confederate Veteran, II (November, 1895), 342-346; and continued in Confederate Veteran, II (December, 1895), 356-360.
delivered on this occasion has been of considerable value to this study.

After the war William B. Bate had returned to his home state of Tennessee only to find himself, along with all other ex-Confederates, disfranchised by the Brownlow regime. It was not until 1869 that these former Confederates of Tennessee were restored to political rights. After this date Bate began to regain the political influence he had possessed prior to 1861. In 1882 he was elected governor and proceeded to "readjust" the monumental state debt which had built up during Brownlow's tenure and which had often accrued from measures which were "tainted with fraud." Bate served a second term as governor and then, in 1886, was elected to the United States Senate. He remained in Washington until his death in 1905. While in the Senate he authored a bill which repealed the "last vestige of Reconstruction legislation" from the statue books. The act in question removed all laws then in force which called for Federal supervision of local and state elections.

Edward Cary Walthall

When the second annual reunion of U.C.V. was held in 1891 in Jackson, Mississippi, it was scheduled to


26 Ibid.
coincide with the unveiling and dedication of a monument to Jefferson Davis and to the Confederate dead of Mississippi. Edward Cary Walthall, who was then serving as a United States senator from that state, delivered the major address for this unveiling. The oration is an important one to this study because it covered all of the major themes of the Confederate myth.

In 1841 Walthall had moved with his parents from Virginia to Mississippi. He studied law in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and was admitted to the bar in 1852. Beginning his practice in Coffeeville, he soon won election to the post of district attorney. However the war interrupted his legal career, and he enlisted with the Yalobusha Rifles. Then after Confederate surrender he returned to Mississippi.

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27 For a copy of this oration see Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 298-312. Although the date on this volume indicates that it was published in 1890, the content demonstrates that it was published in 1891 or later. In addition, Walthall's speech is misdated. It was delivered June 3, 1891.

28 Walthall was elected to the rank of first lieutenant. When the Yalobusha Rifles joined the Fifteenth Mississippi regiment he advanced quickly to lieutenant colonel and from that rank to colonel in the Twenty-Ninth Mississippi regiment. On December 13, 1862, he received his promotion to brigadier general, and on July 6, 1864, advanced to major general. Warner mentions that Walthall "fought gallantly at Chickamauga and at Chattanooga" and that he engaged in the Atlanta campaign "with his customary steadfastness." At Chattanooga he "sustained a painful wound in the foot." Furthermore, like Bate, he made the claim of having horses killed under him, however in his case the number was only two. See Generals in Gray, p. 326. Also see The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, I, 289-290.
to continue his law practice in Coffeeville and in Grenada.

State and national politics soon attracted his interests, and he served as a delegate-at-large to the national Democratic conventions of 1868, 1876, 1880, and 1884. Then in 1885 he was appointed to the United States Senate to fill the unexpired term of L. Q. C. Lamar when Cleveland made Lamar a member of his cabinet. Walthall remained in the Senate almost continuously until his death in 1898. Woodward notes that in the early 1880's Walthall was an avowed friend "of the railroads and corporations and hostile to any attack from agrarians." However, as the farmers in Mississippi gained greater political strength the senator became a silverite.

Bradley Tyler Johnson

Next to John H. Reagan, Bradley Tyler Johnson is perhaps the most quoted orator in this study. This is true not because his rhetoric is so abundant. In fact, the study makes reference to only two of his addresses, the first delivered June 10, 1891, at the unveiling of a monument in


30 Origins of the New South, p. 18.

31 Ibid., p. 282.
Fredericksburg, Virginia, and the second delivered February 22, 1891, at the dedication of a Confederate museum in Richmond. The reason simply is that of all the speeches which this study examines Johnson's oratory appears to have been the most colorful, the most impassioned, and the most immoderate. His addresses give no indication that he ever yielded, in any meaningful way, in his support of Old South and Confederate principles or that he ever felt inclined to direct a single reconciliatory remark toward the North. In short, his oratory indicates that he was thoroughly unreconstructed.

Johnson was a native of Frederick, Maryland, who before the war had graduated with honors from Princeton. He had then studied law and had been admitted to the bar in 1851. Sometime afterwards he entered politics and became state's attorney. In addition, he served as state chairman of the Democratic Committee and was a delegate to the national Democratic conventions of 1860. Then in 1861 he assisted in organizing the First Maryland regiment and

\[32\] For a copy of this address see Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 397-405.

\[33\] For a copy of this address see Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 506-510; or A. W. Garber, ed., In Memoriam Sempiternam (Richmond: Confederate Memorial Literary Society, 1896).
entered military service as a major in that unit.  

In postwar years Johnson settled in Richmond and returned to the practice of law, devoting much of his time to representing railroad interests before the state legislature. From 1875 until 1879 he served in the Virginia senate, and at the end of this period returned to Maryland where he practiced law in Baltimore from 1879 to 1890. In the last years of his life he again settled in Virginia and devoted himself primarily to writing and speaking. During this period he produced three works of history, A Memoir of the Life and Public Service of Joseph E. Johnston (1891), General Washington (1894), and the section on Maryland in Volume II of Confederate Military History (1899), a multi-volumed work edited by Clement Anselm Evans, the next orator to be considered.

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34 Serving consecutively under Generals Ewell, Jackson, Hampton, and Early, Johnson advanced through the ranks to brigadier general, receiving his promotion on June 28, 1864. Apparently his most successful command was that of the Maryland cavalry under Hampton. Stationed North of Richmond in February, 1864, this cavalry stopped a Northern force of far superior numerical strength. Warner suggests that Johnson's advancement might have been quicker and more extensive had it not been for the "non-existence of Maryland units." In fact, because all of these Maryland forces had been consolidated with other units, Johnson was left with no command and spent the last few months of the war in the inglorious position of commander of a prison stockade in Salisbury, North Carolina. For further information concerning his military career see Generals in Gray, p. 157. Additional biographical information obtained from Dictionary of American Biography, X, 90-91.
Clement Anselm Evans

Clement A. Evans was an active leader in the United Confederate Veterans. When the organization was founded in 1889 he served as Gordon's first adjutant general and chief of staff. Later he was appointed commander of the Georgia division of U.C.V. and held this post for twelve years before becoming commander of the Army of Tennessee Department. Then in 1908 Evans was elected commanding general of the entire association, defeating General William L. Cabell for the post. Evans was always active at the reunions and frequently spoke to these annual gatherings; however, the two addresses which are examined in this study were delivered outside the U.C.V. The first is a Memorial Day oration which was voiced April 26, 1895, in Macon, Georgia, and the second is an oration delivered before the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, October 10, 1895, in Richmond.

Before the war Evans had entered the legal profession, served on the bench of the inferior court of Stewart County, Georgia, spent three years in the state senate, and acted as an elector in the 1860 Democratic conventions. Then when the war began he enlisted in the Thirty-First

35 For excerpts from this address see Confederate Veteran, III (May, 1895), 147.

36 For a copy of this address see Southern Historical Society Papers, XXIII, 3-24.
Georgia Infantry and was commissioned a major. According to Thomas M. Spaulding, Evans was a sensitive observer of the war and was "much impressed and depressed by the carnage and suffering which he saw." He therefore resolved "that if he were allowed to survive . . . he would spend the rest of his life trying to teach men how to live together instead of murdering each other." This resolve allegedly influenced his decision to abandon his legal profession after the war and to enter the Methodist ministry.

Evans subsequently spent twenty-five years of his life in service to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. During most of these years he resided in Augusta, Georgia, where he also "ventured into business, organizing the Augusta Real Estate and Improvement Company and the Augusta and Summerville Land Company." Then in 1892 he retired from pastoral work and, until his death in 1911, devoted himself exclusively to the activities of the U.C.V. and to writing, editing, and speaking. In 1895 he published a Military

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37 Serving under Generals Stonewall Jackson, Early, and John B. Gordon, Evans spent virtually all of his time in the Army of Northern Virginia and "was present in every battle from the Peninsular campaign onward." In these battles he was wounded a total of five times. His promotion to brigadier general dated from May 19, 1864. Evans' division has been credited with winning the last fight of Lee's army. See Generals in Gray, p. 83; and Dictionary of American Biography, VI, 196-197.

38 Dictionary of American Biography, VI, 196.
History of Georgia and then turned to the task of editing the twelve-volume Confederate Military History. This work was published in 1899. During this time he also became heavily involved in the successful efforts to raise money for the Confederate Battle Abbey in Richmond. Finally, in 1906, the three-volume cyclopedic work Georgia was published, with Evans serving as co-editor. Hesseltine says of Evans that "he was one of the most persistent historians of the Confederate glory," but also observes that "in theology and in economics, he was noted for his willingness to accept the 'true results of the war.'"\(^{39}\)

**Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry**

Jabez Lamar Curry, the well-known promoter of Southern education, was popular with Confederate veteran audiences, and he delivered two addresses at reunions of U.C.V., one in 1896 at Richmond,\(^{40}\) and the second in 1899 at Charleston.\(^{41}\) In fact, Curry's 1896 oration was delivered in response to a request included in the report of the Historical Committee at the 1895 convocation in Houston.

\(^{39}\) Confederate Leaders in the New South, p. 52.

\(^{40}\) For a copy of this oration see "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," pp. 55-75.

\(^{41}\) For a copy of this oration see "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," pp. 154-159.
The report stated:

... we would respectfully recommend that Dr. J. L. M. Curry, the patriot, statesman, philosopher and educator, be invited to deliver an address at our next annual reunion on the subject of slavery, nullification and secession.\(^4\)

Curry complied completely with the subject matter stipulations of this request, and the resulting address has proved valuable to this study.

Prior to the war Curry received two university degrees, one from the University of Georgia and the second, a law degree from Harvard. As a protege of John C. Calhoun, Curry gave some early indications that he might have a brilliant political career, but he eventually became known as an educator instead.\(^4\) Between 1847 and 1855 he served three terms in the Alabama legislature and then was elected to the United States Congress in 1857. William J. Lewis has noted that the first of Curry's speeches in the House "was a strong argument for the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution."\(^4\)

After Alabama seceded from the Union, Curry served first in the provisional Confederate Congress and then in the First Confederate Congress. Defeated in his bid for


re-election, Curry then lent his talents to the military effort, and from 1864 until the end of the war he was on the staffs of Generals Joseph E. Johnston and Joseph Wheeler. He closed out the war with the rank of lieutenant colonel of cavalry.45

Curry began his post-bellum career in education in 1865 when he became president of Howard college in Birmingham, Alabama. However this institution did not hold him long, for in 1868 he became disturbed by the Reconstruction government of Alabama and moved to Virginia where he became Professor of English at Richmond College. Curry then remained at this post until he took over the administration of the George Peabody Fund and the John F. Slater Fund. These two philanthropic grants were established for the development of public education in the South. Through his administration of these monies, Curry exerted tremendous influence over the direction of Southern education during the 1880's and 1890's. In this effort Curry frequently used his oratorical talents to support the cause of free public education, particularly education for the Negro.46 His two addresses to the reunions of U.C.V. are interesting not only

because they touch on most of the traditional themes of the Confederate myth but because they also find opportunity to (1) promote Southern education, and (2) to attack the common practice of mob violence and lynching.

**John Warwick Daniel**

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, John Warwick Daniel had the honor of being the first official orator of the occasion for a U.C.V. reunion. He apparently won considerable recognition for his speaking skills, for he has been described as "an occasional orator who was much sought after." When he delivered his 1892 reunion address in New Orleans the *Daily Picayune* declared him another Patrick Henry, and the *Times-Democrat* called him "renowned for his eloquence" and declared:

> . . . in his brilliant career the gallant soldier and statesman has never excelled, in heights of silvery eloquence, his oration delivered yesterday. Every face was lifted to his. At times not an eye in the vast audience was dry.

In bringing forth those tears, Daniel touched on all of the major themes of the Confederate myth; therefore, his address has been of value to this study.

Daniel entered the war as a private but soon advanced to the rank of major, serving as chief of staff to

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48 *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.

49 *Times-Democrat* (New Orleans), April 9, 1892, p. 1.
General Early. After Appomattox he enrolled in the University of Virginia, but one year later began the practice of law at Lynchburg, Virginia. Entering public life, he served first in the Virginia House of Delegates and then in the state senate. Politically he was a "Funder" and fought against all proposals to scale down or repudiate the state debt. In these fights he was often matched against General William Mahone who led the "Readjusters" of Virginia. Daniel failed in two attempts, 1877 and 1881, to become governor of his state; however, he was elected to the United States Congress in 1884 and the next year advanced to the Senate. Here he served from 1885 until his death in 1910. The following statement provides some insight into Daniel's motivations as an orator for Confederate veteran occasions:

[Daniel] . . . felt that fighting the Civil War to the last ditch not only "gave finality to its results and well-nigh extinguished its embers with its flames" but also preserved to Southerners "their title of respect. . . . and their incentive to noble and unselfish deed."

Benjamin Morgan Palmer

The last orator in this representative group was not a Confederate veteran in the true sense of the term,

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50 It seems likely that Daniel would have advanced beyond this rank had not a severe wound ended his military career and placed him on crutches for life. However, this wound was one factor which made him very popular with the old veterans.

for during the war Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer apparently held no specific military title. However he did prove valuable to Confederate forces as a floating morale booster and a "fire-eating" agitator. In performing this service he traveled through several Southern states, speaking to various military units and to state assemblies.  

Prior to 1861 Rev. Palmer held churches in Savannah, Georgia; Columbia, South Carolina; and in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was in New Orleans that he became effective as a secessionist orator. As fever rose in the South, he used his speaking talents to fan that fever into open revolt. He preached the most famous of his secessionist sermons on November 29, 1860, in the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans. This Thanksgiving sermon, "Slavery, A Divine Trust," has been analyzed by Wayne Carter Eubank.  

After the war Palmer returned to his New Orleans pastorate "chastened and subdued." In the following years he devoted himself to the traditional duties of his ministerial role, but he remained an eloquent supporter of Lost


54 Hesseltine, *Confederate Leaders in the New South*, pp. 53-54.
Cause principles, frequently delivering orations for Confederate veteran activities. In 1900 he was asked to be one of the major orators at the tenth annual reunion of U.C.V., and the resulting address has been examined in this study.

One interesting factor about Palmer is that his New Orleans sermons often expressed a distinct social philosophy. Hesseltine observed that "Palmer opposed all 'coarse and selfish utilitarianism' which measured things by material standards," and noted that the minister indirectly attacked such powerful commercial interests as the railroads by deploring "the subversion of the free market to the 'caprice of capitalists.'" Furthermore, this social philosophy also brought Palmer into direct confrontation with the Louisiana Lottery, and during the 1880's and 1890's he became deeply involved in the movement to rid the state of this corrupting influence. Joseph Charles Mele has observed that "Although ministers had spoken against the Louisiana Lottery before Rev. Palmer chose to denounce it, he seemed to have done more than any of them to arouse the people."

For an example see Times-Democrat (New Orleans), April 27, 1891.
For a copy of this oration see "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," pp. 26-39.
Confederate Leaders in the New South, pp. 46-47.
In making a concluding evaluation of Palmer, DesChamps asserted succinctly that in those years after the war "his church grew rapidly, and his moral influence in Louisiana was tremendous."\(^{59}\)

SOME ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

As was indicated earlier, these ten orators are only representative of the larger group. During the course of this study addresses by thirty ceremonial speakers have been quoted. An examination of these thirty orators reveals that nine of them were former Confederate generals,\(^{60}\) fifteen were lower ranking officers,\(^{61}\) two were private soldiers,\(^{62}\) three were chaplains,\(^{63}\) and one, John H. Reagan, was a member of the Confederate cabinet. After the war most of these men entered politics and held offices either at the state or national level. In fact, twelve of the thirty served in

\(^{59}\)DesChamps, "Benjamin Morgan Palmer, Orator-Preacher of the Confederacy," p. 22.


\(^{62}\)Andrew Bradford Booth, and Thomas B. Turley.

\(^{63}\)J. William Jones, J. H. McNeilly, and Benjamin Morgan Palmer. (Palmer apparently only acted as an unofficial chaplain-at-large.)
either the United States Congress or Senate, and three became state governors. Also of interest is the fact that three were prominent educators in the postwar South, and three became notable for their historical writings.

The ten orators just discussed were chosen, among other reasons, to represent the diverseness in political or social ideology which was present in the Confederate veteran movement. In politics, John B. Gordon was an exponent of New South industrial and commercial interests; Stephen D. Lee became a voice of agrarianism. John H. Reagan fought to curtail the monopolistic powers of the railroads; Bradley T. Johnson was a legal counsel for such concerns. William B. Bate was an "adjuster," arguing that Reconstruction debts incurred by Tennessee should not be paid in full, John H. Daniel took just the opposite position in the state of Virginia. Edward Cary Walthall became a political switch-sider, supporting first the industrial, commercial, and railroad interests, then jumping on the agrarian bandwagon.


when Mississippi moved under the influence of the Farmers' Alliance. Furthermore, the social causes expounded by these orators were also varied: J. L. M. Curry struggled to improve Southern public education; Clement A. Evans, as a postwar minister, set out to teach men how to live together, but probably did a better job of preserving the romance of war through his numerous publications of Confederate memorabilia; and Benjamin Morgan Palmer attacked the Louisiana Lottery, even while it was being represented by General W. L. Cabell, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department of U.C.V.

One of the reasons why the movement became so ideologically diverse was that John B. Gordon, in his first official order as commanding general of U.C.V., declared that the association would be nonpolitical. In fact, the credo which Gordon formulated in this order created so broad an ideological base that few, if any, Southerners would feel uncomfortable within the ranks of the association:

It [the U.C.V.] is political in no sense except so far as the word "political" is a synonym of the word "patriotic." It is a brotherhood over which the genius of philanthropy and patriotism, of truth and of justice will preside; of philanthropy, because it will succor the disabled, help the needy, strengthen the weak and cheer the disconsolate, of patriotism, because it will cherish the past glories of the dead Confederacy and transmute them into living inspirations for future service to the living republic; of truth, because it will seek to gather and preserve as witnesses for history the unimpeachable facts which shall doom falsehood to die that truth may live, of justice, because it will cultivate National as well as Southern fraternity and will condemn narrow mindedness and prejudice and passion, and
cultivate that broader, higher, nobler sentiment, which would write on the grave of every soldier who fell on either side: "Here lies an American hero, a martyr to the right as his conscience conceived it." 68

Only one issue in this creed became controversial, the question of to what extent U.C.V. should be reconciliatory. Gordon's method was to make everyone feel righteous and heroic, and he obviously found it advantageous to do this for the North as well as the South. Other veterans, however, conceived the purposes of U.C.V. in a different light, and the resulting ideological split—though minor—was one which was never completely cemented. Nevertheless, Gordon's statement included another clause, the impact of which was considerably more unifying than the reconciliation issue was dividing: "... it will cherish the past glories of the dead Confederacy, and transmute them into living inspirations for future service to the living republic." The "past glories" of the Confederacy would be available to all. They would provide "living inspirations" for all who chose to use them, for whatever ideological purpose. The Confederate myth, therefore, became a flexible tool and a broad umbrella under which all Southerners could be protected.

Chapter 4

CONFEDERATE VETERANS SPEAK OF THE CAUSES
OF THE CIVIL WAR

When Confederate veteran orators stood before their former military comrades one of the subjects which frequently found a place in the resulting rhetoric was the question, "What were the causes of the war?" This was a meaningful issue and one which seemed to provide the foundation for other questions. For example, if they could demonstrate that this war was waged for noble or even sacred purposes, then this evidence would be of considerable importance in properly measuring the sacrifices made to fight that war. Furthermore, it was necessary to establish an exact reason why the South went to war before one could accurately gauge the implications of Southern defeat.

In order to understand fully the nature of this question of causes, one must remember that four years of internecine combat not only had resulted in that destruction of lives and property but had also, during the following twelve years of Reconstruction, rendered the South impotent in the national councils of government. As Weaver noted,
"the section was for the time being emasculated." True, those Reconstruction years had passed, Carpetbag rule had been overthrown, and New South industrial expansion and growing political strength now seemed to make the region more important to the rest of the nation. Nevertheless, the gnawing question still remained: Had that war really been warranted when measured in terms of the physical, economic, political, and psychological losses which the South had suffered? To a people who had staked their all and lost, it became important to vindicate the original gamble.

John H. Reagan certainly was expressing some of his own eagerness to vindicate that gamble when, in 1894, he told an audience of Texas Confederate veterans:

Of late years we occasionally hear the inquiry as to what caused the great war. . . . A struggle which cost hundreds of thousands of valuable lives, and by which many billions of money was spent and property sacrificed, could hardly have been engaged in without a sufficient cause. . . . Without raising the question of who was right and who was wrong in that struggle, I think our children should know why their fathers engaged in so great a war.2

Following this statement, Reagan proceeded to summarize the long chain of events which, from the colonial period until 1860, pulled, as he believed, the North and the South into


2Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75.
an inevitable armed conflict. His motivations appear to have been clear: he wanted posterity to understand that the South did what she had to do. Furthermore, he wanted that posterity to view Confederates as heroic defenders of principle. But perhaps most of all he wanted these ex-Confederates to view themselves as gallant champions of constitutional freedom.

Reagan was by no means alone in his effort to justify the Confederacy. Other Confederate veteran orators joined him in this purpose, and many used entire ceremonial addresses to outline causes and to argue the inevitability of effects. The following chapter explores (1) how these orators justified the war, and (2) why they employed particular rationales in that justification. Consideration is given to four major topics: (1) slavery as a cause, (2) constitutional disputes as a cause, (3) Northern "aggression" as a cause, and (4) regional sociological and philosophical differences as a cause.

SLAVERY AS A CAUSE

Of all the issues which these orators treated, none seemed to be more sensitive than the issue of slavery. For if the South had fought for this institution, then she had lost, and lost irrevocably. Slavery had been abolished and showed no promise for reinstatement. In fact, the judgments of civilized society relative to such systems of human
bondage had grown even more condemnatory. The former Confederate states could never garner praise for having fought for so ignoble a course. Whereas, if it could be shown that the South had struggled to preserve some higher principle, then such praise might be forthcoming. Therefore, these orator-apologists were faced with the problem of how to treat slavery, and their first decision apparently was to minimize the evils of the institution, arguing that positive goods had accrued both for the Negro and for the South in general.

One minimizing idea which was highly popular was the view that slavery had provided a civilizing and Christianizing influence for a people who, according to this argument, would otherwise have remained in a primitive state of barbarism. John W. Daniel expressed this particular premise in his 1893 address to the third annual reunion of U.C.V.:

Our race found the black man a wanderer in the wilderness and gave him a home; it found him naked and clothed him; it found him a savage, a cannibal, and a heathen and it made him a Christian; it found him muttering a gibberish and gave him a language; it found him empty-minded and it filled him with instruction. When he ceased to be a slave, so had he been elevated from his barbarous state that he was declared fit to assume the great prerogatives and responsibilities of an American citizen.3

That same year, when addressing veterans gathered for the dedication of a monument in Clarke County, Virginia, Colonel

3 "Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V."
Richard Henry Lee expressed sentiments which were much in agreement with those of Daniel. Speaking of slavery Colonel Lee argued:

It was useful and valuable in its day. It lifted a people who, in the land of their nativity, were savages, out of barbarism and animalism to such a plane of Christian civilization as to qualify them, in the judgment of the conquerors of the South, to participate in the government of the great republic. What a tribute to the much abused South! What a monument to Southern Christian men and women.5

Then John H. Reagan voiced the same idea in his 1894 address to the annual reunion of Texas veterans by noting that antebellum churches had justified slavery on the ground that

. . . Negroes were taken from a condition of heathenish barbarism and cannibalism and brought to where they could be taught the arts of civilization and industry, and where they could be instructed in the doctrines and practices of the Christian religion.6

Of course a certain connotation in the statements of both Daniel and Lee slightly altered their assertions. When Daniel said that the Negro had been "declared fit to assume the great prerogatives and responsibilities of an American

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4 Colonel Richard Henry Lee was the grandson of Richard Henry Lee, The American Revolutionary statesman. During the Civil War he served as a lieutenant in the Second Virginia Regiment before being seriously wounded. At the centennial celebration for the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Colonel Lee was selected to read the document. See George Norbury MacKenzie, ed., Colonial Families of the United States of America (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966), p. 312.

5 Confederate Veteran, I (July 1, 1893), 205.

6 Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75.
citizen" he no doubt intended to challenge this declaration of fitness. Furthermore, when Lee carefully noted that it was "the judgment of the conquerers of the South" that the Negro was ready "to participate in the government of the great republic" he apparently intended to communicate his reservation in reference to this "judgment." It should be noted that these speeches were delivered in the 1890's when several of the Southern states were considering disfranchise¬ment legislation. In fact, by 1890 disfranchisement had already been accomplished in Mississippi. Nevertheless, Daniel, Lee, and Reagan obviously did believe that the emancipated Negro was superior to his ancestor on the African continent, and that the difference in civilized attainments was because of the "humanizing" and "Christianizing" environment which American slavery had provided for the Black. With this argument they sought to place focus on the "benefits" of the institution rather than on its innate brutality.

The speakers next tried to minimize the evils of slavery by demonstrating the benefits gained by the total Southern society. Bradley T. Johnson used such an argument. He reasoned that slavery had been immensely profitable for his region, that it had "produced an enormous expansion of material and consequently political power." Not stopping on

this point, Johnson went on to charge that slavery had made possible the development of some wonderful characteristics in Southern whites. It had permitted the growth of "a society which for intelligence, culture, chivalry, justice, honor, and truth has never been excelled." It had enabled the South to produce a highly sophisticated type of political genius. "The Southern race," charged Johnson, "ruled the continent from 1775 to 1860 and it became evident that it would rule forever as long as the same conditions existed." Thus it "became the deliberate intent of the North to break up institutions . . . controlling and producing such dominating influences." For this reason, argued Johnson, slavery originally had been attacked. He denied that the morality of the institution had ever been the major issue.8

Few of these orators indicated a willingness to deal directly with this question of the morality of slavery. In fact, preferring to shift the ground for debate, they ended up advancing arguments similar to this one voiced by Congressman Thomas C. Catchings9 of Mississippi in a Memorial Day oration delivered at Vicksburg:

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8Confederate Veteran, I (July, 1893), 205.

9Thomas C. Catchings was a Confederate veteran from Mississippi who served his state in the United States Congress from 1885 to 1901. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, I, 161; and Who Was Who in America, IV, 161.
If the institution of slavery was accompanied by the suggestion of moral wrong, the States of the North were no more blameless than we; for, aside from the fact that in the early days their inhabitants were themselves owners of slaves, and had parted with them only when they ceased to be a profitable investment, and then by sale for the best price to be had, the very constitution which they had helped to frame declared it to be lawful and provided safeguards designed to prevent its destruction.  

Supporting this line of reasoning, John W. Daniel included the following in his address to the third annual reunion of U.C.V.:  

Who was responsible for African slavery? All our ancestors, English and American; all of our contemporaries, Northern and Southern. Not a section, not a country, but a race. . . . If it were wrong all were guilty.

Daniel's comment is of additional interest because he apparently was the only orator in this movement who saw slavery as being an institution which was essentially rooted in racism.

Even J. L. M. Curry, who accepted the indictment of slavery on moral grounds, employed a minimizing defense for this ante-bellum institution, pointing to the involvement of New England in the slave trade. Furthermore, the orator also argued that during the last half of the eighteenth century two states, South Carolina and Virginia, enacted legislation designed to curtail this traffic in human

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10 *Confederate Veteran*, VIII (July, 1900), 315-316.

cargo. The implication here seems obvious: Curry apparently felt that the South was made a victim of a radical change in a moral standard, even after she had taken steps to halt the further importation of slaves. However, it should be noted that Curry failed to interpret accurately these legislative actions. For instance, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips indicated:

The distinctively Southern considerations against the trade were that its continuance would lower the price of slaves already on hand, or at least prevent those prices from rising; that it would so increase the staple exports as to spoil the world's market for them; that it would drain our money and keep the community in debt; that it would retard the civilization of the Negroes on hand; and that by raising the proportion of blacks in the population it would intensify the danger of slave insurrections.13

Nevertheless, in fairness to Curry, it should be noted that he did take a positive position concerning the morality of slavery. The following excerpt from his 1896 U.C.V. reunion speech indicates that this Southern educator supported the philosophical and theological premises which lay behind emancipation:

African slavery has shared in the evolution of public opinion and social institutions, and the Christian world has slowly, but irrevocably arrived at the great truth that a human being is entitled to personal freedom, to the products of his labor, to unrestraint upon his fullest moral and mental development.14


14"Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 60.
Three ideas in this statement deserve closer examination. First, the orator spoke of this "evolution of public opinion" as arriving at a "great truth," not at a new attitude or at a new opinion. Curry apparently viewed abolition as being a permanent advancement in social justice, or in other words, the unveiling of a great truth. Second, Curry was careful to suggest that this "truth" was hidden from earlier men. The "Christian world" had "slowly" advanced to that point of enlightenment where this truth was no longer hidden. The implication here apparently was that no ante-bellum societal element should be condemned for failure to accept a truth which had not as yet evolved as such. Third, he saw this new truth as calling for something more than just the removal of the shackles of slavery. For according to Curry, this human being was "entitled . . . to unrestraint upon his fullest moral and mental development." In other words, this former slave, and his children and his grandchildren, should not be denied an education. Curry was telling the old veterans a little more than they were accustomed to hear.

Another approach taken by these orators, with the apparent intent of minimizing the slavery issue, was to argue that even if the institution had been immoral the North had not abandoned it on these grounds. Like Congressman Catchings, these orators often charged that Northerners had parted with their slaves "only when they [the slaves]
ceased to be a profitable investment." In addition, a few speakers extended this rationale in an attempt to show that the South had literally been trapped by circumstance while the North looked on with hypocrisy. For example, Senator Daniel explained how in his judgment the South became a victim. First, agreeing with Catchings, he charged that the North had discontinued its use of slave labor for only two reasons, "it [slavery] was not profitable in mechanical labors, . . . [and] it competed with free labor." Then he asserted that the agrarian South simply continued a system which it had earlier received "from the imposition of tyranny." And finally he argued that the South continued slavery through necessity. "It knew not what to do with it," Daniel asserted. The South "was 'between the devil and the deep blue sea.' The slaves were too numerous to transport. Free them and free suffrage would follow, and with suffrage race conflict." After minimizing the evils of slavery by charging that the institution benefited both the Negro and the entire Southern society, and after avoiding the moral issue by shifting blame to the North, these orator-apologists then charged that slavery had not been the true cause of the war.

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15 *Confederate Veteran*, VIII (July, 1900), 316.

In fact, this was one allegation on which these speakers reached almost total unanimity. The following statements constitute a sampling of the many declarations of this premise.

It is not true, as an historical fact, that the maintenance of slavery on one side, or its abolition on the other, was the cause and origin of the war. Its abolition was an incident to the war—and a very striking one—but not the cause of it.

- Congressman Charles E. Hooker

These Southern States believed that the powers granted to the federal government had been used to their injury and oppression, and therefore they decided to abandon the Union. In taking this step, slavery was not the cause, but the occasion of the separation. It might as well be said that tea was the cause of our separation from the government of Great Britain in 1776.

- Colonel Richard Henry Lee

... I should be false to the memory of the dead, if I did not remind you, that he [Jefferson Davis], the man we all adore, battled for the constitutional right to dissolve the Union, not for revolution, not for slavery—that the war was fought upon a legal, not a moral issue, and it is significant that slavery is not mentioned either in the Confederate inaugural or in Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

- General Stephen D. Lee

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17 "Minutes of the Eighth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 30. Charles E. Hooker obtained the rank of colonel in the Confederate cavalry and was seriously wounded in the defense of Vicksburg, losing his left arm. After the war he was one of the lawyers appointed to defend Jefferson Davis. He served in the United States Congress 1875-1883, 1887-1895, and 1901-1903. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, IV, 135.

18 Confederate Veteran, I (July, 1893), 201.

I insist that the South did not make war in defense of slavery; slavery was only the incident, the point attacked.

- General Bradley T. Johnson

But we did not go to war for slavery, though slavery was interwoven with the causes and intensified the bitterness of the war, and the fate of slavery was forever settled by the result.

- Senator Edward Cary Walthall

If slavery, then, was not the true cause of the war, what was its relationship to the true cause? Well, some of these orators alleged that the North simply chose to declare war on slavery in order to attack something much more basic in the Southern way of life. This scapegoat rationale was certainly expressed by General Bradley T. Johnson, who denied that the morality of slavery was ever a major issue. He argued instead that there were characteristics in antebellum Southern society that the North both envied and feared. "There was forming in the South," said Johnson, "a military democracy, aggressive, ambitious, intellectual, and brave, such as led Athens in her brightest epoch and controlled Rome in her most glorious days." Fearing perpetual domination, the North sought some Southern institution to attack. Slavery was chosen for that attack not because Northerners conceived it to be wrong but because they conceived it to be vulnerable. "The point of the right or

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20 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 507.
21 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 300.
wrong of slavery," asserted Johnson, "agitated but a few weak-minded and feeble men."^22

The orator further charged that the result of this Northern guile was that the entire force of her social institutions, "the press, the pulpit, the public schools--was put in operation to make distinctive war upon Southern institutions and Southern character."^23 In short, Johnson simply refused to accept the idea that the abolitionists had any motive other than a political one, and consequently refused to accept slavery as being a meaningful cause of the Civil War.

In general these speakers avoided any direct treatment of the issue of slavery. The myth-veneered image of their Lost Cause could not be built upon a defense of this institution. Surely the South had not fought simply to protect the right of one man to make a slave of another. A higher principle than this was needed if the Southern apologist was to depict the Confederacy as the savior of American ideals. But, as a basic prerequisite to further rationalization, slavery still had to be removed as a substantial issue. The orators chose to do this first by minimizing the evils of the institution, second by shifting the blame for its origins, and third by charging that slavery had never been

^22Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 507.

^23Ibid., pp. 507-508.
the true cause of the war. Nevertheless, this left them in the position where they had to identify that true cause.

VIOLATIONS OF CONSTITUTIONALITY AS A CAUSE

In their subsequent search for causation, these Confederate veteran speakers depicted 1860 Southern motives in terms of a "principle" or "principles" rooted in the American Constitution. The following general statements indicate the popularity of this basic contention:

The principle in defense of which the South accepted battle, after peaceably seceding from the Union, was found in the Constitution.

- Senator William B. Bate

Hence the men who fought and the men who fell, fought and fell in a just cause. They fell in defense of the Constitution.

- J. L. M. Curry

The war, with us, did not originate in ambition, nor did we fight for spoils, for conquest or for fame. . . . We went to war for none of these, but it was to save the Constitution as we read it.

- Senator Edward Cary Walthall

We cannot yield the belief in the principles we inherited from our revolutionary forefathers. We fought for what they did, but they had better luck. . . . Constitutional and sacred guarantees agreed on in the Union

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24 Confederate Veteran, III (November, 1895), 343.


26 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 300.
of sovereign States were trampled under foot.
            - General Stephen D. Lee

We fought for the Constitution as our fathers taught it to us.
            - Senator James H. Berry

These speakers did not always stress the same constitutional principle. In fact, there were three constitutional issues frequently discussed, (1) constitutional guarantees for slavery, (2) the right of secession, and (3) the question of state sovereignty.

**The Question of Constitutional Guarantees for Slavery**

Considerable discussion has already been devoted to the issue of slavery, but as yet the basic constitutional arguments which these orators advanced in support of this ante-bellum institution have not been examined. In truth, this seems not to have been a popular issue with these orators, except to the extent that many of them simply asserted the ante-bellum constitutionality of slavery. Furthermore, they usually stated that assertion indirectly, much as did John W. Daniel in the following passage:


28"Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 64. James H. Berry enlisted in the Sixteenth Arkansas Infantry but served only a few months before losing a leg at Shiloh. After the war he practiced law in Arkansas and in 1882 was elected governor of the state. Then in 1885 he became a United States senator and remained so until 1907.
If it [slavery] was wrong all were guilty, for all put it in the Federal Constitution and swore to support it, and the fugitive slave law in the Constitution found its germ in the earlier action of the United colonies of New England.29

Or they phrased it even more indirectly as did George Clark: "There was another great principle for which we stood, and that is that we fought against the interference of the government with the right of the property of the individual."30

In his 1897 address at the seventh annual reunion of U.C.V., John H. Reagan went into much greater detail than did Daniel or Clark and provided a specifically stated presentation of these constitutional arguments relative to slavery. Reagan pointed out that the ante-bellum South had claimed constitutional recognition of slavery in three clauses of that document.

The first such clause is contained in Article 1, section 2, paragraph 3 and deals with the method by which Representatives are apportioned among the several states.


30 Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 22. George Clark entered the war as a private in the 1st Alabama regiment, saw action in several engagements, and ended the war as a captain. After Appomattox he moved to Texas, practiced law and served as secretary of state for Texas, attorney general, and judge of the court of appeals. He was a political opponent of John H. Reagan and James Stephen Hogg. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, II, 22-23.
The clause in question was later superseded by the Fourteenth Amendment, but it originally prescribed that the state populations should be determined

... by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other Persons.31

Reagan argued, as had many Southerners before him, that this clause recognized slavery as a legal institution and granted "partial representation of slavery in Congress."32

The second clause is contained in Article 4, section 2, paragraph 3. This is the paragraph which was used to justify fugitive slave laws. The clause holds that,

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.33

Reagan of course argued that this clause provided "for the protection of the rights of the owners of slaves by requiring their return to their masters when escaping from one state to another."34

32 "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 27.
34 "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 27.
The third clause which the orator claimed recognized slavery was one which is contained in Article 1, section 9, paragraph 1. It reads as follows:

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.35

Reagan reasoned that this clause not only recognized African slavery but made "provisions for the continuance of the slave trade for twenty years after the adoption of the Constitution."36

The Question of the Right of Secession

Several orators chose to argue that the South really had a constitutional right to secede and that the North's violation of this right actually precipitated the war. Under this rationale the South was depicted as having peacefully followed procedure which had been sanctioned by the highest law of the land, while in turn the North was drawn as an aggressor whose actions were in rebellion to that highest law. When Thomas C. Catchings delivered his Memorial Day address in Vicksburg, he followed this line of reasoning.


36 "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 27.
Catchings began by arguing that "the Southern States" in withdrawing from the Union were exercising a power which had been claimed from the . . . adoption of the constitution." To support this assertion he defended an interpretation of the American Constitution which years before had been advocated by John C. Calhoun. This interpretation was that the document was merely a "compact" between equally sovereign states, a compact which could be, under certain circumstances, dissolved, or from which an individual state could withdraw. Catchings gave voice to this interpretation in the following statement:

... in the early days of the republic, the theory was recognized by American statesman with substantial unanimity, that the constitution was but a compact between sovereign States entered into for their common welfare; that by this compact they surrendered none of the attributes of sovereignty; that because of this sovereignty, any State could lawfully withdraw from the compact whenever in its judgment its interests required it to do so.

Therefore, under such an interpretation, if a state were to withdraw, then any steps taken by the remaining members of the compact to compel reinstatement could only be considered illegal.

Defending this interpretation, the Mississippi orator reasoned that the Founding Fathers had understood this to be the meaning of the Constitution from its inception.

37 Confederate Veteran, VIII (July, 1900), 313.
38 Ibid.
For example, Catchings pointed out that New York, Virginia, and Rhode Island had ratified the document only after they had inserted

in their resolutions of ratification the explicit declaration that the powers of government vested by the constitution in the United States of America might be reassumed by them [the states] whenever they should deem it necessary to their happiness or to prevent injury or oppression.³⁹

Catchings reasoned that what these state resolutions actually demanded was the right of secession, since—as he argued—they could not have withdrawn delegated powers and stayed in the Union.

The orator also made reference to resolutions passed by Virginia (1798) and by Kentucky (1798 and 1799) in which those states claimed the right to remove themselves from the control of Federal powers which had not been constitutionally delegated. Catchings interpreted the implications of these state actions in the following manner:

These resolutions announced what is commonly known as the doctrine of nullification, with which it is difficult to agree, since it is impossible to perceive how a State could remain in the Union and not obey its laws.⁴⁰

Secession would become the only course of action open to such a state, and this was a course of action which developed logically from the simultaneous legality and unworkability of nullification.

³⁹Ibid.
⁴⁰Ibid., p. 314.
After advancing these arguments, Catchings sought to develop another defense for the "right of secession," arguing that New England and other Northern states had been the "home of secession." In support of this he charged that several of these Northern states, including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and Rhode Island, had given ideological endorsement to the doctrine of secession, and he pointed to several state legislative actions which he interpreted as having supported the doctrine. Furthermore, he contended that the "right of secession had at least on one occasion been upheld by United States congressional action, and that this action had been precipitated by a Representative from Massachusetts. 41

Nevertheless, Catchings seemed to recognize that the main support for the doctrine eventually came from the South, and that arguments over the right of secession crystalized in the deliberative clashes between Calhoun and Webster, and that issues relative to tariffs and slavery polarized the positions. "But thoughtful men," concluded Catchings, all along perceived that if both sides persisted, . . . if no middle ground could be found upon which both could stand, the time would surely come when the strife for mastery would find its settlement in another field than that of discussion and debate. 42

41 Ibid., pp. 314-315.
42 Ibid., p. 315.
Thus for Catchings there was a touch of inevitability about the war: the Southern states exercised a right which by their interpretation of the Constitution was entirely legal; the Northern states, true to the arguments of Webster, did not support this claim of legality; consequently, a war ensued which placed the issue before the arbiter of battle.

Catchings was by no means the only one of these Confederate veteran orators who spoke of the "right of secession" as the major principle for which the South fought. In fact, while delivering an address at the annual reunion of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1890, General Evander McIvor Law developed essentially the same set of arguments. In addition, J. L. M. Curry strongly supported the South's ante-bellum view on secession, making such a point of its legality that he objected to the use of the term "Civil War." To Curry this term implied that the Confederate states had never been separated from the Union, and that the fighting had been between rebel and non-rebel states, all within the same federal structure. Curry preferred to use the phrase "the war between the states." This

43 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVII, 86-110. Evander McIvor Law obtained the rank of major general during the war, serving under Lee in most of the important campaigns in the East. After the war he founded the South Florida Military and Educational Institute and served as its president until 1903. From 1899 to 1903 he was commander of the Florida division of U.C.V. See Dictionary of American Biography, XI, 38-39.
The war had been waged between equally sovereign states. Curry was so sensitive to this issue that during the ninth reunion of U.C.V. he took the opportunity to reprimand some of the speakers—including Gordon—who had been on the platform prior to his appearance:

I have been pained even since I have been sitting here on this platform, to hear expressions which, when properly analyzed, concede what the North claims to our prejudice and our dishonor. Mr. Commander, that was no Civil War; it was neither a Civil War nor a Rebellion. On the contrary, every step taken by the Seceding States was a step taken in conformity with the strictest compliance of law. Everything was done in accordance with legitimate procedure.

The Question of State Sovereignty

There was a third constitutional issue which assumed even more importance in this rhetoric than did the right of secession or the right of slavery. This was the question of state sovereignty. Most of the speakers touched on this subject, and the approaches to the topic fell basically into two categories: (1) arguments which held that the war had been precipitated by an ever-increasing Northern political dominance, a regional ascendancy which resulted from usurpation, and (2) arguments which held that the South seceded only after she saw clearly that the federal government was assuming nondelegated and therefore unconstitutional powers.

These two positions are distinguishable only by point of emphasis. For example, if an orator supported views belonging to the first position, then he explained the war's cause in terms of a North-South political dichotomy in which the South, losing her regional pre-eminence, faced an unavoidable future of political subservience. On the other hand, if an orator supported views belonging to the second position, he saw this dichotomy in terms of federal versus state powers, with the state's role losing pre-eminence. The positions were by no means mutually exclusive, and occasionally an orator advanced both ideas, as did Clement A. Evans in his address to the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, in Richmond, 1895:

It is, therefore, well asked why then did secession occur? Let the answer be honorably made, that in 1860 the Southern States despaired of maintaining the original principles of the Union which they had helped to form. They saw sectional ascendancy become imminent and portentous of evil [position number one]. . . . With unspeakable sadness they beheld centralization tightening its coils to crush out the Statehood of the States [position number two].

The first charge made by Evans was that in 1860 the North was assuming political dominance and that this represented a danger to the South. The danger which most of the speakers chose to discuss was that of unequal treatment. For example, at the dedication of the Chickamauga battleground William B. Bate asserted:

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45 Southern Historical Society Papers, XXIII, 17.
The South claimed and asked nothing more than equal rights—not of persons only, but of states. Equal privileges in all parts of the Union, equal protection wherever the flag floated, to every person, to every species of property recognized by any state. Less than that was subordination, not equality.\textsuperscript{46}

Later in the same address Bate added that the eleven Southern states seceded "feeling that their constitutional rights were imperiled, and that they could not be as equals in the government.\textsuperscript{47} The charge here was not one based simply on the issue of state sovereignty per se. Instead, the implied allegation was that the North had somehow obtained all of the governmental prerogatives. Therefore the Southern states were threatened with perpetual political subjugation. The demand for "equal privileges" in essence meant a demand for equal political influence.

Colonel Richard Henry Lee also dealt with this charge of inequality. He told a group of veterans that the South of 1860 considered the Union to be "a temple dedicated to American constitutional liberty." Then he proceeded to qualify the type of liberty of which he spoke:

Not a liberty for one class of people or section of the country to prey on any other people or section. Not a liberty for the majority to invade the rights of the minority, and to use the powers of the government to the aggrandizement of the former and the injury of the latter; but guaranteeing equality of rights and privileges to each section and each state.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Confederate Veteran, III (November, 1895), 343.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 344.
\textsuperscript{48} Confederate Veteran, I (July, 1893), 201.
Colonel Lee's meaning seems clear: the South of 1860 considered herself to be under the heel of a despotic majority which was determined to crush out all semblance of equal treatment between the two sections. This was essentially the same sentiment expressed by Rev. J. H. McNeilly in an 1894 Memorial Day address delivered in Franklin, Tennessee:

> With all their hearts they [the Southern people] loved the Constitution, they loved the Union, they loved liberty. But they believed that the name of the Union was used to destroy their liberty under the Constitution, that they were denied equality of rights, that their States were to be degraded to a subordinate place in the great sisterhood which constituted the Union.⁴⁹

Further expression of this idea was provided by Governor of Virginia Charles T. O'Ferrall,⁵⁰ who at the sixth reunion of U.C.V. told the old veterans that they were the remnants of an army which had taken to the field "only after all means had been exhausted to secure a recognition of rights." Then he added:

> . . . it was not until we found that we were no longer to be treated by our Northern brethren as joint heirs with them in a country which had been aroused to action by the bold words and fiery eloquence of a Southerner, whose Declaration of Independence was penned by a Southerner, and whose Constitution was framed under the watchful eye of a Southerner.⁵¹

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⁴⁹ Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 264.

⁵⁰ Charles T. O'Ferrall served during the war in the Confederate cavalry. The highest rank which he obtained was that of acting colonel. See Dictionary of American Biography, XIII, 633-634.

O'Ferrall of course added an element to the basic charge: it was bad enough for the South to be denied equal protections under the Constitution, but what made the situation even more unjust was that the South had played such a vital role in forming that Constitution and the government which existed under it.

Occasionally an orator would spell out this inequality more specifically and his discussion would usually center on ante-bellum tariff and taxation policies. General Evander McIvor Law dealt with these issues. However, Law viewed the entire North-South conflict as one which sprang not so much from principles per se but from defense of raw sectional interests. "It is safe to say," charged Law, 
"... that in all the great questions ... sectional interests, and section hostility arising therefrom, were the great central controlling facts."52 Nevertheless, the evils of sectionalism which Law mentioned were always Northern evils. Such was the case in his treatment of tariff and taxation policies.

Law first reminded his audience that "The Northern States were commercial and manufacturing, the Southern States agricultural." This argued the orator set the stage for sectional conflict:

52 *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XVII, 94.
So long as the carrying trade of the South was done by the ships of the North the arrangement was beneficial to both. But when, under the constitutional provisions to regulate commerce, the general government extended the broad aegis of its "protection" over the "infant" manufacturers of the North, it . . . [asserted] its assumed prerogative to tax the weak for the benefit of the strong, to tax the workman for the benefit of the master, to tax labor for the benefit of capital, in short to lay tribute upon every interest not identified with its own selfish self.\[53\]

Law made it clear that his references to "the weak," to "the workman," and to "labor" alluded primarily to the agrarian South. In addition, he later reminded his audience that such Northern excesses had resulted in South Carolina's nullification movement of 1832. "Then for the first time in our national history," charged the orator, "the doctrine of coercion was enunciated . . . , asserting the right . . . of the government to enforce the execution of its laws in the territory of a recusant state."\[54\]

It is interesting, however, that General Law believed that neither a practice of coercion nor a practice of nullification could have been tolerated. To this extent he disagreed with some of the other orators in this movement, for he rejected nullification as ever having been a viable policy. Indeed, Law made this position very clear:

Nullification was indefensible in law and morals, as much as coercion itself. On the broad principles of equality no party to a compact can be justified in resistance to laws made in ostensible conformity with

\[53\] Ibid.  \[54\] Ibid.
the instrument of compact, so long as it remains a member thereof and enjoys its benefits.\textsuperscript{55}

The orator apparently felt that both the North and the South occupied untenable positions and that the war grew as an inevitable result from these uncompromisable poles. National policy could not accommodate both nullification and suppression of state sovereignty. Therefore, the section split widened, and war ensued.

In his analysis of causes General Law had placed emphasis upon the regional splits which developed during the ante-bellum years in reference to almost every major political issue. By this focus all issues were viewed as rooted in a Northern-states-versus-Southern-states context. However, other orators emphasized that second issue, federal centralism versus state sovereignty. Those who saw this as being the basic conflict of the war tended to trace the roots of dissension back to the actual writing of the American Constitution. Charles E. Hooker demonstrated such a tendency. Speaking of what he believed to be the fundamental issue of the war, Hooker told the veterans gathered for the eighth annual reunion of U.C.V.:

The differences manifested in the very convention which adopted the Federal Constitution, and in the conventions of each one of the States ratifying it, and in all the legislation introduced in the Congress under it, shows that it [the cause of the war] originated in the differences of opinion as to how far the government

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
created by the Constitution was central or national, or how far it was federative in its character. This was the germ from which the conflict came.56

John H. Reagan also felt that the roots of the conflict stretched back to ideological disputes which arose in the new American government. He believed that the slavery issue only aggravated a very basic controversy which the young nation had never resolved. At the ninth reunion of the Texas division of U.C.V., Reagan presented the following explanation of that controversy:

There has, from the foundation of the government, been two antagonistic views as to the character of the government of the United States. . . . The one that the Federal government was one of strictly delegated and limited powers. . . . The other believing in a liberal and latitudinal construction of the constitution. The one desiring a strong government, with power to coerce the states to obedience to its authority; the other insisting that the states were sovereign, except as to the powers delegated to the Federal government, and regarding the preservation of the rights of the states and the liberties of the people as of more importance than a strong government.57

Senator William B. Bate also felt that part of the blame for the Civil War should be placed upon the shoulders of the Founding Fathers:

When our patriotic fathers, by way of compromise, planted certain seeds in our political garden, they proved to be the seeds of discord, and after our variable political sunshine, clouds, and rain, for three quarters of a century, they at last germinated and

57 "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion of U.C.V., Division of Texas," p. 11.
and blossomed into blood.\(^{58}\)

Nevertheless, many of the speakers seemed to think that the early patriots had made themselves very clear on the fundamental issue of state sovereignty and that it was later tamperings with the doctrine which had thwarted these original intentions, thereby moving the American government toward an unconstitutional principle of centralism. In fact, this was by far the most popular view. Senator Walthall expressed this position in his monument dedication address in Jackson, Mississippi. He explained the war as an "effort [on the part of the South] to establish the true boundary between the constitutional authority of a state and the general government."\(^{59}\) Then, at the laying of the cornerstone for the Confederate monument in Birmingham, Stephen D. Lee told his audience:

> War was forced upon us. Constitutional sacred guarantees agreed on in the Union of sovereign States were trampled under foot, under the theory promulgated by Mr. Seward, and accepted by the North, of a "higher law than the Constitution."\(^{60}\)

Next, speaking at an 1898 monument unveiling in Jacksonville, Florida, Colonel Robert H. M. Davidson told an audience of old veterans:

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\(^{58}\) Confederate Veteran, III (November, 1895), 344.

\(^{59}\) Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 301.

\(^{60}\) "Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 18.
The men of the South, a large majority of them, believed . . . in the doctrine of absolute sovereignty of the State, in the right of secession and in the doctrine that the consent of the governed was the only correct foundation of government, and that the true construction of that doctrine was that the consent meant was that of a state, and not of the whole or entire number of the States.61

Then in 1900, at the tenth reunion of U.C.V., Senator James H. Berry presented the state sovereignty argument in these words: "We fought for the Constitution as our fathers taught it to us. . . We fought for home rule and local government. We fought for the Declaration of Independence which says that all men have a right to govern themselves.62 And finally, Benjamin Morgan Palmer told an audience at that same reunion:

Whatever may have been the occasion of the war, its cardo causae, the hinge on which it turned, was this old question of State sovereignty as against national supremacy. As there could be no compromise between the two, the only resort was an appeal to the law of force, the ultima ratio regum.63

It seems obvious that what all of these speakers were charging was that in 1860 the balance of power in America had shifted from the state to the national level and

61Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVII, 119. Robert H. M. Davidson served in the Confederate army first as captain of infantry and then as lieutenant colonel in the Sixth Florida Infantry. From 1877 to 1891 he served as a United States Congressman from Florida. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, II, 355.

62"Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion. U.C.V.," p. 64.

63Ibid., p. 28.
that this shift was in violation of constitutional principles. Furthermore, it should be noted that this idea of state sovereignty was the one issue upon which the orators appeared the least ready to yield. For example, when J. L. M. Curry addressed the sixth reunion of U.C.V. in 1896 he indicated that he had not given up on this cause. He believed that the constitutional principles for which the South had fought were, with one exception, still in force.

"The Federal Government," argued Curry,

the Union as a corporate body politic, does not claim its life, nor a single power, from the people apart from the State organization. In truth, and in fact, there is not, nor ever has been, such a political entity as the people of the United States in the aggregate, separated from, independent of, the voluntary or covenanted action of the States.64

The exception which he mentioned dealt with the abolition of slavery and the effect of the fourteenth amendment upon this doctrine of state sovereignty. Nevertheless, Curry continued to view the state as the most important political unit in the American system of government. By Curry's ideology, the state was meant to play the role of an immensely powerful middleman: all power originated in and was shaped by this political unit before being "covenanted" to the federal unit. Consequently, by this reasoning, state political organizations should be far more important than the national political organization.

It seems necessary at this point to pause and examine why these speakers placed so much emphasis upon the issue of state sovereignty. First, as was indicated earlier, the right of slavery was ill-designed as a foundation principle upon which to build the image of a revered Lost Cause. For even Southern attitudes toward this institution had changed. A Lost Cause tied forever to the ugliness of slavery could never be lifted to a sacred position of regional or national respect. Some higher principle must be found. Ironically that higher principle became "freedom," not for the Negro but for state and local political units. This was a cause which the orator-apologists could depict as universal. Furthermore, it was a cause which was not tied to any particular issue. Slavery could be abolished, the right of secession could be lost, and local sovereignty could still be championed as a viable principle. This was important—as will be seen more clearly in Chapter Six—because the Lost Cause needed to be drawn as a living force. The cause was "lost" only because it had been temporarily defeated; it was not "lost" in the sense of being forever dead. If the speakers were to be successful in rebuilding the spirit of the Southern people in general, and that of the old veterans in particular, then they would need to relate their praise of past glories to predictions for future glory. Slavery was ended; struggles for state and local sovereignty they felt would be perpetual. The cause of the Confederacy must
be drawn so that posterity would associate it with this living struggle.

NORTHERN AGGRESSION AS A CAUSE

Occasionally an orator mentioned yet another cause for the war, one which he discussed either in conjunction with those already mentioned or which he claimed to exist by itself as the cause. The charge was that the North had acted as an aggressor against a peaceful and, to a degree, passive South, who, finding her rights irretrievable within the Union, followed established procedure, withdrew peacefully, only to encounter that Northern aggressor demanding that she return to the compact under which she had been so ignobly treated. Only then, according to this argument, had the South fought—on her own soil, to save her own soil.

This last phrase introduces a charge frequently advanced in this rhetoric, the argument that the South had simply protected, or sought to protect, home territory. It was asserted that Confederate soldiers fought only to save their property, their communities, their states, and their wives and children. By contrast, the Northern soldier—or so the argument went—fought for purposes considerably less noble. Bradley T. Johnson proclaimed that "the war waged upon the South was an unjust and causeless war of invasion and rapine, of plunder and murder." He went on to charge that the Yankee had not fought for patriotism or other high
motives, "but to gratify ambition and lust of power." The Confederate, on the other hand, had waged a war which was one "of self-defense, justified by all laws sacred and divine, of nature and of man." According to this orator, the North had made an all-out attack upon Southern society and upon every institution which supported that society. The South simply fought to save her land and way of life. 65

Other speakers, however, simply placed the emphasis upon the idea that Southerners had fought to protect their property, their homes, their physical territory. Speaking to a reunion of the Orange County veterans in Orlando, Florida, General S. G. French told his audience that there had been something more at stake in the war than a principle. Confederates, he argued, had given "their lives for their homes and their country." Then he explained why these Confederates had been compelled to make such a sacrifice.

We were a peaceful and quiet people, practicing the courtesies of an age that is past, and rose in arms only when our homes were threatened with invasion, and in doing so we did but exercise the first law of nature, an instinctive law that pervades all life. To have acted otherwise we would have lost self-respect, been untrue to ourselves, unworthy of our homes, false to our country, irreverent to our God, who created man in his own image. 66

65 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 509.

66 Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210. Samuel Gibbs French served in the Army of Tennessee and obtained the rank of major general. After Confederate surrender he returned to his old occupation as a planter. Later, however, he wrote an autobiographical work entitled Two Wars. See Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University press, 1965), pp. 93-94.
The last part of this quotation is of special interest because it seems to indicate that French saw a spiritual significance in this "defense" of home and country, almost as if the South had followed a divine commandment to take up arms against an aggressor. This certainly appears to be the implication of his argument that if the South had failed to fight her conduct would have been "irreverent" to her God.

General Stephen D. Lee did not specifically credit Southern action with that element of divine sanction, but he came very close to doing so, in addition to supporting the contention that the South fought a defensive war. For example, when Lee delivered the oration at the laying of the cornerstone for the Confederate monument in Birmingham he first dismissed slavery as being anything other than an "indirect" cause of the war, and then he asserted that state sovereignty became the major issue. However, he also added the following observation:

"We were invaded, and were forced to defend our hearthstones and our property. . . . We need no justification for our conduct. It is a universal law that a man should defend his own. We did that, and that only. We would have deserved to be trampled on if we had not resisted."^7

There is much similarity between this statement and the one made by General French. French implied a divine law to be in operation compelling the South to strike back at an

invader. Lee's charge that this action was required by "universal law" may not have been so different. Both orators were asserting that the South operated within the natural and sanctioned patterns of national and societal behavior and that Southern actions had therefore been inevitable, given the existing set of circumstances.

One final example of this invasion-and-defense theme should be examined, this time a passage from the speech which Congressman Hooker delivered at the fourth reunion of U.C.V. After arguing that Southerners had originated from a long line of Anglo-Saxon "liberty-loving people" who had on several historical occasions rebuffed a tyrant or an oppressive political system, Hooker asserted that the South performed as her traditions prescribed she must perform.

"Our Confederate people," argued the orator,

thought their lives, property and sacred homes were endangered, and they resorted to the remedy which they believed was rightly theirs.

When assailed in their homes, and on their own soil, they defended themselves as their English-speaking ancestors were wont to do.®®

Hooker's argument was, therefore, that the South had followed a course of action which fit very congruously into a long line of historical precedents established by her Anglo-Saxon ancestors, that Southerners had responded in accordance with the laws of their ethnic origins.

Hooker's reasoning also projected, at least indirectly, the concept of inevitability, for he seemed to be saying that if the South had acted otherwise she would have violated those Anglo-Saxon traditions. If this is a reasonable interpretation of this orator's position, then it can be concluded that all three of these speakers, French, Lee, and Hooker, discovered what they felt were sanctions for the South's "defensive" war. One found these sanctions in divine law, another in "universal law," and the third in ancestral or ethnic law.

INNATE REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AS A CAUSE

There remains to be examined one final "cause" which these orators frequently discussed. This "cause" was embodied in the idea that the North and the South had been settled by people of widely divergent social, cultural, and economic interests, and that as a result the two regions became, by virtue of these contrasts, natural adversaries. Therefore, war developed, in part, from innate regional differences. To advance this rationale these orators usually pointed to alleged differences in social structure, differences in basic human values, differences in commercial interests, and even differences in religion. Furthermore, these speakers occasionally charged that the South, as a result of these differences, had emerged as possessing the superior way of life. The North in turn, or so these
advocates reasoned, had responded with covetousness.

The orator who seems to have advanced the most extreme position along these lines was Bradley T. Johnson. In 1891 Johnson addressed veterans gathered in Fredericksburg, Virginia, for a monument unveiling, and one topic which the former brigadier general chose to discuss was the differences which he believed had existed between the two regions. "By race characteristics and geographical environment," asserted Johnson, "the civilization of the North and the South had developed on different lines." The North, he claimed, had

adopted the philosophy of materialism, and had come to believe that the highest duty of man was to accumulate power; and as money . . . had come to be a source of all material power the pursuit of wealth has got to be the . . . the highest aim of human effort.

The result, asserted Johnson, had been that "supreme selfishness had become the all-pervading sentiment and directing force of the society." 69

On the other hand, the orator had high praise for the ante-bellum South. This region, he proclaimed, "had developed a more sentimental society," and in such an environment "the ties of blood kept their hold. Husband and wife, parent and child, all the ramified relations of kinship, retained their binding force." Furthermore, he argued,

69Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 400.
"veracity and honor in men, chastity and fidelity in women, were the ideals which formed character."\textsuperscript{70}

Johnson not only felt that these special differences existed, but he also believed that Confederates had fought to preserve these distinctive Southern virtues. "The resistance made by the South," he argued,

was not merely an attempt to preserve political institutions, but to perpetuate a social organization inherited through a thousand generations—the sanctity of marriage, the inviolability of the family, the faith in truth, honor, virtue, the protection of home.\textsuperscript{71}

This statement of course relates back to the orator's charge that the North had leveled an aggressive attack against the total Southern society. Not only were the two regions distinctly different, reasoned Johnson, but the North had set about to destroy those qualities which had made the South superior. Therefore, in addition to being a war for political and economic superiority, it became—by the above rationale—a war for cultural superiority.

Few of these orators depicted the North-South social dichotomy in terms as extreme as those employed by Johnson; however, several of them did repeat the idea that the two regions had been widely separated in basic cultural and commercial traits. Senator Bate, for example, in his address at the dedication of the Chickamauga battleground, indicated that he considered these basic cultural and

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. \textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 401.
commercial differences to be significant forces in precipitating the war. "There were," said Bate,

two great divisions of the Anglo-Saxon race, domiciled in the colonies with distinct economies arising from the operations of climate, soil and occupation. They were trading and planting people—where agriculture and commerce had created a difference in every feature of domestic life. Their systems of labor, their habits of life, their thoughts and their aspirations divided and separated along diverging lines, until apprehensions, jealousies and distrusts existed, no less distinct than the climatic differences which surrounded them.  

One thing that should be remembered about Senator Bate's address is that it was delivered to an audience of both Confederate and Union veterans. Consequently, it seems only natural that he would not have been as highly critical of ante-bellum Northern society as was Johnson. The latter, in contrast, had addressed a highly partisan audience composed of ex-Confederates and members of the Ladies' Memorial Association of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Benjamin Morgan Palmer also had something to say about the differences which allegedly existed between the North and the South. In his oration at the 1900 reunion of U.C.V., Palmer discussed the causes of the section dispute by observing:

... war is not always the mere outburst of human passions; but that when projected on a large scale and protracted through a long period, and especially when occurring between members of the same race, it is the result of an antecedent conflict of opinions, which

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72 *Confederate Veteran*, III (November, 1895), 342.
having sought arbitration in vain, appeal finally to the sword from the simple necessity of settling the question of supremacy.  

This "conflict of opinions" appears not to have been, according to the minister, just variances in political ideologies. Rather, Palmer seems to have been referring to the social and political philosophies of the respective sections. The example which he chose as illustration for his thesis was the historical conflict which developed between Athens and Sparta. "From the outset," argued Palmer, these two became the exponents of two opposing systems of government and social discipline. Lacedemon expoused a policy which has been defined as continental and oligarchic; while Athens represented the ideas of commerce and democracy. Sparta sought to consolidate the Continental States of Greece under the supremacy of the few; Athens to weld the Maritime States into a democratic confederacy, of which she should be the center and soul. The antagonism was fundamental; and the two States struggled together, like Jacob and Esau, even in the womb.

Palmer obviously considered the South to be analogous to Athens and the North to Sparta; therefore, it is interesting to examine the judgment which the minister made of Athenian contributions to the world:

We, who stand on the top of so many centuries and survey the whole landscape of the past, understand perfectly that the wildness of individual freedom, so fatal to the permanence of her [Athens'] power, was yet the only condition through which Athens worked out her mission and became the "schoolmistress of the world." 

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73 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 29.
74 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 29.
75 Ibid., pp. 29-30.
The aging ex-secessionist evidently believed that the Confederate South would eventually become a "schoolmistress" in her own right, perhaps by serving as an example of heroic struggle for principle.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction to this chapter it was observed that one of the most compelling forces operating on these orators was their desire to explain why the South had engaged in so destructive a war. With few exceptions these ceremonial speakers yielded to this force and enunciated numerous apologetic rationales in vindication of the South's ante-bellum and wartime behavior. The arguments which emerged exhibited some parallels of thought and three common premises, (1) the war was inevitable, (2) the cause of the war was not understood, and (3) the true Confederate cause was righteous, universal, and eternal.

The War Was Inevitable

It was important to these Confederate veteran orators that the actions of the South, pursuant to the war and to the antecedent political conflicts, should be viewed as having been unavoidable. To admit the contrary would have meant to admit at least partial responsibility for not having achieved peace. By only one rationale did these speakers suggest that the actual military conflict could have been avoided: the South could have decided against
secession. However, J. L. M. Curry, Thomas Catchings, and others, charged that secession had in every way been legal and peaceful, and that it should have been allowed to stand. This placed the responsibility for the military conflict squarely on the shoulders of the North. It made that region the aggressor and labeled the South as a defender of sacred and constitutional rights. It was at this point, therefore, that the premise of inevitability joined with this particular rationale: the South, finding herself under military attack for having pursued a course of action which she had every constitutional right to pursue, only followed universal laws of behavior in defending her own.

This charge of inevitability also is found in conjunction with other rationales promoted by these orators. For example, when it was argued that there had existed, from the beginnings of the American political system, a basic dispute over ideology, and that this dispute had grown in its confrontations until it erupted into war, the charge was essentially one of inevitability. As Senator Bate argued, the seeds of war were planted in the Constitution itself. Military action eventually became necessary, according to his reasoning, in order to provide an arbiter for issues yet unresolved by perpetual legislative squabbling. By the same token, when it was argued that the North and the South had become populated by two different Anglo-Saxon cultures, and that the eventual conflicts had arisen from the clash of
sharply variant philosophies and ways of life, again the charge was one of inevitability. There was no "melting pot" theory operating within this rationale. Instead the view was expressed that factors of climate and commerce thrust the sections even further apart until, by simple laws of nature, their interests had assumed a collision course.

The Cause of the War Was Not Understood

The idea that was most objectionable to these speakers was that slavery had been the main cause of the war. The South, according to the vast majority of these speakers, had not fought to preserve or to extend slavery: they had fought for the rights of states and of individuals, and these rights just happened to include the ownership of slaves.

Slavery was a dead institution, and although many of these orator-apologists praised the former institution for its alleged achievements for the Negro, none seemed ready to call for its re-enstatement. Therefore, if they accepted slavery as a dead idea, and if they in turn acknowledged this dead idea as the cause of their great war, then how much more futile could that war have become. But if they did even more than this, if they accepted slavery as an immoral institution, and if they in turn acknowledged this immoral institution as the cause of their great war, then how much more ignominious could that war have become.
The South surely did not fight for something so transitory and, later, so unrighteous. The true cause for which the South fought was not only righteous, but it was universal and eternal. To admit less would mean more than just admitting defeat: it would mean admitting error.

The True Confederate Cause Was Righteous, Universal, and Eternal

These speakers believed that the ante-bellum South had all of the arguments of legality on her side. Slavery was legal because it had been sanctioned by the Constitution. Federal domination of the states was illegal because it violated the principle of state sovereignty. Secession was legal because it had been recognized by the states when the Constitution was ratified. The South, therefore, had always followed legal procedures and advocated legal policies, and where else did righteousness lie other than in law and in accepted precedent?

The Confederate cause, therefore, was a righteous cause, or so argued these apologists. It was righteous not only because it was legal, but because it upheld principles which stood in defense of human liberties. Indeed, there were many such principles mentioned by these orators. For example, it was charged that this cause upheld the concept of equality—of one state to another, of one section to another. It was also argued that the cause upheld the principle of self-government, of government by the people
to be governed. And finally it was claimed that the cause upheld principles of individual liberty, such as the right of private property. Somehow the counter charge that the Confederate cause also upheld a system of human bondage was lost amid all these claims.

There appears also to have been a claim that the Confederate cause was a universal one, that it involved rights and principles for which a long line of Anglo-Saxon ancestors had also fought, and, consequently, that it involved issues which extended beyond the actual circumstances of this particular war. For example, these orators often equated the Civil War with the Revolutionary War and even charged that the same issues had been at stake. Only the Confederates had not been as fortunate as their Revolutionary forefathers. In addition, there were attempts to link this war of 1861-1865 with earlier struggles of the Anglo-Saxon race for freedom and democracy. The liberties for which the Confederates fought were said to have been the liberties for which mankind in general had fought.

If, therefore, the South had fought for a universal cause, it would appear that, by definition, she also fought for an eternal cause. Consequently, these orators often envisioned the efforts of the Confederacy as belonging to some continuous struggle for personal freedoms. The cause would be vindicated if by no other way than by being continued, by all societies and all nations that feel themself
oppressed. Defeat, therefore, had no meaning for such a principle. It could only be momentarily retarded. The idea would be kept alive. Confederate veteran orators gave frequent indication that they considered their lost cause to be one that would be kept alive. In the sixth chapter of this study examination will be made of the possibility that they even considered this cause to have been victorious.

When one asks why these speakers depicted the Confederate cause as they did three answers seem to emerge: (1) they wanted to correct what they claimed were errors in history; (2) they wanted to satisfy themselves and their listeners that the South had always followed courses of action which were legal, noble, and morally correct; and (3) they wanted to assure posterity that the Confederate struggle had also been for them. Furthermore, by achieving these major goals the orators apparently hoped to rebuild the Southern spirit, to reawaken regional pride, and to guarantee the Confederacy a praiseworthy place in history. All of these goals could not be obtained simply by redefining the causes of the war; however, this issue of causes was the most basic element in the Confederate apologia. The question of why the South had fought had to be answered before dealing with the question of how she fought or the question of what was the meaning of her defeat.
Chapter 5

CONFEDERATE VETERANS SPEAK OF THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER, THE CONFEDERATE LEADER, AND THE SOUTHERN WOMAN

Confederate defeat had not only left Southerners with a desire to justify their war in terms of its cause but had also made them want to vindicate their role in the actual fighting. As was mentioned earlier, these Southerners entered the conflict believing that they could achieve an easy victory. The easy victory, however, never came. The expected short summer war stretched into four long years of wearisome fighting, and at the end the South emerged not with victory but with demoralizing defeat. The destitute and disillusioned Confederate soldier then trudged home, perhaps wondering about some of that optimistic rhetoric which he had heard in the spring and summer of 1861.

Many questions no doubt arose in the mind of this returning soldier, not the least of which was one which asked how the South had fallen so far below expectations. The opening chapter of this study dealt, in part, with the efforts of early Southern apologists to answer such questions, and now the present chapter will examine what Confederate veteran orators between 1889 and the close of 1900 had to say about, (1) the Confederate soldier, (2) the Confederate leader, (3) the Southern woman, and (4) the Southern society.
in general. In this discussion emphasis will be placed not upon the total nature of these groups but only on those attributes allegedly exhibited during and immediately after the war.

THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

In 1897, at the seventh annual reunion of U.C.V., John B. Gordon delivered a speech which he had intended to be his resignation address as commander in chief of the association. As was his custom on all U.C.V. occasions, Gordon voiced an eloquent encomium to the Confederate private soldier:

From first to last, in all those years of alternate victory and defeat, of hope and despair, my heart was ever paying its spontaneous tribute to the matchless fortitude of that intrepid band, who shoeless, half clad and hungry, marched on foot, suffered on picket and bravely defied the battle's carnage from the beginning to the end of that struggle without one murmur of discontent. Sir, if I had the power I would erect to the private soldier the most splendid memorial that gratitude could suggest, genius could plan or money could build, but I am too poor for that. Or if I possessed the needed gift of speech I would leave upon record a tribute worthy of them ... but my words are too feeble for that.

Such praise was by no means unusual in the rhetoric of Confederate reunions and memorial occasions. In fact, of all the topics which these orators chose to discuss, none seemed to receive as much attention as did "the Confederate

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soldier." The reason for this is understandable. The old Southern soldier in the audience wanted to hear about himself. He wanted to hear how courageous his fight had been. But perhaps most of all he wanted to hear it said that Confederate defeat had not tarnished his image as a soldier, that regardless of this defeat he had been a fighting man of whom his region was proud.

Demonstrating no hesitation in accommodating this want, Confederate veteran orators poured forth praise for the skills and character of this soldier. To illustrate the popularity of this topic, and the intensity of the panegyric rhetoric in which it was treated, one needs only to draw samples at random from the wide range of this apologetic oratory:

What mind can contemplate, what tongue can speak without emotion of the gallant volunteer army which came forth at the great call of nature, of honor, and of their country? It is impossible for their countrymen to recollect them but with tenderness, with affection, with tears.

- Senator Thomas B. Turley

I rejoice that we raise this monument to the memory of such heroes... It is to perpetuate their stainless name and untarnished honor. It is that our children may thrill with the thought that they are descended from such a race.

- General Stephen D. Lee

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2 Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 498. Thomas Battle Turley served the Confederacy as a private in the 154th Tennessee regiment and was wounded twice. From 1897 to 1901 he was a United States Senator from Tennessee. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, VII, 933.

Great as was the ability and courage and purity of life of our generals, who deservedly achieved a world-wide fame, . . . we turn with still greater pride and holier reverence, if such a thing be possible, to the memory of the subaltern officers and private soldiers . . .

- John H. Reagan

One of the brightest chapters of the history of nations is the story of the constancy and devotion shown by the Confederate soldier to his cause, and in return by the people to his person and his fame.

- George Moorman

I yield to no one in love for the Confederate soldier, and admiration for his deeds. I never see his halting gait or empty sleeve, or honorable scars, that I do not involuntarily take off my hat in profound respect for the man.

- Rev. J. William Jones

There is no question that these speakers did praise the Confederate soldier. In fact, they acclaimed his virtues with what appears to have been every superlative available. The only real questions are how did they praise him and why did they praise him. Stephen D. Lee addressed himself specifically to this second question at the laying

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4 Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75.

5 "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 63. George Moorman obtained the rank of captain during the war and, among other positions, served as Aide-de-Camp on the staff of General Roger W. Hanson. For many years he held the office of adjutant general of the U.C.V. See Confederate Veteran, II (November, 1895), 351.

6 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 108. For many years Rev. John William Jones was the chaplain general of the U.C.V. He spent the war years as a chaplain-evangelist in the Army of Northern Virginia and later recorded some of his experiences in Christ in the Camp. See Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), I, 710-711.
of the cornerstone for the Confederate monument in Birming-
ham. Speaking of the Confederate dead, Lee proclaimed:

When we praise them, we glorify ourselves; when we speak
of their invincible courage, of their heroic sacrifices,
we feel a thrill of pride that we shared the same priva-
tions and the same perils. We moved in the same line of
battle, and braved the same showers of shrapnell and
minie balls; we charged the same breastworks; we heard
the echoes of the same artillery and the rattle of the
same musketry. . . . We did all they did, except it was
theirs to die for their country. 7

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to document a
charge that these veterans ever wished they had died for
their cause, but it does seem probable that they wanted to
hear themselves praised as being willing to do just that.
In addition, the constant homage paid them for the "courage"
they exhibited and the "perils" and "privations" they en-
dured probably made the memories of defeat less sharp.

On the other hand, this entire idea of Confederate
defeat had been questioned by some of these veterans.

Richard M. Weaver observed that

It was hard for the ex-Confederate to understand why he,
who had fought in almost every battle against odds and
who had routed superior numbers on more than one field,
should be demoted to the position of failure by the mere
technicality of surrender.8

Consequently the purpose served by this laudatory rhetoric
may have been to refute this idea of Confederate defeat. If

7"Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting and Reunion,

8The Southern Tradition at Bay (New Rochelle, N.Y.:
it could be demonstrated that the Confederate soldier had fought courageously and skillfully against great odds then perhaps there was profound truth embodied in Rev. J. William Jones' charge that the South "won victories which illustrated the brightest pages of American history and yielded at last, 'not conquered but wearied out with victory.'" 

There may have been a third reason why these speakers devoted so much of their rhetoric to praise of the Confederate soldier. Rev. J. H. McNeilly gave indication of this third motive when, in 1894, he delivered the Memorial Day address at Franklin, Tennessee:

They [the Confederate soldiers] vindicated the character and quality of the civilization in which they were trained. For years the life, customs, manners, and institutions of the Southern States had been abused, misrepresented, and ridiculed. The people were denounced as effeminate and brutal, haughty in manners and loose in morals. . . . But those four years of deadly strife, in which the whole world was held at bay, in which they wrought deeds of daring and magnanimity almost unparalleled in history, taught all the world the strength of character, the firmness of purpose, the long-enduring hardihood of nature, the noble manhood . . . that had been nurtured under a system which had been so grossly slandered.

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9 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 103.

10 Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 265. During the war, Rev. McNeilly was chaplain of the 49th Tennessee regiment. After the war he was pastor of a Presbyterian church in Nashville. See Ibid., p. 264.
Therefore, this rhetoric became a defense against Northern criticism of Southern society in general. A society which could produce such superior fighting men must have its own superior qualities.

In summary, then, there were at least three possible motives behind this perpetual praise of the Confederate soldier, (1) to soften the reality of defeat, (2) to challenge this "reality," or (3) to refute assumed criticism of the Confederate soldier and of Southern society. The question which remains is, How did they praise the Confederate soldier?

The Confederate Soldier as an American Patriot

It should first be noted that these speakers depicted the Confederate soldier as an American patriot. The cause for which he fought, and the way he fought, set him, it was argued, into an American tradition for which the South and the entire nation should be proud. In addition, this soldier was by race and cultural heritage American, and his fight had been in support of principles received from that cultural heritage.

First, it was frequently charged that the Southern soldier was an American because he was racially pure. There were no blacks or men of "foreign" blood in this army: There were only Anglo-Saxons firmly tied to the nation's early heritage. Or at least this was the view expressed by
many of the orators. For example, Colonel J. H. Estill made such a claim when he told an audience in Savannah, Georgia:

The Southern people are the Americans of Americans, and ex-Confederates of today are representatives of an American army—not an army made up largely of foreigners and blacks fighting for pay, but defenders of American principles as handed down by the forefathers of the republic.11

In addition, General S. G. French agreed with this position, telling the veterans of Orlando, Florida, that they were remnants of an army that was "not a heterogeneous mass of humanity from all nations, serving for pay, for bounty, for pensions and spoils." French continued by implying that the Northern army, by contrast, had been composed mostly of foreign born individuals and Negroes. "The census report shows," charged French,

that little wee Rhode Island has a foreign born population nearly equal to seven of the Southern States. There were more Negro soldiers in the Union army than General Lee ever mustered on any field of battle, and Massachusetts recruited some of her regiments in South Carolina and Georgia with Negro slaves.12

Frequent efforts were also made to relate the Southern soldier to a heroic heritage extending far beyond the beginnings of the American nation. For example, when

11Confederate Veteran, III (May, 1895), 131. John Holbrook Estill was wounded several times during the war, apparently serving most of the time in Virginia. In post-war years he became a journalist and eventually secured control of the Savannah Morning News. In addition, he was a prominent Georgia business man and civic leader. See The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, II, 531.

12Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210.
Charles E. Hooker addressed the eighth reunion of U.C.V. he asserted that the "personnel of Confederate army was a remarkable one," that it was "composed of the descendants of the liberty-loving people who speak the English language." Hooker then proceeded to link the Confederate soldier with the entire line of Anglo-Saxon history, strongly implying that this soldier played much the same historical role as that played by the Barons in their confrontation with King John at Runnymede.13

John B. Gordon also sought to draw these connections between the Southern soldier and his Anglo-Saxon heritage, but Gordon further argued that Confederates had inherited some highly desirable characteristics from certain strains of his West European ancestry. For example, at the ninth reunion of U.C.V. Gordon praised the Confederate soldiers of South Carolina by asserting:

What else could be expected of a people in whose veins are commingled the blood of the proud English Cavaliers; the blood of those devoted and resolute men, who protested against the immoralities and grinding exactions of the Stuarts; the blood of the stalwart Dissenters and of the heroic Highlanders of Scotland and of the sturdy democratic Presbyterians of Ireland; the blood of those defenders of freedom who came to your shores from the mountain battlements of Switzerland, and lastly, but no less pure and sacred, the blood of the high-souled Huguenots of France, whose martyrs, by a glorious fidelity, even unto death, have made sweeter and richer the record of human devotion to conscience and liberty.14

13"Minutes of the Eighth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.,” p. 34.

Apparently Gordon believed—or at least asserted the belief—that Confederates originated from a fortuitous blending of the best of several cultures. Furthermore, his statement suggested that Confederates were sired only by heroic defenders of liberty. However, Gordon may have broadened his base of praise for no other reason than to include the ancestral heritage of most of his hearers. It might have been difficult to find a sizeable number of old veterans who did not have either British, Scottish, Irish, French, or Swedish blood running in their veins. Perhaps Gordon would have widened this ancestral base even further had he been speaking in New Orleans.

Another interesting viewpoint, related to this idea of an elite Southern heritage, was expressed by General William H. Jackson, who translated this heritage into images of medieval knighthood and chivalry. Jackson was the master of ceremonies for a tournament of knightly sporting events staged in Nashville for the benefit of the Battle Abbey of the South. Speaking to the "knights" and "ladies" gathered for the festivities, Jackson charged:

But knighthood and chivalry are not dead. The spirit that vitalized the knights of old, and inspired the splendor of their achievements still lives today, and its worth and deeds may well challenge a Bayard, a Bruce, or a Richard to parallel them.15

15Confederate Veteran, IV (June, 1896), 176. William Hicks "Red" Jackson was a graduate of West Point (1856) and advanced to the rank of brigadier general, serving under
For his example of a Southern "Knight" General Jackson used the young Confederate spy, Sam Davis, who during the war lost his life supposedly because he refused to tell his Northern captors the name of his accomplice, thereby accepting death rather than "betray a trust confided in him." 16

In summary, then, according to the rhetoric of most of these orators, the Confederate soldier was an American, but a very special kind of American: he was racially elite, he was the beneficiary of an exceptional cultural heritage, and he sprang from a long line of fighters for freedom. But there was yet another way in which these speakers depicted the Confederate soldier as a true American: he had fought with pure motives for American principles.

It was often implied, as in the statements by Estill and French, that the Northern soldier had not been highly motivated but instead had fought for mercenary reasons. The Southern soldier, on the other hand, was usually credited with lofty, even sacred, motives. Illustration of this can be seen in an oration which Basil Duke delivered at the dedication of a Confederate monument in Louisville, Kentucky:

Polk, Hood, and Forrest. After the war he became a gentleman planter and spent the "rest of his life in the breeding and developing of thoroughbred horses" on a plantation near Nashville. See Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 152-153.

16 Confederate Veteran, IV (June, 1896), 176.
Was it for gold or rank that they [the Confederate soldiers] gave their breasts to the battle? Were they lured by the thirst for fame? Did they leave home and family... the father who had hoped that the boy he had reared would be the staff of his declining age, and the mother whose tender love the tenderest care could never requite; perhaps wife and little ones, dearer than life itself; was all this wealth of happiness relinquished for the bubble; reputation, or any wish of gain? We know that such thoughts had no part in determining the choice they made.

With youthful ardor and fiery zeal they rushed to arms believing their cause invincible because they believed it just. When terrible disaster... had dispelled all hope of ultimate success, they yet remained as firm in their reality as in their convictions, and fought with resolution unabated and devotion unimpaired.17

Another passage which could be used to illustrate this position is found in the address delivered by Senator Bate at the Chickamauga battlefield dedication:

The sacrifices made by the Confederate soldier put the question of motive beyond cavil. There never was a time between Fort Sumter and Appomattox, when, even in the death struggle, the Confederate soldier did not feel that he was fighting for his country—for the legal right to local self-government under the existing constitution made by his fathers.18

The implication of all these passages seems to have been that the Southern soldier fought in the true spirit of

17 Confederate Veteran, III (October, 1895), 299. Basil Duke, a Kentucky orator and writer who authored History of Morgan's Cavalry, obtained the rank of brigadier general and commanded a cavalry brigade in eastern Kentucky and western Virginia. After the war he settled in Louisville, practiced law, was a legal counsel for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and wrote several works of Civil War history. See Dictionary of American Biography, V, 495-496.

18 Confederate Veteran, III (November, 1895), 343.
America's original ideology and of America's cultural heritage; he fought for principle, not for gain; he fought for liberty, not to countermand liberty; he was representative of America's true racial heritage, not "foreign born"; and he was representative of America's Founding Patriots, not the antithesis of these sacred progenitors. He was, in short, everything of which America, and the South, should be proud. Indeed, one does not have to search long in this body of rhetoric before one finds eloquent expressions of that pride. This passage from an oration by Joseph B. Cumming might serve as an example:

Do I not voice the feeling of every Confederate heart, or do I speak only for myself, when I say that that period of my life is the one in which I am most nearly satisfied? I take my own career as that of the average Confederate soldier—nothing brilliant, nothing dazzling in it, but a persistent, steady effort to do my duty—an effort persevered in the midst of privation, hardship, and danger. If ever I was unselfish, it was then. If ever I was able to trample on self-indulgence, it was then. If ever I was strong to make sacrifices, even unto death, it was in those days. And if I were called upon to say on the period of my soul when it lived its highest life, when it was least faithless to true manhood, when it was loyal to the best part of man's nature, I would answer "In those days when I followed yon bullet-pierced flag through its shifting fortunes of victory and defeat."

Cumming delivered these sentiments at a reunion of the Fifth Georgia regiment, and when he spoke he was not

19Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 274. Joseph Bryan Cumming entered Confederate service in the 5th Georgia regiment and rose to the rank of major. After the war he entered the legal profession and served in the Georgia legislature. See Memoirs of Georgia (Atlanta: The Southern Historical Association, 1895), II, 777-778.
making a purely private statement: he was speaking in behalf of his auditors. They, too, had been "average" Confederate soldiers, "nothing brilliant, nothing dazzling." But twenty-nine years before they had felt less than average; they had felt defeated. Now, through the help of an eloquent orator, they could look back on that defeat with pride, and perhaps even question that it had been defeat. Such seems to have been the transforming magic of this ceremonial oratory and of the myth of the Confederate soldier.

**The Confederate Soldier as a Fighting Man**

Not only was the Southern soldier depicted as being representative of the original American patriot, but he was also lauded as having been a courageous, loyal, dedicated, and skillful fighting man, always ready to make that ultimate sacrifice. In fact, the virtues of bravery, loyalty, and dedication—both to his cause and to his comrades and leaders—often seemed to be treated as accepted first premises from which further discussion of his merits might be pursued, and the resulting panegyrical rhetoric, if taken in its totality, makes it difficult to imagine that the Confederate soldier could have lost a battle, much less a war.

First, that soldier was credited with being immensely loyal to his cause, his comrades, and his leaders. General French, for example, argued that each Confederate
soldier had been confident that his right and left hand comrades "could be depended on not to desert him or abandon a position given them." Senator Bate urged his audience to remember "that the oath of loyalty would have opened the prison gate to the dying Confederate, and that they [sic] refused to take that oath--accepting death in a distant prison to life purchased by infidelity to conviction." And in his invocation at the unveiling of the Confederate monument in Jackson, Mississippi, Father H. A. Picherit also testified to this Confederate loyalty:

May the patriots of every nation unite with us today in weaving an imperishable garland to the fame of our gallant, true-hearted and brave Confederate soldiers, who stood undaunted, shoulder to shoulder, around their commanders . . . and who, when overpowered by numbers, fought to the end, handing from one to the other their blood-stained banner, until they fell dead on the battlefield with the patriotic cry upon their lips: "For the rights of our native land." 

20 *Confederate Veteran*, II (July, 1894), 210.

21 *Confederate Veteran*, III (November, 1895), 342.


23 *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XVIII, 296. Father Picherit was not a Confederate veteran but spent the war years at Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Jackson, Mississippi. See *The Story of Jackson*, p. 281.
Finally, speaking to an 1895 Memorial Day audience in Savannah, Georgia, Pope Barrow charged that there was "no devotion in history more heroic than theirs; no patriotism more sublime. In the darkest hour of the struggle they clung to their colors."24

It is interesting to compare these claims for the Confederate soldier with the views expressed by a modern historian, David Donald. In his essay, "The Southerner as a Fighting Man,"25 Donald first argues that it is difficult to generalize about this Confederate soldier and "even more difficult to think of him as unique." The story of this soldier, reasons Donald, was the story of all soldiers of all wars: "He enlisted for a variety of reasons; he was brave or he was cowardly; he fought to the end of the war, he deserted, or he was killed, wounded or captured." Nevertheless, Donald has found one characteristic which apparently belonged innately to this Southern fighting man: He exhibited poor discipline and a pronounced "democratic disrespect for authority." "The theme of poor discipline,"

24 *Confederate Veteran*, III (May, 1895), 131. Pope Barrow served in the Confederate artillery and obtained the rank of captain. After the war he became a prominent lawyer in Savannah, Georgia, and served in the United States Senate from November, 1882 to March, 1895. See Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, eds., *Georgia* (Atlanta: State Historical Association, 1906), pp. 132-133.

observes Donald, "runs through the official reports of all Confederate commanders." 26

Donald's position was also supported by Wilbur J. Cash, who charged that until the end of his service the Confederate soldier could never be disciplined:

He slouched. He would never learn to salute . . . . His "Cap'n" and his "Gin'ral" were likely to pass his lips with a grin—were charged always with easy, unstudied familiarity. He could and did find it in himself to jeer openly and unabashed in the face of Stonewall Jackson when that austere Presbyterian captain rode along his lines. And down to the final day at Appomattox his officers knew that the way to get him to execute an order without malingering was to flatter and to jest, never to command too brusquely and forthrightly.

Cash went not to observe that what has been identified as the esprit de corps of this Confederate army was nothing more or less than his [the Confederate soldier's] conviction, the conviction of every farmer among what was essentially only a band of farmers, that nothing living could cross him and get away with it. 27

The views of these historians challenged the idea that the Confederate soldier always exhibited complete loyalty, particularly toward his commanders. But these Confederate veteran orators, speaking twenty-five to thirty-five years after the fact of war, managed to forget these negative characteristics and instead depicted the Confederate soldier as the most perfect fighting man who ever took

26 Ibid., pp. 72-80, passim.

to the field. In doing so, another virtue was always men­tioned, that of courage, and particularly courage in the face of a Northern numerical advantage.

The orators seldom ignored this Northern advantage. For example, Senator Turley, speaking at the unveiling of a Confederate monument in Shelbyville, Tennessee, reminded his audience that Southern soldiers had not been "deterred by the knowledge that they were to contend against over­whelming odds and inexhaustible, fully organized resources." Then he added that these soldiers "remembered only that a great issue was involved, a great cause was at stake, a great principle was to be vindicated with their fortunes and their lives."28

It was also frequently observed that this disparity in numbers and resources was paralleled by a disparity in the losses suffered by the South and the North. Several orators made reference to the percent of mortalities incurred by the two sides. Stephen D. Lee claimed that "the Federals lost five per cent [of their total fighting force], and the Confederates ten per cent."29 John W. Daniel gave

28Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 498. Thomas Battle Turley served as a private in the 154th Tennessee regiment and was wounded twice. After the war he served four years as United States Senator from Tennessee, 1897-1901. See Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States, VII, 393.

these figures to be 4.7 per cent for the North and nine per cent for the South. But Daniel also noted that many Confederate regiments suffered losses of over fifty per cent and that some incurred losses as high as eighty per cent.\footnote{Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V., p. 41.}

The Confederate Soldier as a Man of Character

Without exception, these orators depicted the Confederate soldier as possessing virtues common to men of excellent character and citizenship. General French charged that these private soldiers "were men of education, thoughtful, self-reliant, [and] at home neighbors and friends."\footnote{Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210.} George Moorman argued that they exhibited self-control and humaneness, "that no act of vandalism or incendiaryism marred the stainless and glorious record of the rank and file."\footnote{Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V., p. 63.} Senator Daniel charged succinctly that the Confederate soldier was honored because "he was honest and honorable and true and brave."\footnote{Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V., p. 41.} While Rev. J. William Jones noted the religiosity of Confederate fighting men, describing them as "true soldiers of the cross," and also arguing that no army in history--and he included the Crusades--"ever had in it as
large a portion of humble, earnest, active Christian men as were found among the rank and file of the Confederate army." 34 But one of the most extended panegyrics of the character of the Southern soldier was given by Thomas G. Jones 35 of Alabama when speaking at the unveiling of a Confederate monument in Montgomery.

Jones began by exclaiming, "Would that I could draw a picture of this soldier." The picture which the orator then proceeded to etch was one of humble yet honorific impressions. "Home was his ideal," charged Jones,

and wife, mother and sister were his "holy of holies." They planted, deep in his bosom, the instinct that manhood required that he should yield to other women, the respect and deference he demanded for those about his hearthstone.

Jones also assured his listeners that this soldier cherished his community with the same degree of ardor, that "the hospitality of his roof took in his community." In addition, this connection with home and community was so strong, argued Jones, that when the young Southern soldier entered the army these two loves

... were with him everywhere--on the march, bivouac, and battle line. ... He would have soon have brought

34 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 104.

35 Thomas Goode Jones entered the war as a private and rose to the rank of major, serving as aides to Generals Early and Gordon. Elected governor of Alabama in 1890, he subsequently served two terms in that position. See Dictionary of American Biography, X, 202.
disgrace on his own home, or the little village where he expected to return, as to sully his own name, or that of the organization to which he belonged, by rapine, insubordination or any other kind of unsoldierly conduct.

In other words, Jones believed it was this innate respect for home and community that disciplined the Confederate soldier. "He could not," asserted the orator, "disgrace his home by the pillage of another's home, or disgrace his wife and mother by insulting the wives and mothers of other men." 36

The orator still had more to say about the character of the Confederate soldier. First, that soldier "was a cleanly man, despite his rags. Most of them had sooner parted with a pair of shoes than a good tooth brush." Second, "He was cheerful as the Indian at the 'Feast of corn,' when his only rations were roasting ears." Third, he was possessed of "philosophy as well as humor," and he was always respectful to women, the minister, and the aged." Finally, "He was modest withall, and seldom wrote to the papers of his achievements." 37

Jones did admit two faults for this man as a military figure: "He was not always up on salutes, and the finer points of tactics or guard duty . . . ." But the orator quickly added that "in the essentials of marching,  

36 Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVI, 200-201.  
37 Ibid., pp. 201-202.
fighting and taking care of himself, he had no superior."

Jones also observed that this soldier's "battalion drill may have been somewhat ragged, but that his alignment in the charge was magnificent, his fire by file unequaled, and his 'rebel yell' the grandest music on earth."\(^{38}\)

In concluding his panegyric for the Confederate soldier Jones voiced some sentiments which deserve to be quoted in their entirety:

> Who that looked on him can ever forget his bright face, his tattered jacket, and battered hat, his jests, which tickled the very ribs of death--his weary marches in heat and cold and storm?--his pangs of hunger, his parching fever, and agony of wounds--his passing away in hospital or prison, when the weak body freed the dauntless soul--his bare feet tracing the rugged fields of Virginia, and Georgia, and Tennessee, with stains like those which reddened the snow at Valley Forge--his soul clutching his colors, while suffering and unprotected wife and child cried for him at home--his faith and hope and patience to the end--his love of home, deference to woman and trust in God--his courage which sounded all the depths and shoals of misfortune, and for a time throttled fate--the ringing yell of his onset, his battle anthem for native lands rising heavenward above the roar of five hundred stormy fields?\(^{39}\)

In this final passage Jones mentioned no virtues not already claimed for the Confederate soldier, and he underscored no sacrifices which he had not previously cited. Nevertheless, in bringing these emotion-packed images together in one final grand encomium he seemed to be telling his listeners that although the Confederate soldier had attributes which were common to many ordinary men, he

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 203.  \(^{39}\) Ibid.
possessed them in extraordinary proportions. Furthermore, the images incorporated in this passage seemed to convey broader meanings than just the literal words would have implied. The "bare feet," the "tattered jacket," and the "battered hat" all exemplified the destitute condition in which this soldier had to fight. The "weary marches," the "heat and cold and storm," the "pangs of hunger," the "parching fever and agony of wounds" emphasized the physical sacrifices which he was forced to endure. The "stains like those which reddened the snow at Valley Forge" likened him to America's earlier "patriots." The "love of home, deference to woman and trust in God" made him a man of substantial, Christian values. The "fields of Virginia, and Georgia, and Tennessee," "his soul clutching his colors," and "his battle anthem for native lands" depicted him as a dedicated and loyal Confederate. And "his passing away in hospital or prison, when the weak body freed the dauntless soul," signified the frequent finality of his sacrifice. These images were typical of those employed in the large body of Confederate veteran rhetoric.

The old veterans who heard this address, or any of the other panegyric passages which have been quoted, may have forgotten for a moment that the South had been defeated. In truth—or so believed these eloquent apologists—this Confederate soldier had provided his region with at least a partial victory: He had vindicated his cause by his
individual and collective skill, courage, and patriotic resolve. Furthermore, these orators obviously felt—or at least expressed the view—that even if it could be argued that the Southern cause had been lost, it could not in turn be charged that such a loss resulted from any deficiencies in the private soldier. For this man, they argued, had fought tenaciously and courageously against overwhelming odds. Ultimate defeat had no significant meaning when related to such an effort: Victory was in the quality of the effort.

THE CONFEDERATE LEADER

In 1896 when Bradley T. Johnson spoke to the ladies and veterans of the Confederate Memorial Society of Richmond, Virginia, he briefly addressed his remarks to the topic of Confederate military leaders:

But, while I glorify the chivalry, the fortitude, and the fidelity of the private soldier, I do not intend to minimize the valor, the endurance, or the gallantry of those who led them. I know that the knights of Arthur's Round Table, or the paladins and peers, roused by the blast of that Fuenterrabia horn from Roland, at Roncesvalles, did not equal in manly traits, in nobility of character, in purity of soul, in gallant, dashing courage the men who led the rank and file of the Confederate armies, from lieutenant up to lieutenant-general.  

Johnson's statement is representative of the rhetoric usually employed to describe former Confederate military

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40 *Confederate Veteran*, V (October, 1899), 508-509.
leaders, and this passage demonstrates that, to a large degree, the virtues which were ascribed to the private soldier were in turn ascribed to their commanders. Attributes such as "valor," "endurance," "gallantry," "nobility of character," "purity of soul," and "dashing courage" were frequently, as has been demonstrated, claimed for every Confederate fighting-man regardless of his rank. Therefore, the rhetoric which was used to describe the private soldier was generally duplicated when treating the character of former Confederate leaders. Two exceptions however must be noted: (1) these orators did not speak of the leaders nearly as often as they spoke of the private soldier and of Southern women, and (2) with the exception of Jefferson Davis the ranks of Confederate civilian leadership were almost totally ignored.

As explanation of the first exception one might surmise that emphasis upon the private soldier and upon Southern women developed primarily because these two groups were abundantly represented in the audiences. By the same token, the orators frequently were former "leaders." Therefore, it might have been considered inappropriate for these speakers to dwell too long upon the virtues of their own class.

Concerning the second exception, there are at least two possible explanations. First, these ceremonial occasions were distinctly military in emphasis; therefore, it was the military's role in the war which always received the
greatest attention. Second, there may have been some lingering dissatisfaction with that civilian leadership.

During the war the military had not always been pleased with the activities of their civilian counterparts in Richmond and in the statehouses, and in an earlier period than that which this study concerns military commanders found opportunities to enumerate their dissatisfaction. For example, in 1873, General John B. Hood addressed the annual meeting of the Survivors' Association of South Carolina and spoke of the "grave misfortune" which the Confederacy had suffered due to behavior of its civilian congress.

"From this Congress," argued Hood,

the poison of dissension and demoralization . . . found its way to every quarter of our beautiful land. Governors, in some instances, stubbornly refused to co-operate [sic] with the administration, thus gnawing at our very vitals. Rarely did they visit Richmond save for the purpose of fault finding, and complaining that they had been required to furnish more men or money than another State. Deserters were but seldom returned to the ranks; they had but little to fear from civil officers of State, and could, therefore, without much difficulty, evade the military authorities.\(^41\)

If such feelings of dissatisfaction remained in the minds of Confederate veteran orators they were not given utterance. It probably would have been considered inappropriate to express such views during the 1890's when the myth of Confederate harmony and total unity, the myth of the

solid South, was being promulgated. Therefore, these orators probably chose to remain silent on a topic which they felt incapable of discussing in the spirit of the era.

This study does not consider those many ceremonial addresses delivered solely as memorials or eulogies for individual Confederate commanders. Nevertheless, many of the orations which treated a broader range of Confederate themes did mention leaders either individually or collectively, and this rhetoric, when pulled together, creates a picture of the prototype Confederate chieftain. One of the images which emerges as part of this prototype is that of a commander who inspired—and deserved—absolute fealty from those serving under him.

Some mention has already been made of the numerous instances in which these speaker praised the private soldier for his loyalty to his officers. This loyalty phenomenon was emphasized even more strongly whenever it was noted that the leaders to whom this loyalty was given had been "failures"—at least in the sense that they had lost the war. When General French spoke to the Orlando, Florida, veterans he observed that "there is a tendency in men to condemn and abandon their agents and leaders who have failed, and thereby blasted the hopes of their supporters and followers." He then argued that this natural tendency had been violated in the South, that Southerners had granted continued "devotion to the memory of Davis, Lee, Johnston, Jackson, Stuart,
Pelham, and others."\(^{42}\)

Senator Walthall also noted this loyalty phenomenon, but he discussed it in terms of fealty to the man who had formulated Southern ante-bellum ideology, as well as to the man who had led the region during war. "No citizen nor soldier, no man nor woman, of all the bereaved and disappointed sons and daughters of the South," argued Walthall, ever cursed the memory or even impugned the statesmanship of Calhoun for whose political doctrines they had risked all and lost all; and for our grand old chief [Davis], . . . there never was a breath of criticism or repining from his scourged and afflicted people—nothing but faith and trust, affection, admiration, sympathy, and honor.\(^{43}\)

Walthall further emphasized the unusualness of this tenacious loyalty to Davis:

There is nothing in history like this. Look over the course of nations from the dawn of time, turn through the books of the world's history whenever written, search all the annals of the earth, and you will find no other single instance where a vanquished people have so idolized the leader of a cause that had failed.\(^{44}\)

Walthall credited much of the honor for such virtuous fealty to the nature of the Southern people, and stated that he was proud of whatever "weakness" it was that so motivated the South in her expressions of loyalty, but he also argued that there was something special in Southern

\(^{42}\)Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210.

\(^{43}\)Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 302.

\(^{44}\)Ibid.
leadership as a genus. Southern men, he asserted, had always possessed those qualities necessary for national greatness:

From among them came the statesman who wrote the Declaration of Independence . . . . From among them came the Father of His Country, the father of the Constitution and the greatest of all its expounders. At the head of great armies, in the presidential office, in cabinet and court, and in all the nation's high councils, everywhere, in peace and war, great Southern lights illuminate the annals of America and shed upon our country's name its chief honor and renown.45

Although Walthall never specifically charged that the Confederate leaders were of the same caliber as had been Patrick Henry, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson, such was certainly the implication. Therefore, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, John B. Gordon, John H. Reagan, Stephen D. Lee, and others merited admiration and Loyalty because they had been, and were, a special breed of men.

One virtue often attributed to this "special breed of men" was that of personal purity or general sterlingness of character. With particular emphasis placed upon Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, Confederate leaders were described as men who possessed exceptionally high qualities of honor, dignity, and piety. In fact, one of the virtues frequently identified with the various leaders was that of being a dedicated "Christian." Rev. J. William Jones, who,

45 Ibid.
as was earlier noted, described Confederate fighting men as "true soldiers of the cross," also labeled most of the major Confederate leaders as men of "humble, devout, piety." In making this charge Jones listed thirty former Confederate leaders who he said were "active workers for Christ." In his list—in addition to Davis, Lee, and Jackson—he included such men as Leonidas Polk, John B. Gordon, James E. B. [Jeb] Stuart, Stephen D. Lee. William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, Kirby Smith, Clement A. Evans, and John B. Hood.

However, he particularly emphasized the "Christian" character of Jefferson Davis. "I will not speak of Davis as a statesman," proclaimed Jones,

though I believe he was one of the greatest statesmen this country has ever produced; nor as an orator, though upon the three occasions that I had the privilege to hear him speak he thrilled me as no other mortal man ever did. I will not speak of him as a soldier, though you know his history . . . . And those of you who knew him best know that if he had had his wishes in the matter he would have been in the army rather than the Presidential chair. . . . But I speak of him today as the humble Christian.46

In speaking of Davis as "the humble Christian" Jones alluded to several instances during and immediately after the war when Davis had allegedly been sustained by his "Christian spirit," noting particularly the "indignity" which the ex-President had endured when "ironed as a common felon in Fortress Monroe."47 The minister even told of

46 "Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion U.C.V.," p. 106.

visits to Beauvoir, Davis's postwar haven on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and reported the following observation gained from these visits:

... if I ever met a man who took the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, who loved God's word, and was an intelligent, trustful Christian, that man was our great President Jefferson Davis.48

Finally, the minister exorted the old veterans to examine their own lives in order to ascertain if they were still ready to follow their former leaders:

Are you ready when your summons comes joyfully to "cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees" with Davis, and Lee, and Jackson, and other Christian comrades who wait and watch for your coming?49

Rev. Jones was not the only orator to refer to the "Christian" character of Jefferson Davis. For example, George Moorman spoke of the former Confederate commander in chief as being a "Patriot, Orator, Soldier, Statesman, Savant, Christian Hero, and Stainless Citizen."50 Then Stephen D. Lee testified to the "incomparable beauty of his character," and classified him, along with Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, as a man of "strong religious faith."51

Finally, John H. Reagan made reference to "the faith of

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 108.
51 "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 158.
Jefferson Davis in God and [to] his devout earnestness."  

Returning the discussion to that statement advanced earlier, that one virtue often attributed to the Confederate leader was that of personal purity or general sterlingness of character, it should be noted that frequent references were made to both Davis and Lee as men of such qualities. For instance, when discussing General R. E. Lee, J. L. M. Curry spoke of the "stainless character of that great Hero."  

Then Rev. J. H. McNeilly argued that the society of the Old South had been "splendidly vindicated" by "that manliest of men, 'pure as light, and stainless as a star,' Robert E. Lee."  

General French proclaimed of Jefferson Davis that "His life was pure, and nothing could swerve him from the path of honor."  

John H. Reagan predicted that "the names of Jefferson Davis, R. E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Albert Sidney Johnston, and many others . . . will go into history, illuminated by a halo of courage and skill and purity of life . . . ."  

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52 "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 34.
54 Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 265.
55 Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210.
56 "Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 34.
that Davis was dear to the South because of "the incomparable beauty of his character." 57 Lee further charged that "Davis, Lee, and Jackson, were men who wore the white flower of a blameless life--men of clean lips and spotless names." 58

Why did these orators lavish such praise upon the character of Confederate leaders? Two answers are suggested. First, when the leaders were depicted in these superlative terms the rhetoric in turn said something about the total Southern society. A judicious, courageous, morally correct, and Christian people could hardly choose leaders who did not also possess these qualities. By the same reasoning, leaders who did possess these qualities could hardly have been produced by a society lacking them.

The second answer appears to be that a sacred cause, in order to be properly dramatized and promoted, needs martyrs. In addition, martyrs, in order to be so established, need purity of character. Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Albert Sidney Johnston, and others were therefore lifted to planes of personal virtue unobtainable by most mortals. In essence, they were defied.

Occasionally, however, even more overt attempts were made to create the image of a martyr. This was most often

57 "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 158.
58 Ibid.
done with Jefferson Davis, and in this effort the charge was first made that the Confederate commander in chief had suffered great indignities during his imprisonment at Fort Monroe. Then Davis would be depicted as a Christ figure to whom Southern people owed their love and loyalty, not so much for his former leadership as for this selfless sacrifice. Congressman C. P. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, expressed this point of view when he spoke at the 1892 reunion of the association of the army of Northern Virginia:

It was not that he was our president—our valiant chief-tain; ... it was not that he had championed our cause and lost; but it was that he was selected as our victim that made us surround Jefferson Davis with all our hearts. So long as for our sins he was selected as our victim to suffer in our place, we bear to him the utmost loyalty . . . .

Breckinridge's use of the phrase "as our victim" is open to confusion, but it seems probable that he intended the term "victim" in its more exact sense, a living being sacrificed to a deity in some religious rite. Davis was the sacrifice selected--by the North or by Providence--as the price for Southern atonement.

Suggestion of Confederate sin is rare in the rhetoric of this movement, and the word may have been intoned in

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such a way as to qualify its meaning. Nevertheless, the word found its way into Confederate veteran oratory on at least one other occasion. When Congressman Hooker, of Mississippi, was addressing the eighth reunion of U.C.V. he twice used the term, and in both instances he also promoted Davis as a Christ figure. In the first instance he referred to Davis as "our great civic leader . . . [who] was made to suffer for our sins," and in the second instance he spoke of Davis as "the lofty hero who had taken upon himself the sins of a whole people, and vicariously suffered for all with sublime abnegation of self." 60

Of course these veteran orators also lavished praise upon former Confederate chieftains for their military genius and combat prowess. Usually such plaudits were given in general terms which commended the overall military leadership exhibited among the Southern forces. But occasionally, as did Senator Daniel in his address to the third reunion of U.C.V., the orator would devote a few sentences each to a large number of Confederate military chieftains. Daniel charged that "the South . . . surpassed the North in generalship," and to support this contention he argued that Confederate generals—he mentioned fourteen of them in the course of his analysis—contributed "two great ideas to

military science," the efficient use of cavalry forces, and the disruptive and murderous employment of the flank attack. Daniel credited these two developments in military science to R. E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, but he also suggested that Stuart, Hampton, Forrest, and others made significant contributions. 61

Robert E. Lee, of all the military leaders, received the most intense expressions of admiration, both from the speakers and from the audiences. No name of a sacred place of combat, for example, ever roused the old veterans as much as did a mention of their beloved commanding general. As Davis became a symbol of a martyred cause, Lee became a symbol of the virtues which the South exemplified while fighting for that cause. His name was gilded with all of the superlatives associative with great generalship and personal virtue. The encomiums reserved for this Confederate figure carried praise about as far as the restrictions of language would allow. George Moorman claimed that the "blending of his [Lee's] moral character and warlike deeds . . . [were] so unique and marvelous that history furnishes no counterpart to this wonderful man." 62 General Evander McIvor Law spoke of him as "our imperial chieftain," and

61 "Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 64.
declared that in memory of him "the hearts of a whole people will swell with the proudest emotions that life can give." Senator Turley proclaimed that "the memory of R. E. Lee is enshrined as the purest and greatest American since the days of Washington." Senator Walthall charged that "General Lee's life was a lesson to mankind that there was nothing too lofty, nothing too severe, for the highest type of Southern manhood to do or to endure at the call of honor." And Senator John W. Daniel argued that the "genius of Lee [was] a combination of that of Stonewall Jackson, and of Wellington and Marlborough in one." In summary, these orators placed no heavy emphasis upon the former Confederate leaders, choosing instead to spend most of their time discussing the causes of the war, the Southern soldier, and other topics yet to be examined. When speakers did touch on Confederate leadership they dealt more heavily with the military chieftains rather than with their counterparts in civilian life. In fact, of the many Confederate civilian leaders only Davis received any significant attention. Occasionally orators would, in a general

63 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVII, 106.
64 Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 499.
65 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 303-304.
way, remark that the South had been blessed by exceptional leaders in all areas of Confederate life, but the real praise was reserved for military figures. Only Davis received verbal accolades comparable to those laid before the names of Generals Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Albert Sydney Johnston, and others.

It is also interesting that the orators did not often choose to speak about Davis's governing abilities. Instead they chose to discuss the commander in chief in postwar settings, his "martyrdom" at Fort Monroe, his retreat into justificatory writing at Beauvoir, his eventual re-emergence as a figure of worship, and his final interment in Richmond. One might surmise that this silence on Davis's wartime career was motivated by memories of the criticism which had been directed against the Confederate president.

The oratorical tribute to Davis which Stephen D. Lee delivered at the sixth annual reunion of U.C.V. provides support for the above conjecture. The general theme for Lee's oration was "Why do we love Davis?" In answering this question the orator briefly reviewed the high lights of the subject's military and political career, his training at West Point, his service in the Black Hawk War and in the War with Mexico, his tenure in the United States Senate, and his role as Secretary of War. In addition, Lee praised the former president for certain worthy attributes of character, his "exquisite courtesy," his "fidelity to principle," his
"unselfishness," his "self-abnegation," and his "tenderness of heart." But when Lee reached the point in his address when he was compelled to discuss Davis's wartime record, he switched the emphasis away from the Confederate president and again reviewed the arguments concerning the odds against which the South fought. Finally, however, the orators stated, "As president, Davis may have made mistakes. He was a constitutional ruler, not a revolutionary chief. He could not work miracles." Lee then proceeded to praise his former commander in chief, not for having wisely administered the government in Richmond, but for having appointed a body of exceptionally skillful military commanders, "Lee, Jackson, Albert Sydney Johnston, Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston and other leaders, not surpassed in any army since the marshals of the empire."

This consistent tendency on the part of these orators to return, in their panegyrics, to the Confederate military commander and to the private soldier may have been motivated by nothing more than a natural proneness to emphasize the roles which they and their auditors had played. Nevertheless, there is also the possibility that these orator-apologists found it much easier to see virtues in the Confederate military than in the Confederate civilian

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government. Perhaps some of them would have liked to voice complaints like those earlier enunciated by General John B. Hood. Therefore, in many of these speeches there may have been as much meaning in what was not said as in what was said, for the spirit of this movement was one of unity and commendation, not one of dissension and censure. The myth was being promulgated of a totally homogeneous Confederacy, of a people who thought and acted as one, of an army which coalesced around its leaders and fought with unabated zeal to the very last, of a commander in chief who inspired complete fealty, and of a cause which compelled the utmost fidelity from all its followers. Such had never been the case in the Confederate South. As James W. Silvers stated,

The legend of a united people who went down fighting as one man against overwhelming odds simply could not stand serious investigation. In reality the Confederacy had collapsed from within. Its people had been divided from the start and as the . . . war lengthened into weary years of fighting, Southerners lost their will to fight. Real unity in the South came only after Appomattox and after Reconstruction . . . . Newer generations came along, more steeped in the traditions of the Lost Cause than their ancestors had been energetic in defending it.68

The prototype Confederate leader who emerged from this body of ceremonial rhetoric helped, no doubt, to promote these "traditions of the Lost Cause." It became easier

to believe in such traditions when one knew they had been supported by such men of true greatness. By the same token, it became easier to glorify one's own efforts for a cause when one realized that those efforts had been joined by such men of uncommon courage, virtue, and ability.

THE SOUTHERN WOMAN

Confederate veteran orators frequently touched on one subject which rivaled the private soldier as a popular theme. This subject was the Southern woman, and many speakers appeared to reserve their most eloquent encomiums for this beautiful, heroic, pride of the South. Their discussions of this woman usually came near the end of the address. By then the orator had reviewed the causes of the war, perhaps examined the "virtues" of the Old South, generally praised the character of Davis, Lee, Jackson, and others, and almost certainly lauded the courage, loyalty, and consummate skill of the private soldier. Now he turned his attention to the Southern woman. But before he did so, perhaps he paused and gave some nod of recognition to the many ladies who were in his audience. Then he may have introduced his new topic with words similar to those employed by John H. Reagan:

History notes, with the richest praises, the matrons of Rome. They were no doubt worthy of all that has been said of them. But their honors cluster about them when Rome was a great and victorious nation. This is not said in their discredit, but to contrast with them the
noble and devoted women of the Confederacy. The grandeur of their lives and conduct was exhibited in a cause in which the odds were greatly against their country, in which great sacrifices were necessary, and in which success was at all times doubtful. I never felt my inability to do justice to any subject so keenly as I do when attempting to do justice to the character, services and devotion of the women of the Confederacy.69

Nevertheless, Reagan did not allow this feeling of "inability" to retard his panegyrical efforts. In fact, few, if any, of these speakers succumbed to any such feeling of inadequacy; consequently, the rhetoric of this movement contains passage after passage of florid tribute to these "Marys at the foot of the cross, . . . [who] through weal and woe, . . . unfalteringly followed the varying fortunes of the Confederate cause."70 A few samples of this rhetoric might be of interest before moving into a more complete analysis:

The women of the South! These words convey a eulogy in themselves, and are so interwoven with our Southern history as to give to it its brightest page and sweetest charm. It is a phrase that epitomizes all that is noble and exalted.

- Senator William B. Bate71

Of all the examples of that heroic time, of all figures that will live in the music of the poet or the pictures of the painter, the one that stands in the


70 Father H. A. Picherit, from a prayer delivered at the unveiling of a Confederate monument in Jackson, Mississippi, Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 297.

71 Confederate Veteran, III (December, 1895), 359.
foreground, the one that will be glorified with the halo of the martyr-heroine, is the woman—mother, sister, lover—who gave her life and heart to the cause.  
- General Bradley T. Johnson

I affirm it with some knowledge of history, and not being unfamiliar altogether with what has been written about women in other ages and other countries, . . . that the future of the South and our families rests upon the women of the South.  
- J. L. M. Curry

Southern women had endured much between 1861 and 1865, and after the war their suffering had not been immediately alleviated. For as Paul H. Buck noted, the Confederate female experienced a "triple agony":

First was the suffering that came from deprivation and impoverishment. . . . Secondly was the personal loss of husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers killed in battle or by disease. . . . Finally, the Southern woman had an experience her Northern sister more fortunately escaped—the crucifixion of soul that came from sacrifices made in vain.  
Nevertheless, this woman emerged from the war less broken in spirit than the Confederate soldier. In fact, it was this Southern woman who, during the early Reconstruction period, exhibited the greatest contempt for Federal authorities. "Women were the most uncompromising part of Southern creation," argued Merton Coulter, "and their power was great. The war had put them in a considerable majority in some

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72 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 508.
73 "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 156.
communities, and by setting the tone of society they came near establishing a matriarchy. 75 Furthermore, the "tone of society" which they were prone to establish was one of unrestrained hatred for the "Yankee." Some formed societies pledged never to speak to a Federal soldier, and some "went to great lengths not to walk in the street where the United States flag floated from houses and buildings." 76 Buck noted that for many of these women "peace had meant . . . the ultimate mortification. . . . The only outlet left was hate." 77

Hatred for the Federal soldier usually meant a proportional degree of love for his Confederate counterpart. Thus this woman early expressed her continued loyalty to the cause by promoting various memorials to the Confederate dead. By her efforts, shallowly interred remains were transferred to more appropriate burial grounds. Cemeteries were established, monuments were raised, and annual Memorial Day ceremonies were inaugurated. In the process this woman established herself as an integral part of most, if not all, Confederate ceremonial events— even reunions; consequently, when these orators voiced their eloquent words of support


77 Buck, The Road to Reunion, p. 39.
for Southern themes they usually spoke not just to crowds of aging veterans but also to sizeable numbers of Southern women. It is understandable, therefore, that these women received their share of attention.

The image of this Southern woman which emerged from Confederate veteran rhetoric fits well the regional phenomenon which Wilbur Cash called "the Cult of Southern Womanhood." In general this image combined the traditionally delicate feminine traits, along with heavy mixtures of aristocratic dignity and charm, with elements of regional hardihood and self-reliance. The end result, therefore, was a goddess of virtue, tenderness, beauty, charm, resourcefulness, dignity, and grandeur. The image embodied all that Southern matrons desired themselves to be, and perhaps more. For it may have been an image that confined as much as it glorified.

Confederate veteran orators promoted this image, and in doing so they were not in the least restrained in their praise of the Southern woman's virtues. First, she was usually depicted as one who patriotically served the Confederate cause by voluntarily removing herself from the shelters of her genteel and aristocratic traditions, so that she could apply her resourceful, yet tender, skills to the

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78 Cash used the term in the index of The Mind of the South, but its meaning is explained in pages 87-89 of that volume.
management of a plantation or to the service of a hospital.

"Many of them," proclaimed John H. Reagan,

who had been reared in ease and luxury had to engage in all the drudgery of the farm and shop. Many of them worked in the fields to raise the means of feeding their families. . . . And like angels of mercy they visited and attended the hospitals with lint and bandages for the wounded, and medicine for the sick, and such nourishment as they could for both.79

These genteel and aristocratic traditions, of course, had not belonged to the vast majority of Southern women, but orators frequently ignored this reality and seemed to imply that all of Southern womanhood had sprung from social environments where luxury, gentility, charm, beauty, and chivalry had been inherent elements of life, in short, where the entire cavalier ideal held sway. "Our women whose mothers and grandmothers decorated the most brilliant courts of modern Europe and formed the highest social organization of America," argued Bradley T. Johnson, "whose ancestors had founded Virginia and framed the Union, were forced to the menial duties of the kitchen and the laundry for husband and children." In the true spirit of the cavalier myth Johnson went on to charge that the Southern soldier, himself a man of chivalry, found it easier to endure hunger, cold, and the threat of death than "to see the tender hand . . . toughened by menial toil, the delicate forms . . . bent by daily

labor." Such sights, he proclaimed, "tried the nerves and tested the heart ten thousand times more than the guns at Malvern or the artillery at Gettysburg."\textsuperscript{80}

General Johnson—as did many of the other orators—praised this stately, yet gentle, Southern woman for her stubborn endurance of the hardships which came her way, and credited her with providing Confederate men with a tenacious courage of their own. "By them and through them," asserted the orator, "the men were kept firm and straight."\textsuperscript{81}

William B. Bate agreed, charging that the influence of Southern women was "like a 'pervading essence,' and filled the surrounding air." Bate developed this assertion by saying that the hearts of these Southern women "might have trembled for the safety of those they loved, but their voice did not falter when they spoke of duty and gave words of encouragement."\textsuperscript{82} J. L. M. Curry, however, saw this feminine influence as having been exerted in a slightly different manner. The following passage seems to indicate that Curry had fallen prey to the cavalier myth and that he had envisioned the war as being fought as much for Southern womanhood as for Confederate principles:

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{80} \textit{Southern Historical Society Papers,} XVIII, 399.
\footnote{81} Ibid.
\footnote{82} \textit{Confederate Veteran,} II (December, 1895), 359.
\end{footnotes}
When we were in the field . . . we knew that while hardships and dangers were on every side, dear friends were working at clothes and writing letters and messages of love to their dear ones. We knew . . . that at home we were loved, and were encouraged in that great struggle for the purity of our women and the preservation of their characters.83

In addition to depicting this Southern woman as an "influence"—via her own endurance of hardships, her words and actions of encouragement, and her presence as a sacred and protected symbol of Southern chivalry—there also seems to have been some inclination to draw this woman as a kind of central coalescing force around which the energies of the Confederacy were gathered. It was her love, sacrifices, faith in God and in Southern principles, and perseverance which provided inspiration during the war and strength and saving grace after the war. Andrew B. Booth communicated such a view of the Southern woman when in 1899 he delivered the Decoration Day address in Greenwood Cemetery, New Orleans:

If I could trace in pure alabaster but three monuments of our historic struggle to transmit to coming generations, I would take the first scene at the outbreak of the civil strife, when the devoted mother gave her darling boy to her country, and as she kissed him a last farewell, handed him a prayer book with one hand, while with the other raised to heaven she prayed for God's blessing upon his future. The second scene would be from the trying days of its privations, when our beloved women could get but rudely made shoes to wear, and these too large for their shapely feet—it

83 "Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 156.
would be a scene true to the event. I would show the
devoted Southern girl, as she turned aside and removed
the shoes from her tender feet to give them to a bare-
footed soldier youth to shield his bleeding feet and
encourage his heroic efforts for his country, as he
struggled to keep up with his companions on the march.
And last I would carve that scene at the close of the
battle strife, when the Confederate flag had been furled
forever, and the noble veteran returned to meet his
faithful wife, with the awful words "All is lost." I
would show her as she . . . replied, amid the tears of
. . . sorrow and thankfulness, "Oh, all is not lost.
I have you, our daughter, and our God!"84

Booth's depiction of the Southern girl giving up
her shoes was symbolic and was part of what appears to have
been a concerted effort to draw every Southern woman as one
who made some kind of costly sacrifice for the Confederate
cause. Evidence of such a sacrifice was important in this
area of rededication to the Lost Cause. The old veteran was
lucky. He had his evidence. He had fought and sometimes
suffered grievous wounds for the Confederacy. Occasionally
he had even lost an arm or leg, or had merited a visible
scar, and any of these circumstances stood as excellent
verification of his dedicated service. The woman's sacri-
fice, however, had been of a different nature. She had not
fought; she could point to no visible scar. Nevertheless,

84 *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), April 7, 1899, Sec.
II, p. 1. Andrew Bradford Booth served during the war in
the 3rd and 22nd Louisiana Infantries. After the war he was
involved in various commercial interests in Baton Rouge and
New Orleans. He was also active in the U.C.V., serving at
times as the commander of the Louisiana division of the as-
association. See John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans*
(New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), III, 1135-
1137.
she felt that she had given something to the cause, and these orators appeared intent upon supplying her with her own form of evidence.

The sacrifice most often attributed to the Southern woman was the loss of loved ones. In fact, the implication of this rhetoric was that every Southern matron—at least those who lived through the years of the Confederacy—lost a son, husband, father, brothers, or sweetheart, and that she suffered this loss with heroic resignation. In addition, the idea was promoted that this woman involved herself in a willful act when granting this sacrifice. For example, Reagan charged that they "gave to the armies their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers . . . [believing] the sacrifice was due to their country and her cause." In another speech Reagan depicted this overt act as being even more deliberate, arguing that these women "willingly gave their fathers and husbands and brothers to the service of the Confederacy." The key term here is "willingly," since without volition a sacrifice loses much of its meaning. Reagan apparently did not employ the word lightly, for he used it again later in the same speech:

Can anyone be surprised that a country, whose women were capable of such sacrifice, and sufferings willingly

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86 Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 78.
endured, . . . should have prolonged the struggle for independence?  

Furthermore, to illustrate this "willingness," Reagan on two occasions told a story he claimed to have received from Governor Letcher of Virginia:

He [Governor Letcher] had visited his home in the Shenandoah Valley, and on his return to the state capital called at the house of an old friend who had a large family. He found no one but the good old mother at home, and inquired about the balance of the family. She told him that her husband, her husband's father and her ten sons were all in the army. And on his suggestion that she must feel lonesome, having such a large family with her and then to be now left alone, her answer was that it was very hard, but that if she had ten more sons they should all go to the army.  

After concluding this story Reagan asked, "Can ancient or modern history show a nobler or more unselfish and patriotic devotion to any cause?"

Bradley T. Johnson also told a story to illustrate this Southern woman's willingness to sacrifice her men for the cause. In his address to the Confederate Memorial Society of Richmond, Johnson referred to a character in one of the works of Thomas Nelson Page: a young soldier whom Johnson believed had represented the typical Confederate fighting man. "I knew the boy and loved him well," asserted the orator,

87Ibid.
89Ibid.
for I have seen him and his cousins in camp, on the
march, and on the battlefield . . . . I recall . . .
how the mother packed up his little "duds" in her boy's
school satchel and tied it on his back and kissed him
and bade him good-by and watched him as well as she
could see as he went down the walk to the front gate
and as he turned into the "big road" and, as he got to
the corner, turned round and took off his hat and swung
it around his head, and then disappeared out of this
life forever; for after Cold Harbor his body could never
be found nor his grave identified, though a dozen saw
him die. He was in front of the charge. And then for
days and for weeks and for months how she lived this
lonely life, waiting for news. He was her only son, and
she was a widow; but from that day to this no human
being has ever heard a word of repining from her lips.90

Therefore, Johnson's woman not only sacrificed, but she
sacrificed all. Her only son was required of her, and she
already a widow. But she placed him on the alter of the
Confederate cause and stepped back uncomplainingly. His
death engendered no show of bitterness. This was a sacri­
fice, the orator told her sisters, of which they could be
proud. Even the old veteran would find it hard to match
such evidence of dedication.

Johnson, however, did not stop with this story. He
gave these Southern women an even more startling example of
the dedication of her kind. He recalled an episode told to
him by Bishop-General Leonidas Polk:

. . . of the woman in the mountains in Tennessee with
six sons--five in the army--who, when it was announced
to her that her eldest-born had been killed in battle,
simply said: "The Lord's will be done! Eddie will be
fourteen next spring, and he can take Billy's place."91

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90 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 508.
91 Ibid.
Johnson seemed to be telling the Confederate mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives that by giving their Eddie's and their Billy's to the cause they had become full partners in the heroic experience of war, yielding up what was most precious to them. Could anyone demand any greater evidence of their loyalty?

The death of loved ones, however, had not been their only sacrifice. The orators frequently reminded the women that they had experienced personal deprivations, including, as an example, having their homes burned by infamous Northern troops. In fact, this rhetoric often demonstrates that twenty-five to thirty-five years after Appomattox the South still vividly remembered Sherman's march through Georgia. In 1898, for example, when Charles E. Hooker spoke in Atlanta to the eighth reunion of U.C.V., he sharpened the memory of some of his matronal listeners:

> Ofttimes driven from home by a brutal soldiery, their homes consumed by fire, they [the Southern women] would fly with their children, and their parting glances would disclose the lambent flames of the incendiary licking their housetops, and their ears were greeted by the sound of the crackling rafters as they crumbled into ashes on their hearthstones.92

The Southern woman's sacrifice, therefore, had been complete—or so these orators indicated. She had been driven from her protected position in society, she had survived by performing menial labor, she had yielded up her

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loved ones to her country's cause, and she had even suffered through seeing her home burned and her plantation laid waste. However, she endured all these horrors with a dignity, grace, and courage which in turn fortified the Confederate soldier. "God bless them," cried Senator Bate.

for the patience with which they endured privation and the cheerfulness with which they gave up luxuries for the cause they loved. . . . Their hearts might have trembled for the safety of those they loved, but their voices did not falter when they spoke of duty and gave words of encouragement.93

Furthermore, these "words of encouragement" did not constitute the only gifts, according to these orators, which the Southern matron and maid gave to their men in arms. For these women were often depicted as "angels of mercy,"94 attending to the sick and the wounded. "The battle over," continued Senator Bate, "she found the hospital, and, like Noah's trembling dove, she was the first to enter. She soothed the last hour of the dying hero, and received his last adieu to his loved ones far away."95 During such times of service, argued General William H. Jackson, it was her smile that provided the needed encouragement:

I can liken the smiles of our women of the fair Southland to a mocking bird: since both are rich in their notes of cheer; [and] their voices are heard in gloom

93 Confederate Veteran, III (December, 1895), 356.


95 Confederate Veteran, III (December, 1895), 359.
and darkness of night, as well as during the open sunshine of day. In short— or so these orators implied—the natural gentleness of her character made her an ideal source of comfort to the wounded, just as the natural spiritedness of her patriotism made her an inspiration to those still fighting.

In summary, the oratory of Confederate veterans promoted the myth of Southern Womanhood, the myth which claimed for these women virtues which were distinctive for their purity and exceptional for their universality in the species. Such, of course, was the prevailing view in the South. As illustration, in 1894, an article in the Birmingham Daily News proclaimed that "a boy cannot grow to manhood in the South without realizing that a respect for woman's virtue and a worship of her charms is a part of the genius of his people." The rhetoric of these Confederate veterans in no way challenged the premises upon which this "respect" had been built. To the contrary, it gave those premises greater dimension, for the women of the South were depicted as having played indispensable roles during the war without losing any of their image of gentility, charm, beauty, and unruffled demeanor.

96 Times Democrat (New Orleans), April 8, 1892), p. 8.

97 The Daily News (Birmingham, Alabama), April 25, 1894, p. 1.
Two possible motivations were present during these rhetorical occasions, to promote this lauding of the Southern woman. One has already been discussed: this woman was in the audience and was eager to hear herself praised. The second possible motivation, however, relates back to an image that was frequently drawn of the Confederate soldier. As it will be recalled, this soldier was characterized as a chivalrous cavalier who fought, in part, to save home, family, and Southern womanhood. Two myths, therefore, depended upon each other: For the soldier to be chivalrous, the woman had to be genteel; for the battle to be judged as one fought for societal virtues, the feminine roots of that society had to be meritorious. Consequently, when the orator glorified the Southern woman, he also, in part, glorified the principles and values for which he and his comrades had allegedly fought.

THE SOUTHERN SOCIETY IN GENERAL

The private soldier, the Confederate leader, and the Southern women composed a large and significant part of that total Southern culture which waged war against a Northern foe; consequently, those attributes which were universally attributed to these constituent units must in turn have been credited to the entire society. There would seem to be little justification, therefore, to re-examine those numerous oratorical passages in which speakers praised Southern
society as being American, aristocratic, chivalrous, loyal, religious, home-centered, courageous, moral, honorable, and dedicated to Confederate principles. The total effect of the rhetoric already examined should be such as to indicate that these characteristics were frequently attributed to the entire South. Nevertheless, if a final illustration is needed one might cite a passage from the speech which Walthall delivered in Jackson, Mississippi:

There is some priceless element in Southern character that I cannot define, which makes our people at once practical and sentimental—makes them good soldiers and good citizens, sustains them in every trial, adapts them to every changed condition and anchors them upon their honor as a rock; something that makes the men knightly in their deference for women, and makes the gentle woman strong when trouble comes; I know not what it is, but it is the same thing that made them true to the Confederacy . . . . There is nothing disloyal in it, for it is the very essence of patriotism; . . . there is no weakness in it, for in it lie our chief strength and power. Call it what you will, it is real, it is Southern, and it is worth preserving.98

These orators spoke of the South as a land and a culture apart. Because of all the virtuous attributes previously mentioned, Southerners were viewed as a special people, and, as was mentioned in the third chapter of this study, these special qualities and cultural characteristics allegedly constituted one of the reasons why the two sections went to war in the first place. It should be remembered that it was Bradley T. Johnson's contention that the North

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98Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 311-312.
had waged her "aggressive" war because of cultural jealousy.

There was another argument frequently advanced that applied to the Southern society as a whole. This was the contention that the South exhibited extraordinary ingenuity in establishing a government and fighting a war at the same time. Confederates, argued Reagan, "entered the contest without a general government, without an army, without a navy, and without a treasury: they organized all these during the existence of the war . . . ." Reagan went on to observe that even with this disadvantage the South managed to provide a small navy and to bring "hundreds of thousands of men into the field, by which they did defiance to a well-equipped government for four years."99

Rev. J. H. McNeilly also charged that the Southern people demonstrated exceptional powers for quick organization. "Thrown without preparation into the midst of a war to tax the energies of the mightiest," asserted McNeilly, the exigency demanded not only wise statesmanship and military ability, but also the discovery and utilizing of all material resources, the creation of new industries, and the invention of new appliances.100

The minister contended that the South rose to this challenge, that her people, most of whom had been planters and farmers, overnight left their "pastoral peace or rustic toil" and

99 Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75.
100 Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 265.
became "artizans, builders, manufacturers, financiers, and seaman." In addition, charged McNeilly, Southern men became adaptive and inventive, creating "new devices, building ships to revolutionize naval warfare, forging arms, sailing the seas, digging into depths of the earth." Necessity, reasoned the orator, compelled the people to develop latent powers:

Just as oftentimes a man, in some great emergency becomes aware of what is in him, . . . so the Southern people, in those four years of war came to themselves and sprang forth not by slow process of growth, but by the sudden answer to the call of Providence, to a full realization of the splendid possibilities of achievement in their reach.¹⁰¹

One of the more interesting results of McNeilly's reasoning is that it led him to conclude that the New South was really not new at all, that it was born of forces and talents which lay within the people, waiting to be awakened. The entire new movement, therefore, was an indigenous one:

The great development which has come to the South, bringing varied industries, abounding prosperity, and increasing wealth, is not the result of an infusion of foreign life, but is the outcome of her efforts to carry on the war, and to maintain her cause against a power which closed every port of hers and shut her up to dependence on her own strength under God.¹⁰²

The minister never made it clear whether or not he approved of the new industrial age, but apparently the

¹⁰¹ Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 265.
¹⁰² Ibid.
making of such a judgment was not important to his argument. He simply wanted to indicate that the Southern people had always been in control of their own destiny, and that through their flexibility, their inventiveness, their ingenuity they had created what was being called the "New South."

A full discussion of the attitudes of these orators toward the New South will be delayed until the next chapter, but some mention should perhaps be made here of how they viewed the Old South. The special qualities which these men always attributed to the Southern people had their origins--or so one must conclude from this rhetoric--not in the war but in the Old South. The war simply provided opportunities for virtues to be dramatically exemplified. It was the Old South which had nurtured the seeds of cultural greatness and which had in turn brought the plants to full growth.

Perhaps the most complete description of this Old South, as seen through the eyes of a Confederate veteran orator, was provided by John W. Daniel in his address at the third reunion of U.C.V. Daniel gave this Old South an ethereal and dream-like quality:

It was far off in the bygone years under the cypress trees and the ivy vines, with a broken shaft upon its tragic tomb. It was a land of true men and modest women. It lay aside from the great highways, beaten down with the tread of the myriads following
westward the star of empire. On the broad acres of its plantations were the homes of its people. Daniel went on to discuss various aspects of this phenomenal culture, its cities, its commerce, and its resources. Then he spoke of several attributes which he seemed to consider more important:

It had universities, colleges, and schools of high grade. Its scientists were eminent. Its statesmen were imbued with the philosophies that spring from contemplation. Its jurist were filled with the spirit of equality; its soldiers with the spirit of patriotism; its people were filled with the high martial spirit of their race, softened by the spirit of Christianity.

Finally the orator spoke of the culture's value system. Wealth was not its goal. Home and family stood as the most cherished institutions. And its women dedicated themselves to making these homes "lovely, happy, and sacred." Furthermore, "Its society possessed elegance, refinement and dignity. Its public life was but little stained with public scandals . . . . Its men were men counting honor more than life or riches." In short, the Old South had been the most nearly perfect spot imaginable, one which rivaled Camelot for beauty, virtue, wisdom, and chivalry. From such a culture, charged the orator, came the exceptional attributes which Southern people carried into war.

What, however, was the situation after the war? Had

104 Ibid., p. 27.
105 Ibid.
this essence of cultural greatness being destroyed? Daniel did not think so. In fact, he argued that it was during the South's moments of deepest sorrow and deprivation that her people demonstrated their truly heroic mettle. Speaking of the South during Reconstruction, Daniel proclaimed:

Brilliant as are the annals of the Southern land, from the days of the Revolutionary War to the present time, there are no pages in its history which bespeak the stern, enduring stuff of its manhood and the beautiful piety of its womanhood as do those which relate to its rising up from the prostration of civil strife, and its restoration to social prosperity and political liberty.106

Daniel also asserted, apparently in echo to Henry Grady's "New South,"107 that the true glory of the Confederate soldier lay in his return from the field of battle to rebuild his home and society.108

This was a popular theme in Confederate veteran oratory, perhaps because of Grady's speech, and it was usually employed to illustrate the alleged undauntedness of


Southern character. The Southern people, so the argument went, refused to succumb to the most severe adversities. Their homes had been destroyed, their governmental system was no more, their commercial institutions were in ruins, their labor force was scattered and depleted, their leaders were momentarily rendered impotent, and, worst of all, an alien political force had been imposed upon their state and local governments. All of this— noted the orator-apologists—faced the returning soldiers. Nevertheless, they still survived, pulled their world together and went on to build a better South. "Broken in fortune, but not in spirit," argued William B. Bate,

returning from the field of glory, yet field of disaster, with an armless slave as a life companion, in search of his home, his vision was greeted by the broken windlass of the old well which had gone dry, and by the stark and weird chimney—a spectre standing in the midst of desolation . . . where once stood the old, happy home with its latticed porch and trellised vine, its garden and its roses. . . .

The irrepressible pride and indomitable pluck of Southern manhood was still with him . . . and recognizing the demand of the hour . . ., as the antique wrestler in the Olympian games, when thrown in the dust, he arose with renewed challenge, the greater for the fall.109

In summary, these orators viewed Southern society as possessing all those virtuous attributes also attributed to the Confederate soldier, leader, and woman. In addition,

109Confederate Veteran, III (December, 1895), 357.
they saw the South as distinct from that other culture with which war had been waged. Furthermore, they believed that this Southern distinctness had not been destroyed, and that its virtues sustained the region during the trying years of Reconstruction. But, perhaps most important of all, they believed that there was a certain indestructableness about the South, that its people overcame the severest adversities with ingenuity and an indefatigable spirit, that they fought a war, by the sheer force of will, against great odds, and that they applied the same indomitable energy to the rebuilding of their social, economic, and political order.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapter it was shown that these orators defended the Confederate cause as both legal and righteous; consequently, they concluded that the war could not have been lost because of some innate villainy in Confederate principles. But could the South have been defeated as a result of basic weaknesses in her people? This was the next question which demanded an answer. In providing that answer they examined the roles played by the private soldier, the Confederate leader, the Southern woman, and Southern society in general. The conclusions subsequently drawn, when pulled into one all-inclusive statement, proclaimed
that Southern people had by no means been proved wanting. In fact, they had done all that could be expected of a people and more. Against overwhelming odds in military strength, industrial capacity, and established governmental systems they had performed as no people before had ever performed. They had not been defeated, merely outnumbered. Furthermore, they had, in their respective classes, exhibited the utmost courage, stamina, ingenuity, dedication, loyalty, wisdom, skill, and chivalrousness while waging their war for a just cause. Finally, in defeat they had not groveled in sorrow and despair. They had gone to work and rebuilt, and in doing so they had again demonstrated the indestructibility of their spirit. They had shown that they were not, nor ever could be, defeated.

Such was the dominant image of Southern people as they were depicted in this oratory. It was an image which, as has been indicated, was not always true to the original; therefore, it fell within the genre of myth. Heavily tinged with romance and sketched in the bold relief of superlatives, this image conveniently lacked any aspects of the dishonorable, the unheroic, the irreligious, the dispirited, or the unchivalrous. Some of these negative characteristics were occasionally attributed to the former foe, but never to the Southerner.

Such, therefore, was the basic fabric of this myth of Confederate character. Two premises have already been
indirectly advanced as explanation of why these orators chose to promote such a myth. The first premise was that these speakers told their audiences only what they wanted to hear; consequently, the old soldiers and the Southern matrons were deluged with panegyrical rhetoric simply because they would have tolerated no other. The second premise, however, explained this rhetoric in terms of what it achieved in the constructing of a rationale. Given the conclusions that these orators reached relative to the private soldier, the Confederate leader, the Southern woman, and the Southern society in general, it became impossible to imagine that a war could have been lost because of deficiencies in these Southern people.
Chapter 6

THE MEANING OF DEFEAT

Perhaps Confederate defeat would not have been so disturbing to Southerners had it not been for the fact that they had been imbued with a sense of the providential. In fact, spiritual leaders such as Benjamin Morgan Palmer often proclaimed that the Confederacy had a divinely sanctioned mission to perform.\(^1\) Furthermore, throughout the war Southerners had continued to think of themselves as a chosen people and of their cause as protected from above. Later, such thinking made it difficult to construct rationales which could correlate the earlier pronouncements with the later results.

It has already been demonstrated that Confederate veteran orators saw no basic fault in either the Southern cause or in the Southern people; therefore, they concluded that the war could not have been lost because of imperfections in these areas. Ultimately the orators declared that

\(^1\)Wayne Carter Eubank, "Benjamin Morgan Palmer, A Southern Divine" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1943), pp. 122-123.

Southern defeat resulted simply from deficiencies in total manpower, military materials, industrial capacity, and general economic wealth. But Providence—they might have said—still could have changed all of that, or at least could have altered the importance of these factors. A God who had raised up David to fight Goliath certainly could have mitigated the importance of a Northern numerical advantage. However, when that God chose not to do so, then Southerners were presented with a difficult ideological and theological question.

Confederate veteran orators had much to say about the meanings of defeat, both in terms of the immediate literal results and in terms of the theological implications. Under the heading of IMMEDIATE LITERAL RESULTS analysis will be made of their discussions of (1) Confederate Defeat and Slavery, (2) Confederate Defeat and Constitutional Freedom, and (3) Confederate Defeat and the New South; while under the heading of THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS analysis will be made of their discussions of (1) Confederate Defeat as a Sacrifice, (2) Confederate Defeat as a Possible Moral Judgment, (3) Confederate Defeat as a Result of Divine Will, and (4) Confederate Defeat and the Sacred Promises for the Future.
Confederate Defeat and Slavery

For the most part these speakers either ignored abolition completely or dismissed it with but a brief statement. It should be remembered that the rhetoric of this movement discounted slavery as a significant "cause" of the war; therefore, it was easy for these speakers to treat abolition as merely incidental to the conflict. Furthermore, it was argued that the North had not entered the war with the intention of freeing the slaves. The North's stated goal, it was noted, had been simply to reunite the states. In fact, the words of Lincoln were often quoted as support for this contention:

If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery.

Governor Thomas G. Jones of Alabama employed this quotation when in 1898 he addressed an annual reunion of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia. In addition, Jones reminded his listeners of an action taken by Lincoln early in the war. In the particular instance, Lincoln had repudiated an order of emancipation--affecting only certain states--which had been issued by General Hunter. Jones also

3Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVI, 91.
observed that "The first [official] proclamation was an announcement of emancipation to be enforced against persons who thereafter continued in arms against the United States." The orator reasoned that this proposal of an alternative to having one's slaves emancipated—an alternative calling for the laying down of arms—stripped the North of "any just claim to benevolence." In short, Jones argued that abolition had been handled like any other weapon of war, that first the threat of emancipation was used in an attempt to bring slaveholders back into the Union, and that it was finally proclaimed merely as a disruptive maneuver. At no time, the argument went, did the North consider the ending of slavery a primary goal. "The institution," asserted Jones, "was shot down in the angry strife between sections, like the sturdy oak, between the lines, by bullets sped at other marks . . . ."\(^4\)

Since most of these orators claimed that the preservation and extension of slavery was not the reason the South had gone to war, they did not accept abolition as an index of the Confederacy's success or failure. Furthermore, these speakers apparently did not consider it contradictory to express satisfaction with abolition while also suggesting that the Confederate cause had not been lost. Charles E. Hooker, for example, proclaimed at the 1898 reunion of U.C.V. that

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 191-192.
"All [Southerners] are ready to admit as one of the results of war, slavery has been forever abolished, and there is no regret anywhere in the South." In the same address, however, Hooker strongly implied that the South had won, or soon would be winning, her major objectives. "So it will come to pass," proclaimed Hooker,

... that all of the States will unite in thanking the Confederate States for the glorious battle which they fought for preserving that which Mr. Calhoun declared was "the breath of the nostrils of the government, the states."

Demonstrating a similar type of reasoning, John H. Reagan, in his 1897 U.C.V. reunion address, stated that "Whatever may have been said in the past in defense of slavery ... the spirit of the present age is against it ..." Then he also suggested that no Southerner wished the institution reinstated, even if such were practicable. Finally he firmly expressed his own view on the matter: "Certainly I would not restore it if I had the power. I think it better for the black race that they are free, and I am sure it is better for the white race that there are no slaves." However, in the statement which immediately followed Reagan voiced a prediction:

Some great Macaulay of the future will ... , by reference to history, to the sacred scriptures, and to the constitution of the United States, as made by our

revolutionary fathers, vindicate the patriotism and the heroic virtues and struggles of our people.®

The implication of Reagan's words may not have been that the South had already emerged victorious; nevertheless, the suggestion did seem to be that such a victory could be expected in the future. In fact, both Hooker and Reagan apparently believed that an ideological war was still being waged, and that the South was winning.

Hooker and Reagan were not the only orators who expressed some degree of satisfaction with emancipation, but usually these speakers coupled their support for abolition with other statements which questioned Northern motives in the entire affair or which praised the South for having contributed in some way to the process of emancipation. General E. M. Law, for example, described slavery as having been an "incubus" on the back of the South,7 but he also, in the same address, charged that the entire abolitionist movement had been little more than a pretext.8 J. L. M. Curry, as another example, also expressed some pleasure at seeing slavery ended; however, he concurred with Jones in declaring that emancipation sprang from no high moral intentions on the part of the North. In general he agreed


8 Ibid., pp. 94-95.
that it had been a purely military maneuver. Finally Congressman Breckinridge strongly implied his own enthusiasm for emancipation, claiming in addition that the South had supplied the ideological premise basic to abolition. Because Curry and Breckinridge added significant dimensions to this general issue, their positions will be examined in more detail.

Although Curry was a reconciliationist in most of his oratory, he was reticent to ascribe worthy motives to the North relative to abolition. For example, in his address to the sixth annual reunion of U.C.V. he made the following statement:

As a result of the military necessities of the war, the inability otherwise to conquer the seceding States, even with the purchased "Hessians" of overcrowded trans-Atlantic cities, slavery was abolished by the stroke of the pen, a decree of the commander in chief.

This explanation of emancipation indicates that the orator was not ready to accept Northerners as moral leaders simply because Lincoln freed the slaves. Motivations other than

9 "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 70.

10 Southern Historical Society Papers, XX, 227.

11 Addressing the sixth reunion of U.C.V., Curry stated the following: "... I have felt that my highest duty to my section since the struggle ended, was to restore fraternity of spirit as well as political association." "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 72.

12 Ibid., p. 70.
morality, he charged, had engendered the action. Nevertheless, Curry did believe that abolition was a blessing to the South, and he insisted that no ex-Confederate wished to reestablish the system. "I am sure I voice the sentiment of every Confederate soldier," proclaimed the orator, "when I say, thank God, African slavery no longer exists in the South." He then continued by charging that there was "no wish or purpose now, or at any future time, to reverse the decision of the arbitrament of war in reference to slavery or secession."13

After proclaiming his acceptance of emancipation, Curry took two additional steps which carried him far beyond the positions held by typical Confederate veteran orators: he advocated Negro education, and he opposed lynchings. In 1890 Curry had assumed responsibility for the John F. Slater Fund, a million-dollar endowment earmarked for Negro education. He subsequently became an enthusiastic supporter of this cause, and when he spoke to the U.C.V. reunion in 1896 he found opportunity to promote Negro education by praising the South for what had already been achieved: "... history has no parallel to the magnanimity and sacrifices of the impoverished and imperiled South in furnishing him [the Negro] 'without money and without price' the facilities of

13 "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 70.
a common school district."\textsuperscript{14}

Curry next spoke out forcefully against the continued physical mistreatment of Negroes, arguing that "The brutal lynching, the torture and the burning of Negroes charged with unmentionable crime . . . [was] a stigma upon the white race, [and] upon Southern civilization."\textsuperscript{15} Later, at the 1899 U.C.V. convocation, he again touched on this issue, approaching the subject in a skillful manner. First he reminded these veterans that one of the values for which they had fought was the "purity" of Southern women, then he observed that theirs was a campaign which had been "right and just; . . . a campaign of order; . . . based upon Constitutional rights." Next he urged the old veterans to do all within their power to see that their "record in the future is untarnished and unstained." And finally he delivered the main thrust of his message:

If we were in the past a people of law and order, let us be in the future a people of law and order. A mob should not be tolerated because it is wild, irrational and can do no good. A mob has no conscience and no reason. I close with one indignant protest: I have said, Sir; that we fought for the purity and stainless character of our women; we bled and died for them; shall we now intrust this purity of heart and soul of these women to a mob? God forbid that we should now, or in the future, [trust] the honor and the purity of these women to a mob that takes the law in its own

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 73.

\textsuperscript{15} "Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," pp. 73-74.
hands and becomes law-giver, judge, jury, witness, executioner, all embodied within themselves. It is difficult to imagine that Curry's listeners could have missed the implications of this passage.

William C. P. Breckinridge also voiced a distinctive position relative to emancipation. When addressing an annual reunion of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, Breckinridge employed one of the apologetic rationales examined in Chapter Four. This was the idea that the ante-bellum South had been trapped by a complicated web of economic dependence and moral responsibility, spun through years of life with slavery. "... we did not intend that they [the slaves] should be our enemies," argued Breckinridge,

we did not intend to be barbarous or cruel; and yet we knew that their domination meant ruin and disaster, and that we could not leave the country any more than we could export them. And so we were slaves not only to a non-resident master, but slaves to our own consciences, as it [sic] bore upon our relations to this race resident with us and among us. The distinctive element in Breckinridge's position, however, was that he felt that the basic philosophy which supported emancipation had its origin in Southern thought. "The equality of men," contended the orator, "was derived from that fundamental principle enunciated by Jefferson, that

17 Southern Historical Society Papers, XX, 231.
all men were created free and equal by the Almighty Jehovah." Therefore, emancipation--or so Breckinridge suggested--became a natural outgrowth of one of the most basic tenets of Southern thought.

The orators mentioned so far in this chapter, including Thomas G. Jones, expressed feelings of relief for the demise of slavery. This may have been the mood of a substantial number of other Confederate veteran orators, but one cannot be certain. For in the majority of circumstances the speakers simply did not say anything about emancipation, either to express satisfaction with it or to criticize it. For example, among those orators who delivered major addresses at U.C.V. reunions, the following made no mention of abolition at all: Joseph Wheeler, Stephen D. Lee, James H. Berry, George Moorman, J. William Jones, and Benjamin Morgan Palmer. By comparison, only three U.C.V. orators treated the subject in any meaningful fashion: Hooker, Reagan, and Curry.

Nevertheless, one orator, Bradley T. Johnson, demonstrated--but not at a U.C.V. reunion--no hesitancy to treat the question of abolition in a most direct fashion. In general, Johnson believed that slavery had provided that necessary lower rail of a social order and that it had also enabled the upper level of that order, through leisure and

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18 Ibid., p. 227.
contemplation, to develop a highly superior culture, in its politics and in its other social institutions.\footnote{Ibid., p. 509.} As will be recalled, Johnson's premises led him to conclude that the North had attacked slavery only in an indirect effort to undermine this total cultural system. This attack, he reasoned, had resulted in much harm to that social element it was supposed to have helped.

"The greatest crime of the century," asserted Johnson, "was the emancipation of the Negroes."\footnote{Ibid.} In support of this assertion the orator first argued that emancipation had not been necessary: "If the institution of slavery had been left to work itself out under the influence of Christianity and civilization, the unjust and cruel incidents would have been eliminated . . . ."\footnote{Ibid.} In addition, he charged that institutions and society . . . change by the operation of the law of justice and love, of right and charity, and by its influence the Negro would have been trained and educated in habits of industry, of self-restraint, of self-denial, of moral self-government, until in due time he would have gone into the world to make his struggle for survivorship on fair terms.

But this did not happen, argued Johnson, because the Negro had been turned out into the white man's world before he was ready. Furthermore, this had been done "against his [the Negro's] will, without his assistance." The horror of such action, according to the orator, was that this underdeveloped
creature would not be able to survive in the inevitable conflict which would materialize between him and the white man, for jobs and for all the better things of life. "The law of the survival of the fittest," proclaimed Johnson,

forces the fight, and the consequences, that whenever the colored race--black, red, or yellow--has anything the white race wants, it [the white race] takes it, is working. It has done so in the Americas and in Asia. It is now doing so in Africa.

Yet, in the face of this irresistible law, the Negro, a child of fourteen, has been turned loose to compete with the full-grown man of the white race.22

Johnson went on to forecast dire consequences for the Negro in American society. He reasoned that in the future this Negro would not only face those natural handicaps which Johnson claimed belonged inherently to the race but that he also would be prohibited from competing equally with the white man. All these circumstances, thought Johnson, were not so much as they should be but as they must be.

"This will be cruel and unjust," he argued, "but it will be the logical and necessary result of sudden and general emancipation." Even more tragic, reasoned the orator, would be the consequences of giving the Negro the right to vote.

"Nothing ever was devised," claimed Johnson,

so cruel as forcing on these children the power and the responsibility of the ballot. It requires powers they have not, it subjects them to tests they can not stand, and will cause untold misery for them in the future.23

22 Ibid. 23 Ibid.
In reference to this last statement it should be noted that Johnson delivered this speech in 1897 after two Southern states, Mississippi and South Carolina, had already passed disfranchisement legislation. Furthermore, this date was two years after Booker T. Washington inaugurated the "Atlanta Compromise" with his address at the opening of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition. The essence of this unwritten compromise was that the Negroes of the South, under the leadership of Washington, would renounce their aspirations for social and political equality in return for industrial education and economic advancement. The disfranchisement movement, as it developed between 1890 and 1910, translated part of this compromise into legislative actions. Frequently, the arguments which were advanced in support of disfranchisement followed a line of reasoning similar to the following: the Negroes are incapable of functioning in the democratic system; they are subject to being cheated by election officials who steal their votes, a practice which in turn cheapens the entire balloting process; consequently, they should be stripped of the franchise in order to protect them from mistreatment and in order to preserve inviolate the democratic process.²⁴

Johnson's views, therefore, coincided with the general trend of the period. His rhetoric justified white supremacy in terms of benevolent protection for a Negro population which, according to Johnson's claim, had been removed from the incubator of slavery too early. This view was not an extreme one for the age and may have been held by many of the orators who remained silent on the issue of emancipation. It would seem to be a mistake to assume that because certain prominent U.C.V. orators, notably Curry and Reagan, adopted a more liberal stance, that their positions represented the thinking of most of the old veterans. However, it should be noted that even Johnson did not call for the reestablishment of slavery. He argued instead that the action had come too early in the development of the Negro. It is not clear in his oratory whether or not he would have called for such a reestablishment had he had the power.

In summary, the ceremonial oratory of Confederate veterans gave, in comparison to other topics, little attention to emancipation. These orators refused to acknowledge slavery as being a significant cause of the war and consequently did not feel compelled to judge the fate of the Southern cause by what happened to this institution. To have done so would have meant admission of permanent and total defeat. For slavery had been, as they frequently admitted, irrevocably abolished. True Confederate principles, such as constitutional freedom, still lived.
When the orators did choose to speak of emancipation they exhibited a marked reluctance to credit the action with any great moral purpose. Lincoln had freed the slaves, they argued, solely out of military necessity. Therefore, Northerners should not be viewed as benevolent protectors of the Negro race. It was the Southern white who had the best interest of the Negro at heart. This Southerner, for instance, had been saddened by the hardships faced by the former slave after emancipation. Such hardships, they argued, could have been avoided had the Negro remained longer under the developmental protections of the institution.

**Defeat and Constitutional Freedom**

It was noted in Chapter 4 that these orators, when discussing the causes of the war, placed the greatest emphasis upon constitutional issues, particularly the alleged right of secession and the question of state sovereignty. The war, however, had clearly decided the first of these issues, and in general these orators did not hesitate to acknowledge this fact:

> When it [the end of the war] came we accepted the settlement as final and irrevocable, in so far as the further agitation or advocacy of the right of secession was concerned.

> - Congressman Thomas C. Catchings

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25 *Confederate Veteran*, VIII (July, 1900), 317.
The claim of the right of secession is abandoned, having been eliminated from the American Governments.

- J. L. M. Curry

In the gloom of Appomattox it [the Southern cause] seemed lost forever, and so far as the immediate objects—the maintenance of the right of secession and the establishment of an independent government—were concerned it was lost forever . . . .

- Senator Thomas B. Turley

Consequently, in discussing the meanings of Confederate defeat these orators usually treated this right of secession in much the same fashion as they treated emancipation: they simply argued that this was not the proper criterion by which the results of the war should be judged. However, they claimed that this defeat on the secession issue did not mean that the South's interpretation of the Constitution had been wrong. For example, Thomas Catchings argued:

No matter what may have been the right or wrong of the contention in 1861 we have admitted since 1865 that the Union is indissoluble, and that the allegiance is due primarily and fully to the United States of America. But while admitting this, we do not and will not concede that the result of the great strife was a decision that our interpretation of the constitution was wrong.

This passage also illustrates the sensitivity exhibited by many of these orator-apologists whenever they voiced Southern acquiescence on any key issue.


27 Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 499.

28 Confederate Veteran, VIII (July, 1900), 317-318.
Such sensitivity was also demonstrated by J. L. M. Curry, who wanted to make it clear that in giving up the right of secession and in proclaiming loyalty to the Union the South was not admitting any error in her previous constitutional arguments. "In affirming our loyalty [to the Union]," announced Curry,

candor demands that we should not use ambiguous phrase [sic]. We are far from making a half-hearted apology, or interposing sincerity, or honesty of belief as a palliation for the Confederacy. We rest our cause and conduct on no such humiliation... In 1961 secession was a reserved right of the States, and no proposition is logically and historically more demonstrable.29

The arguments of both Catchings and Curry demonstrate that the veterans were willing to yield on the issue of secession only in fact but not in principle. The Union now had the South's allegiance, but the South had her self-assurance of having been in the right. The speakers had employed basically the same rationale when acquiescing on the slavery issue: slavery had been abolished; the South was happy to live with emancipation; but constitutionally the South had been right.

However, when these orators dealt with the general issue of state sovereignty they exhibited attitudes which were not as complaisant. In fact, it was in reference to this issue of centralism in government that the speakers

proclaimed that the South had won, or was beginning to win. Frequently the orators spoke of a rebirth of constitutional freedom, of a stemming of the tide of centralism, and of a preservation of the states—all resulting from the position taken by the Confederacy. Thomas B. Turley, for example, proclaimed:

... the grand principles upon which that cause was based—love of liberty, devotion to constitutional freedom, and adherence to the right of self-government—live on, and will live as long as our system of government lasts. ... Their importance to our institutions ... has again become apparent to all, and those principles which induced us to take up arms have since the war preserved the right of the States against all the centralizing influences and have become a bulwark to our theory of government.30

Senator Turley's argument received support from other speakers. Rev. J. H. McNeilly, for example, believed that the Confederate struggle had a beneficial effect upon the states, preserving their rights and protecting them as politically autonomous units. In his Memorial Day address in Franklin, Tennessee, McNeilly praised the Confederate soldier by saying:

These men effected a stay of the tide of centralization in our government. The protest they made before mankind, and sealed with their blood, was against the destruction of the States, and against the omnipotence of the Federal Government. And that protest will be more and more heeded as the passions of war pass away. Each State will be henceforth more secure in her [in] alienable right to her local government and her individual development.31

30 Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 499.
31 Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 266.
George Clark also agreed with Turley. In his 1894 address at the reunion of Texas veterans Clark observed: "It is sometime said that our cause is lost." Then he quickly proclaimed that "Some causes are never lost. They may be crushed in defeat, they may go down in seeming ignominy, but in the end, like truth crushed to earth, they rise again." Then after describing that cause as one which "stood first for the rights of the States" and "against the interference of the government with the rights of the property of the individual," Clark commanded, "Tell me not that the cause is lost when hosts of Americans are marshaling in defense of these rights . . ." Obviously, he felt that the South was still winning her battle.32

General French also argued that the Confederate cause had not been lost. In his Orlando, Florida address he asserted:

The cause for which so many Confederate soldiers perished is not lost. It still lives in the autonomy of the States as they now manage their home affairs. Appomattox shattered the Confederacy; but it was not a judicial tribunal to determine the rights of a State under the Constitution. All honor then to the private soldier who died that his cause might live.33

In this statement the orator advance two ideas which deserve analysis: First, there is the contention that the war "was not a judicial tribunal to determine the rights of the States

32 Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 122.
33 Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 210-211.
under the Constitution," and second there is the contention that the Confederate soldier served as a martyr for a cause which ultimately prevailed because of his sacrifice. This second idea will receive more complete attention later in this chapter; therefore, for now this cursory mentioning of the argument must suffice. The first idea, however, needs to be examined at this time.

When French argued that the war had not served as a "judicial tribunal to determine the rights of the States under the Constitution" it is possible that he meant that state sovereignty had not been in question, only the act of secession. However, several of these Confederate veteran orators, notably Catchings and Law, defined secession, according to the ante-bellum understanding of it, as a "right." Therefore, if French believed that prior to 1861 secession had not been one of the "rights of the State" then he was in disagreement with a view which was probably held by a majority of these speakers. On the other hand, it is possible that French was simply contending that the war resulted in no definitive judgments concerning state rights, that it merely determined which side was the stronger militarily. This second possible meaning, if held by French, would have placed the orator well within the mainstream of Confederate veteran thought.

Clement A. Evans held a position which placed him within this mainstream, for when he delivered his Memorial
Day address in Macon, Georgia, he suggested that basic Southern rights had not been disturbed by the war. "The results of war," he contended,

never make changes in human rights. The whole American people were left, at the termination of the Southern struggle, the holders still of all the rights which the fathers of our country pronounced inseparable from free government, indestructible by military force.34 Therefore, this statement again advanced the idea that the war did not substantially change anything, that it only determined a military victor.

Evans, French, Clark, McNeilly, and Turley all expressed a variation of the idea that the Confederate cause still lived, that either it had not died or that it was experiencing a rebirth. However, less optimistic views were occasionally voiced, and these were often tinged with ominous forebodings, predictions of social and political perils growing out of Confederate defeat. The views advanced by Generals Law and Johnston might be used as illustrations. However, the dates of these speeches is important.

Speaking in 1890, General Law made it clear that he was pleased with abolition, suggesting in turn that emancipation had freed the South for advancement:

... relieved of the incubus of slavery and disciplined in the stern school of poverty and adversity she [the South] ... [had] not for a moment halted or turned back in the great race of progress.35

34 Confederate Veteran, II (May, 1895), 147.
Nevertheless, he felt that changes in the scope and structure of Federal powers had resulted in a form of government dangerous to American principles. He gave expression to this belief in the following passage:

The question may well be asked today: Who were the victors in our Civil War? It is true that the Federal government overthrew secession and abolished slavery; but has that relieved it from the danger of revolution and internal dissension in other forms and from other causes? All history will belie itself if the future furnish no such causes. . . .

But say our optimistic solons, the war gave us . . . a strong centralized government which is a safeguard against all these possible perils. Let them beware lest they repeat Nebuchadnezzar's dream of his tree of power, and find no Daniel to give the interpretation thereof. The tendency of all centralism in any form of government under the sun is to despotism, and anarchy is the last and most terrible offspring of despotism.36

Later in the same address he charged that the only safe course for the United States was to return to constitutional principles. He recognized, he said, the need for a spirit of unity, "a spirit of loyal brotherhood to meet every danger that threatens, in any and every part of our wide domain." However, he added:

The cultivation of such a spirit and a return to strict constitutional methods, is the only course of permanent national safety. While holding to the principle that the Union is indissoluble, leave to the States their entire sovereignty in all things not absolutely requiring the intervention of the national government.37

Therefore, in 1890 General Law apparently felt that the South had not won her cause, that significant constitutional protections had been lost during the war.

In 1891, when Bradley T. Johnson spoke at the dedication of the monument in Fredericksburg, Virginia, he voiced much the same sentiment. Johnson apparently believed that Confederate principles, and much of what had been original constitutional positions, had been lost. He referred to the war as the "Federal Revolution" and argued that those who supported this "revolution" overthrew "a Constitution with limitations and guarantees, and instituted one of absolute power, controlled ostensibly by popular will, but, in fact, directed by a heartless plutocracy for its own benefit."

Johnson also contended that a previous error had been made in establishing a precedent for the use of force to solve ideological arguments arising within the nation:

They [the supporters of the revolution] have fixed the precedent that all property depends on force, and not on justice and right, for they have destroyed five millions' worth of property on the pretense that it was injurious to permit it to exist. They have fixed the precedent that the constitution of 1787 can be altered by force, for they compelled its amendment by the bayonet.38

Furthermore, Johnson prophesied that this precedent would be used to justify future injustices, some of which would injure the original supporters of the "Federal

38 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 403.
revolution." For the industrial leaders of the North he predicted the following:

... when in the future all corporate property becomes more obnoxious than it is now, and the Government of the Union takes possession of all the railroads, telegrams, mines and manufacturing establishments, and pays for them with legal tender money made out of wood pulp,

... then the very people who have brought all this on themselves will cry aloud for the constitutional liberty for which the Confederates fought and died.39

Next he turned to the Northern labor interest and delivered the same warning:

... when the Congress, on demand of the industrial interests, shall decree that twelve hours shall be a day's work, and that fifty cents a day shall be legal pay for the legal day, then the mass of the people, who always must earn their daily bread by their daily toil, will understand that the Confederate theory, that Government has no right to interfere with the industry of the citizen, ... is the only one which secures liberty to people and security to home.40

Finally he directed an admonition to the entire New England area of the nation:

... when New England is represented in the Senate of the United States by two Senators instead of twelve, on the demand of the great States of California, Texas, Chihuahua and Nicaragua, then she will understand that a Constitution ought to be a shield and not a sword.41

This last passage illustrates another area of Johnson's political philosophy, his expansionist views.

Five years after the Fredericksburg address, Johnson spoke to the Confederate Memorial Society of Richmond, and this second speech suggests that the orator had been having

39 Ibid. 40 Ibid. 41 Ibid., pp. 403-404.
second thoughts about this entire question of whether or not the Confederate cause was lost. The 1896 address indicates that he then felt that these Confederate principles had not been wholly abandoned by the nation, that indeed they might be experiencing a renaissance. "The world is surely coming to the conclusion," Johnson now pronounced,

that the cause of the Confederacy was right. . . . They now know that the fundamental basic [sic] principles of the Revolution of 1775, upon which the governments of the States united were all founded . . . was that "all government of right rests upon the consent of the governed," and that they, therefore, at all times must have the right to change and alter their form of government whenever changed circumstances require changed laws. 42

This passage indicates that Johnson now believed the North was becoming aware of a basic truth: that the South had been forced, via unconstitutional means, to alter her way of life, and that this constitutional violation, if allowed to become a precedent for future policy, would greatly endanger the American governmental system. Therefore, by 1896 Johnson apparently had begun to feel that the Confederate cause was not lost.

An examination of the dates of the orations of Evans, French, Clark, McNeilly, and Turley reveals that all of these addresses were delivered between 1894 and 1899. If one adds to this the fact that Johnson's second speech was delivered in 1896, and if one then contrasts the positions

42 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 507.
expressed in these six orations with the positions expressed in Johnson's 1891 address and in Law's 1890 address, the suggestion of a change in viewpoint begins to emerge. The change in question was one of a growing ex-Confederate confidence in the viability of the Confederate cause. The later addresses, in contrast to the first two, indicate that these orators no longer believed the "cause" to be lost.

Additional suggestion of this change is provided in one of these orations, Turley's 1899 address. However, in order to illustrate this fact it is necessary to examine a larger segment of Turley's oration, parts of which have already been quoted:

And what shall be said of our cause, my comrades, for which so much gallant blood was shed and which was upheld and supported by a great and noble people? In the gloom of Appomattox it seemed lost utterly, and so far as its immediate objects--the maintenance of the right of secession and the establishment of an independent government--were concerned it was lost forever; and, in the light of experience and as the result of calm reflection, we can all say that it is well that these purposes did fail. But the grand principles upon which that cause was based--love of liberty, devotion to constitutional freedom, and adherence to the right of local self-government--live on, and will live as long as our system of government lasts. . . . Their importance to our institutions, . . . has again become apparent to all, and those principles which induced us to take up arms have since the war preserved the right of the States against all the centralizing influences and have become a bulwark to our theory of government. Verily the cause which went down in defeat at Appomattox has become a precious heritage to a reunited people.43

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43 Confederate Veteran, VII (November, 1899), 499.
In this passage Turley followed a five-step rationale in asserting the viability of the Confederate cause. First, as have been previously mentioned, he admitted that immediately after the war all seemed to be lost. Second, he acknowledged that permanent losses relative to "secession and the establishment of an independent government" had occurred. Third, he recognized that these particular losses were to the advantage of the nation. However, fourth, he charged that more important principles concerning "liberty" and "constitutional freedom" had survived and were gaining greater recognition. Finally, as his fifth point, he argued that these principles which had induced the South "to take up arms have since the war preserved the right of the States against all centralizing influences . . . ." By this chain of reasoning Turley essentially concluded that the Confederate cause not only had lived but that it had saved the nation. Furthermore, he observed that Southern victory had occurred not during but after the war.

In summary, the majority of these Confederate veteran orators, particularly in the addresses which they delivered after the midpoint of the decade, expressed the position that the Southern cause had not been lost. In justifying this view they de-emphasized the significance of emancipation and defeat of secession, thereby placing all of the importance upon the broader issue of constitutional freedom. However, when they talked of "freedom," "sovereignty," and
"rights" they failed to transcribe these abstract concepts into specific issues. Instead, they simply asserted that these had been the ideals for which the South had fought, that they had been momentarily lost after Appomattox, but that they were now being reinstated as the guiding principles for the entire American nation. The suggestion, therefore, was that the South had sacrificed herself for the cause of constitutional freedom and that someday the rest of the nation would awaken to that fact and thank the former Confederate states for having preserved the governmental system which the Founding Fathers had created.

Fortified with this rationale, old veterans could accept the fact of military defeat. Such defeat, they were told, had only been transitory. It had merely been a necessary sacrifice for an ultimate goal of greater value than military victory. Real defeat, it was added, could be measured only in the success or failure of basic ideological tenets, and Confederate ideology still lived. Therefore—or so the veterans were told—the Southern struggle had not been in vain. "The Confederacy gave to the world a principle," proclaimed Clement A. Evans. "There is no doubt about that. Perhaps it is required that a nation must die that the world may be lifted up and a principle established."44

44Daily News (Birmingham), April 26, 1894, p. 3.
Hearing such words, the old soldiers probably re-evaluated the war which they had fought. They forgot the humiliations which they had often experienced after Gettysburg. They forgot the sense of hopeless loss which had been engendered by Appomattox. They remembered only what the orators told them, that they had waged war to save the South and the nation, and that they had succeeded.

Confederate Defeat and the New South

When Confederate veteran orators examined the meanings of Southern defeat they often discussed the New South. The reason for their interest in this subject, aside from its immediate topicality, appears to have been that the orators were eager to co-ordinate Confederate tenets with New South values and goals. But why would such co-ordination have seemed necessary to the old veterans? Apparently a feeling persisted among some of the old ex-Confederates that the New South had been born, at least in part, out of a renunciation of the Confederacy. Some justification for this feeling can be seen in a passage which was quoted in the opening chapter of this study. The passage in question was an editorial statement published, September 7, 1880, in Henry Watterson's Louisville Courier-Journal:
The "bonny blue flag" is the symbol of nothing to the present generation of Southern men, . . . The Southern Confederacy went down forever fifteen years ago. Its issues and ensigns went down with it.45

This editorial comment was made six years before Henry Grady's "New South" oration, and, according to C. Vann Woodward, represented the "earlier and more abject stage of the Great recantation."46 Nevertheless, it still indicates that there was during the early 1880's, at least some inclination to abandon Old South-Confederate principles and symbols. However, as was demonstrated in the beginning of this chapter, the sentiments expressed by Confederate veteran orators did not mirror those embodied in this editorial statement. In fact, by the 1890's the symbols, issues, and ensigns of the Confederacy obviously meant a great deal.

How, then, did these orators react to the New South as its philosophy, goals, ideology, and values had developed by 1890? After all, the term itself implied the passing of an old era and the beginning of a new. How did these orators respond to such an implication, considering that they had waged a war in defense of that Old South? Furthermore, to these Confederate veteran orators, speaking during the last decade of the nineteenth century, what did those New South shibboleths of reconciliation, unity, and progress imply in

45Quoted by C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, p. 155.
46Ibid.
reference to Old South principles and Confederate defeat? In short, there appears to have been a need to depict the New South in such a way that the mere mentioning of the term did not imply denunciation of the Old South and the Confederacy.

Indeed, there were sensitivities demonstrated within the Confederate veteran movement relative to this issue. Some of the old soldiers simply did not like the term "New South." The editor of Confederate Veteran, S. A. Cunningham, even refused to print the term in its complete form, choosing instead to use N___ South in all articles touching on the subject. Furthermore, a few orators exhibited considerable dislike for the phrase. For example, when addressing a Memorial Day audience in Savannah, Georgia, Pope Barrow clearly demonstrated his dislike for the phrase:

New men, men with new names, mentioned for the first time in history, names that are not to be found on any muster roll of any army, go about prating of a "N___ South," and sneering at the Old South. Boasting of a new civilization, of which they are the apostles, and mammon is the titular divinity, they embrace every opportunity to proclaim the fact that they belong to the "N___ South," and not the old. They are correct. The Old South knew them not, and if they had any fathers, no account was taken of them. For a time they were more numerous and more noisy than they are now, but there are yet to be found some who believe that they know better, than the men of the old regime, and who would teach our children that their fathers who were Confederate soldiers

47 For examples, see Confederate Veteran, II (December, 1894), 359-362; and III (May, 1895), 130-131.
have nothing to be proud of, and that the least said about the war the better.

I care not how many millions one such may amass, . . . as for me and my house, its doors will open with a quicker welcome . . . for the poorest Confederate veteran, in his tatters and rags, than for this "N__ South" Dives in all his purple.48

In this passage Barrow touched on two areas of concern relative to the New South: first, he obviously questioned the values inherent in New South philosophy, believing those values to be overly materialistic; and second, he definitely place the New South ideology in a dichotomous position to Old South and Confederate principles. Consequently, he envisioned the entire Lost Cause heritage to be in jeopardy.

Both of these concerns were also expressed by other orators. Senator Walthall, for instance, touched on these fears in his 1891 address in Jackson, Mississippi. Walthall first described the New South philosophy as one in which "not business alone, but public virtue and private honor, official fidelity, and even the observances of religion are looked upon and estimated . . . from the stand point of hard practicality and 'trade.'" Then he proceeded to charge that the promoters of the New South were men who would have Southerners "break all . . . cherished images, bury 'a past that is not dead--that cannot die,' and consign all its precious memories and splendid examples to oblivion."

48 *Confederate Veteran*, III (May, 1895), 130.
Finally, Walthall admonished his listeners as follows:

Let us not profanely turn our backs upon the old South with its traditions and examples and hallowed memories; let us never stifle the sentiment which has animated its sons and daughters and sink into mere flinty practicality on the false idea that the virtues which make out people what they are are incompatible with true progress and improvement.49

There were additional indications that some of these orators either did not like the term "New South" or that they were reluctant to employ it when addressing old veterans. Speeches delivered by Evans and by Law provide evidence of such reluctance.

When Evans delivered his address to the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia he praised the ex-Confederates for their contributions to a revitalized South. That "irrepressible land," charged Evans, was "waking up the world to gaze upon the sunrise of the Southern day, and calling it to participate in that coming splendor which another census . . . [would] reveal." Nevertheless, Evans did not label this "coming splendor" the "New South":

This is not a New South that has thus burst into sight like some freshly found planet, which has been formed with regravitated fragments which lately wandered into the skies. Not a New South—but it is truly the Greater South flowing forth under new conditions from the stem of the old plant and out of the rich original soil.50

49 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 304-305.

50 Southern Historical Society Papers, XXIII, 21.
These statements do not conflict with traditional New South rhetoric except for the fact that Evans refused to use the key term, choosing instead to say "Greater South." In this respect Evans might be charged with having played a game of semantics. He might have feared the reaction which he believed the old veterans would give to the epithet "New South."

General Law followed somewhat the same course of action—and perhaps for identical reasons—when he addressed an annual reunion of the same association. Law also lauded the Southern people for their recent progress: "With firm and elastic tread she [the South] is springing forward on the highway of material prosperity, and bids fair to realize her fondest dreams of wealth and power." But Law also proclaimed "New South" to be an inappropriate term to apply to this period of increased prosperity. "As descriptive of these conditions," the orator noted,

we sometimes hear of the "New South" in contradistinction to the old. Thank God, it is one South, neither new nor old, but always glorious. But for its record in the past it could never have been what it is today.51

The obvious observation that might be made at this point is that both Law and Evans charged that the revitalized South grew, in naturalness, out of the Old South. This flower which bloomed with such radiance, they argued, was no

transplant. It was an indigenous vegetation which, for numerous reasons, had just begun to bloom. William C. P. Breckinridge agreed and argued that the war had merely acted as a catalysis which agitated a new form of Southern progress. "Before the war," observed Breckinridge,

there was but one South. It was an agricultural South. . . . The war changed all this. We have in the last year produced nine million bales of cotton, so that you may see that the agricultural South has not gone back; but we have also gone into new industries, and have shown that the ex-Confederate is competent for the discharge of any industrial duty. . . . You come to Richmond and you find a new Richmond, in the sense that her streets have lengthened, her buildings are more stately, and her bank accounts have grown larger; your sons are mining engineers, or chemists, or railroad kings. And so with Nashville, Mobile, or Savannah.52

The men who built and managed these industries and other commercial interests were not "new" men. They were, he charged, new men only "in the sense that they came from our loins fitted for the day in which they were born."53

The speakers, therefore, were usually quick to assert that Southern recovery had been achieved solely as a result of Southern energies and that it had not been the result of Northern creativity and Northern capital. When the time came to rebuild, argued Senator Bate, the ex-Confederate

. . . did not ask for outside help, nor in melancholy mood give way to lamentation; to cover himself in sack-cloth and ashes--but as the antique wrestler in the

52 Southern Historical Society Papers, XX, 235.

53 Ibid.
Olympian games, when thrown in the dust, he rose with renewed challenge, the greater for the fall. Bradley T. Johnson agreed and argued that recovery came solely from the innate force of the South. "It is amusing," asserted Johnson,
to hear the surprise constantly manifested by Northern visitors at the development and progress of the South, and more amusing to hear it so complacently attributed to Northern energy and enterprise.

Such reasoning, Johnson announced, was partly right and partly wrong. It was wrong, he said, because it was "Southern brains and muscle, energy and enterprise" which really regenerated the South. It was right, he added, because the North

... developed and made necessary the qualities in the South which are accomplishing these results. Their war, their reconstruction, their effort to subvert society and put the bottom rail on top, have welded us into a solid mass and aroused energies unknown that will beat them in the struggle for material development and ideas that will govern this Republic as long as it lasts.

Most of these orators, however, were not as acrimonious in their rhetoric as was Johnson. In fact, the dominant mood of this oratory was one true to the New South spirit of reconciliation. The South, the speakers were fond of saying, had rejoined the Union and now owed her loyalty to that Union. They did not mean, however, that any

54 Confederate Veteran, III (December, 1895), 357.
55 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 404.
56 Ibid:
Southerner should forget the Old South or the causes of the Confederacy. What they did mean, apparently, was that new and old loyalties could be compatible. John B. Gordon demonstrated how this could be done when he delivered his would-be address of resignation at the seventh reunion of U.C.V.:

... As long as the South's flag could be held aloft in the smoke and storm of battle, no man followed it more loyally than myself, and the judge of all hearts is my witness that I would freely have given for its triumph the last drop of blood in these veins... But when that flag went down at Appomattox, when the fate of war made it certain that this country was to remain one, with one flag and one destiny, I turned my thoughts and labors to the upbuilding of that one country... From the morning at Appomattox to this hour at Nashville it has been my highest political ambition to be an humble instrument in the restoration of fraternity and unity to the once divided and embittered sections, upon a basis consistent with the honor and manhood of all.57

Those orators who followed Gordon's rationale argued, therefore, that they and the rest of the South had given themselves completely to the Confederate cause and that they still reverenced that cause, its symbols, and all who suffered in its support. Nevertheless, they also argued that the war was over and that, since the issue of secession had been decided against them, their loyalty now lay with the Union. Ex-Confederates, they proclaimed, were now Americans and, as such, should patriotically give their full support to national goals.

Reagan and Curry became advocates of such a rationale. When Reagan addressed the Texas veterans in Waco, 1894, he let the old soldiers know in no uncertain terms that he revered all ex-Confederates and the cause for which they fought. He praised the generals, the soldiers, and the women for the way they conducted themselves during the war; he advanced arguments in support of Confederate positions on slavery and secession; and he denounced what had been done to the South during Reconstruction. But he also clearly indicated that he believed in full reconciliation with the North:

No one can feel more gratification that the war is ended and that peace and fraternal good will are restored between the North and South, than I. And I can meet and greet the soldier who wore the blue as a friend and a brother, and am glad that many of them have made their homes among us. We are now under the same laws and language; we are the same people, with the same hopes, aspirations, and destiny.58

In his 1896 address at the sixth annual reunion of U.C.V., Curry took much the same tack. First, he devoted over half of this speech to a defense of ante-bellum policies relative to slavery, secession, and nullification. Next he praised Southerners for having yielded to the arbitrament of war:

Since the surrender of our armies there has not been a single instance, within the limits of the Southern States, against the authority of the government . . . . There has been no manifestation of a tendency to conflict

58 Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 78.
with the national authority, no purpose to disturb the terms of the surrender and no aspirations outside the limits of the Union.\(^{59}\)

Next he told his audience that since the war he had considered it his "highest duty . . . to restore fraternity of spirit as well as political association" between the North and the South.\(^{60}\) Finally, he gave the old veterans his arguments for more complete reconciliation with the North. "We need no discord, no nursing of the injustice and the wound of the past, no prospering sectionalism, no separate political existence," he proclaimed. "We need the essential conditions upon which alone we can hope for a full share in the councils and advantages of the Union."\(^{61}\) Curry then spoke of these "essential conditions" in terms of full participation in the Union. He reminded his listeners that Southern "heroes . . . had bequeathed an example of lofty patriotism,"\(^{62}\) his implication seeming to be that the South of the 1890's should be patriotic, this time to the national cause. "Nationality," he proclaimed,

is composed of many elements, and, with true Americans, we have a sense of community of race, of religion, of interest, of language, of literature, of history, a single, political whole--an indissoluble Union of indestructible States--strong ties which bind in fellowship and brotherhood.\(^{63}\)


\(^{60}\)Ibid., p. 72. \(^{61}\)Ibid., p. 75. \(^{62}\)Ibid.

\(^{63}\)"Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 75.
Therefore, in addition to telling the old veterans that there were practical reasons for obtaining reconciliation with the North, Curry was also arguing that there were intrinsic ties between the two sections that could not be broken. Sectionalism in the case of America, he seemed to say, was not only unwise, it was unnatural.

In summary it might be said that these orators managed to treat the New South merely as an extension of the Old. They viewed the progress which occurred during the new era as being a demonstration of the indestructible talent and the indefatigable spirit of the Southern people. The orators praised the Confederate soldier for his energetic and determined efforts to rebuild order out of chaos. Working against tremendous odds, this soldier, the orators frequently proclaimed, threw himself into the task of regenerating the South. In this work, it was also argued, the Southerner was constantly thwarted by the madnesses of Reconstruction. "To the ruin already wrought by the convulsions that had shaken [the South]," observed General Law,

... the fierce passions of reconstruction were added to complete one of the darkest scenes in the history of any civilized people. . . . No other people could have stood the test and passed the ordeal successfully. But the law-abiding, courageous, determined spirit of the Anglo-Saxon triumphed at last.64

Consequently, when the South rose from the ashes of war, she did so, asserted the orators, in demonstration of

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64 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVII, 108.
the true nature of Southern people. This Southland "basking in the sunshine of strength, wealth and power," reasoned Charles T. O'Ferrall, had resulted "from the indomitable will of her sons who were enlisted under her banner."65 Such a recovery, argued Reagan, constituted "the greatest and proudest vindication of the capacity of our people . . . and is a grander and nobler achievement . . . than was ever obtained by war."66 Furthermore, this recovery was accomplished not with the help of the North, but in spite of the North. For the Confederate soldier, proclaimed Breckinridge, had "returned home absolutely without government . . . and without the power to make government. There was a power over him, by virtue of conquest, which stood between him and orderly reconstruction."67

There is also evidence in this oratory that some of these speakers were unhappy with, or at least reluctant to use, the term "New South." Nevertheless, the general rhetoric, with some exceptions, seemed to support New South ideals. Southern industrial and commercial growth was lauded, and themes of reconciliation and national unity were

66"Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 34.
67Southern Historical Society Papers, XX, 230.
stressed. Consequently, it seems possible that this hesitancy to promote "New South" as a shibboleth was motivated not so much by a conflicting ideology as by some other factor. Many Southerners were obviously disturbed by this phrase. Perhaps some of the speakers felt that these individuals could be converted to the new thought more easily if the objectionable word symbol was never held before them. Therefore praise of progress was somehow related back to the Old South and to the Confederacy. The old veterans were told that the same regional qualities which had made the South exceptional in war were now making her exceptional in peace. They were told that the principles of order which had triumphed over the chaos of Reconstruction were the same principles which had lifted the Old South above the norm of organized societies. They were told that the genius for industrial growth then being revealed in the South had had its birth in the technological demands of war, and that what was happening in the South was something that only Southerners had made happen. Finally, they were told that it had been the Confederate soldier's own indomitable will to survive and prosper which had engendered the force behind all this new growth. In other words, a few of these orators may have been promoting the New South while ignoring the word symbol or even while deprecating that symbol.
THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONFEDERATE DEFEAT

It was noted in the introduction to this chapter that the ante-bellum and postwar South had been imbued with a strong sense of the providential. The Southerners of 1861, according to James W. Silvers, had "believed they were God's chosen people and that the Confederacy was a part of God's plan." If Silvers is correct, then Confederate defeat should have engendered a touchy theological problem: How could this defeat be explained in terms of God's will and God's master plan for the South and for the nation? There is some evidence in this Confederate veteran rhetoric that these orators tried, consciously or unconsciously, to construct a rationale which would answer this question.

Confederate Defeat as a Sacrifice

One of the most persistent themes found in this rhetoric is the theme of sacrifice. In fact, most of the orators, when praising the virtues of the Confederate soldier, alluded to this idea in some way:

We claim for our men and our matchless leaders a brilliant record in that unequal contest, . . . and we

also claim a purity of motive and patriotic sacrifice not excelled in history.

- Andrew Bradford Booth

... I have seen the dying [Confederate] soldier's face illumined with the dawn of heaven as he said: "Tell them at home I give my life for them."

- General S. G. French

... we turn ... to the memory of subaltern officers and private soldiers, who, for four weary years of privation, suffering, carnage, and death, carried the banners of the Confederacy, and offered their lives for their country's liberty.

- John H. Reagan

As long as there are men who wear the gray, they will gather the charred embers of their campfires, and in the blaze of these reunions tell the truth of the martyrs who fell in the defense of country and of truth.

- Benjamin Morgan Palmer

We are here on this holy anniversary occasion to publicly declare to mankind and to God our steadfast devotion and undying gratitude to the brave men who fought and died for us.

- Clement A. Evans

This theme of sacrifice, however, might seem quite natural to any rhetoric of a postwar period, since nations tend to look upon their combat dead as sacrifices to whatever cause is being defended. Nevertheless, this theme, when discussed by Confederate veteran orators, appeared to

69Daily Picayune (New Orleans), April 7, 1899, Section II, p. 1.
70Confederate Veteran, II (July, 1894), 211.
71Confederate Veteran, IV (March, 1896), 75.
72"Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 27.
73Confederate Veteran, III (May, 1896), 147.
take on added dimension, for it assumed a distinct theological tone. For example, an often repeated charge was that the Southern soldier, of his own volition, placed himself upon his country's altar for sacrifice. The use of the word "country" here is important, because it should be noted in the following quotations that these orators did not choose to say that these soldiers placed themselves upon their region's altar but upon their country's altar. The importance of this distinction will be seen as this analysis progresses.

George Clark gave expression to this view of Confederate sacrifice when he spoke to the Texas veterans in Waco. Clark stated that the Southern soldier "put all on his country's altar, and went forth and gave his heart and his life to the cause."\(^74\) Again, this view was expressed by Stephen D. Lee in his oration at the laying of the cornerstone for a Confederate monument in Birmingham: "I rejoice that we raise this monument to the memory of such heroes. It is an irresistible impulse of homage to their voluntary immolation on the altar of their country."\(^75\) Then Charles E. Hooker, in an oration at the eighth annual reunion of U.C.V., repeated this sacrificial theme by speaking of the Confederate dead as

\(^74\) "Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 122.

\(^75\) "Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 20.
... those dear departed comrades who, while they lived, lived for us, and their country, and when they perished poured out their rich young lifeblood, a generous libation on the country's altar.76

Of course, terms such as "sacrifice," "altar," "immolation," and "libation" have obvious religious overtones, but occasionally an orator was not satisfied with mere overtones. William B. Bate, for example, voiced the religious implications more explicitly when he told his audience at Chickamauga:

You have read of the death of martyrs to the faith in the Roman amphitheatre, of the men who met their death with heroic calmness at the stake, and of all that noble band of martyrs for Christian faith, whose blood became the seed of the Church—those Confederate soldiers were all that—and in some respects more.77

Bate obviously felt that the sacrifice made by the Confederate dead was in all respects a sanctified one, and in this feeling he was not alone. In delivering the invocation at the unveiling of the monument in Jackson, Mississippi, Father H. A. Picherit even drew a parallel between the death of Confederate soldiers and the death of Christ:

Thou, O Lord, who wert falsely charged with being a traitor to Thy country and didst unjustly suffer a cruel death, Thou at least will sympathize with us in our lost cause, and we pray Thee to vindicate and to guard the memory of our comrades, who, likewise wrongfully accused and condemned, willingly--aye, cheerfully--laid down


77 Confederate Veteran, III (November, 1895), 342.
their lives on the consecrated altar of patriotism and liberty.  

In review, Clark, Lee, Hooker, Bate, and Picherit all specifically charged that Confederate soldiers had often given their lives for their country and that these gifts of life had been voluntary acts of immolation. They further implied, by the use of certain religious images, that these sacrifices had been fully sanctified by God. Nevertheless, at the base of these arguments lay a rationale which would have been totally negated had the contention been sustained that the result of war is in itself a moral judgment. Such a contention, therefore, had to be dealt with before further philosophical and theological issues could be resolved.

Confederate Defeat as a Possible Moral Judgment

The charge was frequently advanced by Confederate veteran orators that the war had decided little other than the question of which side was the stronger in military materials and manpower. Confederate defeat, therefore, had not constituted a moral judgment leveled against the Southern cause. "The sword's arbitrament," argued Clement A. Evans, "settled whatever can be settled in the great human disputation by force of arms, and no more than that." This did not include, Evans implied, disputes over moral principles: "The triumphs of power take no trophies save those

78 Southern Historical Society Papers, XVIII, 296.
which might wrenches from the grasp of the weak." Pope Barrow agreed with Evans on this issue, but Barrow made his defense of the position more specific:

Like the old wager of battle in which he who fell was adjudged to be the guilty party, the results of war is frequently accepted as conclusive evidence that the cause of the victorious army was just. This rule of a rude and barbarous age, was long ago abandoned . . . because of its shocking injustice.  

Robert H. M. Davidson upheld this position and in his advocacy of the thesis employed an analogy which probably pleased his listeners:

The failure of a right cause does not make it wrong any more than does the success of a wrong cause make it right. If the cause for which our Revolutionary forefathers struggled for more than seven years and at last gained, had been lost, would it therefore have been wrong? 

Finally, Rev. J. H. McNeilly became an advocate for this argument, charging succinctly that "right and wrong before God are not settled by success or defeat of arms." 

However, when these orators proclaimed that Confederate defeat had not meant Confederate wrong, they still had not by this argument placed the results of this war into a divine plan. In fact, one might at this point in this analysis be tempted to conclude that Evans, Barrow, Davidson, Davidson,

79 Confederate Veteran, III (May, 1895), 147.
80 Ibid., p. 130.
81 Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVII, 119.
82 Confederate Veteran, II (September, 1894), 264.
and McNeilly succeeded only in removing the outcome of war--any war--from the realm of the providential. For if the result of war does not establish truth and moral justice, then does not that result become simply a nonpurposive accident of history? At first glance this question appears as one which might have placed these orator-apologists on the horns of a dilemma: Either they had to admit that God had directed the war in accordance with moral justice, or that He had not directed it at all. Some of the orators, however, were obviously not ready to accept these conclusions as the only possible alternatives.

**Confederate Defeat as an Act of Divine Will**

When Benjamin Morgan Palmer spoke to the old veterans at the tenth annual reunion of U.C.V., the aging minister addressed a portion of his remarks to the question of God's involvement in the actions of history. "History is but the record of theories and principles," argued the minister,

the scope of which can be fully understood only in the results they produce. And God has so conditioned this probationary life that, whether it be for good or evil, these results are allowed to accrue with little or no intervention, or restraint. By consequence, history is throughout the progress of a trial.83

83 Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 33.
Palmer reasoned, however, that the problem with men is that they can never see the full scope of history at any one time, that they consequently "measure the arc of their little segment of Providence and think it is the diameter of the entire circle. God's comprehensive plan takes in the breadth of all the ages."  

Palmer also argued that within this divine plan falseness, error, and evil were allowed to exist, but that final judgments ultimately would be made against these factors. The falseness, error, and evil in man, he reasoned, would be answerable to God, but these imperfections in the governments of states and nations would be answerable to the ultimate judgments of men. Eventually, he argued, "an indignant world rises up in judicial resentment against the fraud practiced upon its credulity, and takes reprisal for the wrong in the complete reversal of its previous judgment."  

Although he was not specific, Palmer seemed to be telling his listeners that God did have a plan for the South and that what happened between 1861 and 1865 somehow fit into that plan. The implication of his remarks seemed to be that some kind of righteous judgment of the Confederacy was forthcoming and that this would perhaps result in a return to those principles which the Confederate states had  

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84 Ibid.  
85 Ibid., p. 34.
defended.

Colonel Richard Henry Lee, when he addressed a
gathering at a monument dedication in Clarke County, Vir­
ginia, was more specific than Palmer in the sense that he
claimed the war to be a clear act of divine will. Colonel
Lee told his listeners:

The cause we loved was lost. My friends, it was not
lost because our quarrel was not just; not because our
leaders were not skillful and our soldiers brave; but
because he [sic] who rules above deemed it best it
should fail . . . God is in all history; was in our
history during our war.86

In this statement it should be noted that Colonel Lee drew a
distinction between justice and God's will, thereby implying
that the deity might have acted to thwart immediate justice
in order to establish some greater good. Colonel Lee then
provided a clear statement of what that greater good would
be:

. . . although the final result was not according to
our desires and hopes, sure am I that the time will come
when we will acknowledge that He in mercy and not in
wrath afflicted us . . . . Who knows but that the de­
votion of the South to the true principles of the con­
stitution may not in the future cause the fructification
of those principles and their growth throughout the
land?87

Inclusion of this element of divine will was ex­
tremely important to this developing theological rationale.
Without this factor the Southern defeat could only be viewed

86 Confederate Veteran, I (July, 1893), 205.
87 Ibid.
as an interesting accident of history. But in Colonel Lee's reasoning this was not the case. A God who controlled history was also a God who designed history, and Lee speculated that God's design presupposed both a Confederate defeat and a Confederate victory, the first eventually actuating the second. In this reasoning he was not alone. Clark also claimed God's hand to be present in the results of the war. When dealing with the question of whether or not the Confederate cause had been lost, Clark made this statement:

It could not be lost. God, in His inscrutable wisdom, if we were untrue to principles for which we contended, and of which we are not ashamed, would raise up another race that would prove better men than we were. The cause is triumphant, and the Confederate soldier will go down into history occupying the proud page he should occupy.\(^8\)

The implication of this statement is clear: God had a role for the South to play, and the South proved equal to the assignment.

**Confederate Defeat and the Sacred Promises for the Future**

In addition to providing this element of divine will these statements by Palmer, Lee, and Clark indicate that this was a divine will with a specific purpose. Palmer charged that an "indignant world" would eventually recognize the injustice which he believed the Confederate cause had

\(^{88}\) *Confederate Veteran*, II (April, 1894), 123.
received. Lee stated that the North had been impressed by this "devotion of the South to the true principles of the constitution." And Clark envisioned an eventual recognition of the Confederate soldier for the proud role he had played in this holy cause. But it was Clement A. Evans who stated the conclusion to these arguments most succinctly. Speaking to the fourth annual reunion of the U.C.V., Evans made this statement which has already been quoted:

The Confederacy gave to the world a principle. There is no doubt of that. Perhaps it is required that a nation must die that the world may be lifted up and a principle established.89

Evans apparently was alluding to the belief held by many of these orators—and discussed earlier in this chapter—that certain Confederate principles were experiencing a rebirth, that a tide of growing centralism had been turned, and that in general the North was beginning to accept values for which the Southern states had fought. In truth, a phenomenon did occur during the late 1880's and throughout the 1890's which, no doubt, supplied these orators with evidence for this belief. C. Vann Woodward indicates that during this period Northern attitudes relative to Southern values and social policies began to shift. For example, Woodward notes that Southern issues, images, and social values were becoming favorite literary themes,

89Daily News (Birmingham), April 26, 1894, p. 3.
and that the resulting literary works were very popular in the North. In addition, Woodward has provided considerable documentation for his thesis that Northern attitudes relative to Southern racial problems were softening during this period. Bradley T. Johnson seems to have had some of these factors in mind when he delivered his 1896 address in Richmond, Virginia:

Success is worshipped, failure is forgotten. That is the universal experience and the unvarying law of nature. Therefore, it would seem that the fall of the Confederacy was in some way a success and a triumph, for it cannot be that universal law has been set aside for this sole exception, the glorification of the lost Confederacy . . . . The world is surely coming to the conclusion that the cause of the Confederacy was right.

When all of these various arguments are brought together a theological rationale relative to Confederate defeat begins to emerge. First, the orators had argued that Confederate soldiers had given their lives in a kind of holy sacrifice. Second, they had charged that Confederate defeat had not meant that their cause was wrong. Third, they had suggested that this defeat had in some way been an expression of divine will. And fourth, they had reasoned that Confederate defeat really held out to the nation a hope for

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92 Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 507.
a glorious future. These arguments seem to indicate that these orator-apologists had solved the touchy theological problem which was mentioned at the beginning of this analysis. They had solved it by formulating a rationale which explained Confederate defeat in the quasi-religious rhetoric of sacrifice, immolation, and regeneration. That rationale might have been expressed in the following three-step reasoning chain: (1) God willed a just cause to be defeated, so that (2) this martyred cause might receive greater recognition, thereby (3) precipitating an eventual total acceptance of the cause.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

When old Confederates gathered for the reunions and memorial ceremonies at which this oratory was delivered, they did not wish to hear their war described as one which failed in all its objectives. The image of a Lost Cause had one major limitation: that cause could not be depicted as being too far lost. The war, the veterans admitted, had failed to maintain the institution of slavery, but they could live with that fact since now the South did not like to hear it charged that she had fought for slavery. Besides, the old veterans were convinced that the North had followed no moral dictates when emancipating the Negro, therefore Northerners were in no better position on this issue than Southerners were. The war had also failed to preserve the
declared right of secession, but the veterans could also live with that fact since most of them were now patriotic supporters of the national cause, even to the extent of offering to return to military life when the Spanish-American war began. What they did not wish to hear, apparently, was that the basic principles of the Confederacy had been lost. True, there was some confusion as to what exactly these basic principles were, but usually they were discussed in terms of strict constructionalism in constitutional government and broad autonomy in state and local affairs.

The orator-apologists accommodated the desires of these old veterans. In general, they told their listeners that Confederate defeat had turned, or was beginning to turn, into victory. Sacrifices, therefore, had not been in vain. In fact, the Confederate states were often depicted as saviors of constitutional government and the Confederate dead as martyrs to a sacred cause. In addition, the old soldiers who had lived through all the struggles were lavished with praise for what they were alleged to have done in rebuilding the South. It was their ingenuity, their genius, their creative energy, they were told, which had regenerated the South, lifting her from the tragedies of war and Reconstruction to that new golden age of a modern, progressive, well-ordered, industrialized society. This modern South—or what some who did not know better called
the New South—was merely a natural extension of the society which the veterans had defended. Therefore, its progressive goals did not imply renunciation of Old South values and principles. And, after all, this Confederate veteran movement was led by John B. Gordon, a man who claimed to cherish all that the Old South had represented, but who also exemplified the progressive spirit of this "New South."

In short, this rhetoric, when it touched on the meanings of Confederate defeat, seemed designed, first, to make the old veterans forget the disappointments and soul-destroying humiliations of that defeat; second, to convince them that they had defended a cause which still lived and showed signs of being rejuvenated; third, to promote the idea that the New South was not necessarily alien to the Old; and fourth, to proclaim that in all of this the South had played a role in God's plan for the nation. An image was thus created which depicted the Confederate soldier as an instrument of God, hewing out of the woods of chaos and error a sanctified destiny. He had suffered, but not in vain. And eventually the world would recognize his service, at that time granting him the laurels which—according to these orators—he so richly deserved.
Chapter 7

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been noted several times during the course of this study that the Southern people emerged from the Civil War in a profound state of shock and disillusionment. By all their previously proclaimed logic what had happened simply could not have happened. For example, they had argued that secession would never result in war. The North would never fight to keep the Southern states within the Union, and even if the Yankee did choose to take up arms he would be no match for his Southern counterpart who was much more skilled with a horse and gun and who possessed the additional advantage of an established military tradition.

"Common opinion," noted Francis Butler Simkins,

held that one Confederate was the match for at least three Yankees. . . . [Therefore] the Confederacy need only stand on the defensive, win a few victories, and the unheroic Yankee would quickly withdraw from the hornets' nest.¹

Besides, argued the advocates of secession, even if the South were to prove weak in any respect, the British would come to her aid. These Englishmen, it was argued, depended

too heavily upon Southern cotton to see this source of the staple product jeopardized.

All these premises, of course, proved to be faulty, and the South found herself engaged in a war which in many ways she was ill-prepared to fight. Subsequently, these people who had believed themselves the beneficiaries of a most extraordinary political and military heritage, who had felt so confident in the righteousness and the constitutionality of their cause, who had conceived themselves to be a chosen people, with God firmly on their side—these people, in 1865, found themselves prostrate in defeat, humiliated by the contrast between expectation and reality.

In the midst of this humiliation, angry and embittered, the South began to write an apologia. Consequently, the first phases of this apologia registered much of this bitterness as individual writers attempted to explain, first, why the South had seceded and, second, why she had lost the war. The literary efforts of memoir writers and Confederate vindicators such as Bledsoe, Stephens, Davis, Early, Duke, and Cooke began to produce a basic rationale which pictured the Southern cause as a righteous and constitutional one which was lost not through any military and governmental inadequacies other than that cause-indifferent handicap of Northern numerical strength and material advantage.

Throughout this early postwar period, however, Confederate veterans, unlike their former Northern opponents,
did not organize into a region-wide movement designed to promote their cause, their honor, and their "heroic" image. True, associations of old veterans were formed between 1865 and 1889, but only of a local and restricted nature, and their ceremonial occasions lacked the tremendous appeal and crowd-gathering power which U.C.V. reunions were later to obtain. Part of this reluctance to gather in large numbers and to proclaim the "glories" of their former service was due to the suspicion which was often directed at Confederate veteran groups by Northerners and Reconstruction governments. However, another motivation for this reluctance seems to have been that the veterans were not yet ready to proclaim their own greatness. Defeat and the shame thereof were still too fresh. The consequence, however, was that during the Reconstruction period Confederate veteran ceremonial oratory was not as significant, as it later was to become, in the formulating and promoting of a Southern apologia.

After Reconstruction the rhetoric of the early promotional stage of the New South doctrine, with its emphasis on industrial progress and sectional reconciliation, seemed to indicate that the wartime exploits of the old veterans and the symbols which represented both the Old South and the

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Confederate South might receive even less attention. However, a phenomenon occurred during the last half of the 1880's which was of considerable import to the Confederate veteran and to the "Lost Cause": The New South apostles and political leaders began to use Old South and Confederate themes, symbols, and heroes as aids in promoting political causes and New South doctrines. One example of this phenomenon was that Jefferson Davis "was resurrected from his plantation exile in 1886 by Henry Grady ... and borne in triumph up and down his old domain." Therefore, between approximately 1885 and 1889 interest in the Civil War, its Confederate symbols, and the old veterans themselves began to grow. Local associations such as the Louisiana Division of the Army of Northern Virginia received more enthusiastic support, both from the veterans themselves and from the entire citizenry. One of the results of this new surge of Confederate veteran activity was that by 1889 there was sufficient interest generated in the establishment of a region-wide association, the United Confederate Veterans.

Throughout the last decade of the century there was a steady proliferation of ceremonial occasions related to the Confederate cause, and, as was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this study, these events provided frequent opportunity for oratory. The resulting body of

\[3\] C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the Old South, p. 155.
ceremonial rhetoric contributed significantly to the further creation and promotion of the Confederate apologia. It has been the purpose of this study to examine the more prominent themes which emerged from this rhetoric. Therefore, it is now time to draw some conclusions relative to those themes, to the way in which they were employed, and to their significance to the total Confederate apologia.

THE MEANING OF MYTH

During the remainder of this discussion considerable attention will be given to the Confederate myth as it emerged from this body of ceremonial oratory; consequently, it is necessary at this point to examine the term "myth" and to construct a definition of the concept as it will be employed in this analysis. For this purpose some reference to previous definitions will be helpful.

Mark Schorer has described myths as "instruments by which we struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves."\(^4\) To this statement he added that "a myth is a large controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which has organizing value for experience."\(^5\) The key element, therefore, in


\(^5\)Ibid., p. 355.
Schorer's definition seems to have been the idea that a myth is a kind of organizing tool, "a large controlling image" which provides an associational base for all "facts of ordinary life."

George B. Tindall has expressed a view of myth which seems to support Schorer's definition while adding to it another element. Discussing the myth in Southern history, Tindall observed:

... we may say that social myths in general, including those of the South, are simply mental pictures of what a people think they are (or ought to be), or what somebody else thinks they are. . . . They have a variety of functions . . . . [They] may offer useful generalizations by which data may be tested, . . . [and they] may become a ground for belief, for either loyalty and defense on the one hand or hostility and opposition on the other.6

The element which Tindall adds, of course, is his thesis that "social myths . . . are simply mental pictures of what a people think they are (or ought to be), or what somebody else thinks they are." This statement communicates an interpretation of "myth" as a communal image, envisioned from within the society or without. The implication seems to be that the image is not a true one, but is merely a communal ideal, aspiration, or self-deception. However, Tindall also appears to agree with Schorer in defining myth as a type of basic value principle from which communal

judgments of all kind are made.

Richard Hofstadter has advanced a definition which also incorporates this idea of value. "By myth," observed Hofstadter,

I do not mean an idea that is simply false, but rather one that so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their way of perceiving reality and hence their behavior. In this sense myths have varying degrees of fiction and reality.⁷

There is a second area in which Hofstadter's definition seems to parallel that of Tindall: Hofstadter contends that myths are not always completely false. Therefore, like Tindall, he seems to think of them as communal self-ideals which possibly possess some degree of truth. The important point is that they must be perceived as true, and that this acceptance of their reality in turn affects all other perceptions. "Myths," observes Ernst Cassirer, "are not regarded as symbols, but as realities. This reality cannot be rejected or criticized; it must be accepted in a passive way."⁸ Mass acceptance, therefore, would also seem to be one of the criteria by which an idea could be judged as being a myth.

Communal belief in the myth, argues George Ellis Sandoz, is not only important to sustain it as such, but it

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is also prerequisite to maintaining cohesion in the particular social unit:

Allegiance to foundation myths is the essential source of political strength and social resiliency. Defection from these myths is symptomatic of crisis and productive of political impotence and social disintegration.\(^9\)

The myth, therefore, is a unifying tool as well as an organizing tool. It organizes by providing a communal self-image in accordance with which all past, present, and future phenomena are to be perceived. It unifies by holding all members of the social unit to this self-image. To abandon it is to become disoriented, lost, cast out, exiled into an inevitable struggle to create new associations and a new myth, in essence to find a new base for all future evaluations. For, as Cassirer argues, "Myth is an objectification of man's social experience, not his individual experience."\(^{10}\)

In other words, men believe in myths not as individuals but as groups. Myths are collective thoughts, collective judgments.

In summary, there appears to be general agreement among Schorer, Tindall, Hofstadter, Sandoz, and Cassirer that myths possess most, or all, of the following characteristics: (1) they are broadly accepted by the societal

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\(^{10}\)The Myth and the State, p. 47.
unit; (2) they involve self-images which are believed to be true; (3) they also involve societal values and thus determine, to a degree, how other ideas, objects, and persons are to be perceived; (4) they may possess elements of truth, but in general they are ideals, aspirations, or broadly erroneous self-deceptions; and (5) they serve a coalescent function within the society.

There is, however, one final characteristic of myth, as that term applies to the Confederate apologia, which should be examined. Mircea Eliade has observed that myths "are a constant reminder that grandiose events took place on Earth and that this 'glorious past' is partly recoverable. . . . Directly or indirectly, myth 'elevates' man." The importance of this statement seems to be that the Confederate myth was created, consciously or unconsciously, to relieve regional self-doubt and to "elevate" the Southern spirit. Furthermore, that myth did tell of a "glorious past" and colored that narrative with a hope of recoverability.

THE CONFEDERATE MYTH

The numerous judgments made by these ex-Confederate ceremonial orators relative to the various issues of the

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war, when pulled together, constitute a Confederate myth. This myth seems to have met all of the criteria mentioned above: (1) it was broadly accepted, both by the old veterans and by the South in general; (2) it constituted a self-image which acted as a base of values by which all elements of life were perceived and evaluated; (3) it represented communal ideals and aspirations, but frequently it was broadly erroneous in its depiction of the war, the Old South, and the New South; (4) it served as a cohesive element in the postwar Southern society; and (5) it provided the rationales needed for the rebuilding of regional pride and self-confidence.

Myths Related to the Causes of the War

One of the most persistent myths in this body of rhetoric was the contention that slavery was not a cause of the war. Abolition of the institution was described as being merely an "incident to the war,"\(^\text{12}\) while the institution itself was referred to as "the occasion of the separation,"\(^\text{13}\) and as "the point attacked,"\(^\text{14}\) but never as the

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\(^{13}\) Richard Henry Lee, Confederate Veteran, I (July, 1893), 211.

\(^{14}\) Bradley T. Johnson, Confederate Veteran, V (October, 1897), 509.
"cause." Furthermore, it was noted that Lincoln had made public declaration of his intention to save the Union and not necessarily to free the slave.

Nevertheless, to soften the criticism of the South for having ever maintained this institution, the orators frequently depicted slavery as having had a profound civilizing effect upon the Negro. This race, they charged, was all the better for having served in bondage under such an advanced, Christianized people. So rich had been this experience for the Negro slave, the apologists proclaimed, that this former slave had been declared fit to function as a franchised citizen in the most democratic nation in the world. What further evidence was needed, they argued, of the benevolence of the ante-bellum institution?

If additional arguments were needed to free the South of condemnation the orator-apologists were ready. They proclaimed that it was the Yankee trader who had promoted this traffic in human lives. In fact, the trade had continued, they claimed, long after certain states had attempted to halt it. The South, some orators charged, had really been victimized by the promoters of this institution, for ante-bellum plantation owners had simply inherited a labor system which they could not long continue or easily discontinue. And so, this reasoning proclaimed, the Southern people were made slaves to the slave, but, cognizant of their awesome responsibility to the child-like Negro,
Southerners continued the benevolent system long after it had proved unprofitable in many areas of their economy.

The most basic contention, however, remained that the South had not fought to preserve the institution of slavery. She had fought instead to preserve constitutional freedoms. These freedoms, it was argued, had been threatened by aggressive Northern interests, and the Confederate states seceded only after it became obvious that existing majority influences were bent on abandoning the form of government which the Founding Fathers had created. The states—and particularly the Southern states—could no longer be protected. Creeping centralism, the speakers observed, became the order of the day. Southern agrarian interests were sacrificed to Northern industrial interests, and the North seemed generally determined to drive her sister South even deeper into a minority status. Faced with these circumstances, asserted Confederate veteran orators, the South exercised her constitutional right to withdraw from the Union. It was over this action, they declared that the war erupted, not slavery.

Orators such as Reagan, Curry, Catchings, and Law expounded elaborate arguments designed to establish that in every step the South had stood on solid constitutional ground. Southern positions relative to slavery, nullification, and secession had all, it was charged, been advanced, at some earlier date in American history, by Northern states.
The Confederate states, therefore, had followed no radical course of action. The speakers argued instead that it had been the North's action to compel the dissident states back into the Union which had been radical and unconstitutional. By this unprecedented procedure, reasoned the apologists, the North indicated that she was willing to rewrite the Constitution by force.

Many speakers proclaimed yet another reason why the war had been fought. This cause, they argued, lay in the basic differences which they in turn claimed existed between the two peoples: the South had been agrarian in her origins; the North was a land of Yankee traders. The South had possessed the blood of the courageous, dashing, and generous cavalier; the North, the blood of the stern and relatively uncultured puritan. The South preferred a national government structured as a confederation of sovereign states; the North believed in federalism. The South was religious; the North was a breeding ground for heretical "isms." The South placed her greatest value in the home, family, and community; the North believed only in the value of commerce. The South was a superior region in the production of statesmen and thinkers; the North was superior only in the devious machinations of trade. In short, the orators proclaimed the two regions to have been so distinctly different that antagonisms had been inevitable. The civil conflict developed, therefore, from this basic
disparity in nature, ideology, and values, fanned into open hostilities by the jealousy of the less endowed North.

Thus the Confederate myth proclaimed that the war had been fought for practically everything but slavery. And in making this claim the apologists spoke contemptuously of the activities of Northern abolitionists. Such rantings, the myth declared, had influenced only men of weak minds. More profound and fundamental principles, those anchored in the very heart of all systems of free government, had been at stake. The rights of the individual, the rights of states, the rights of geographical regions, the rights of economic subgroups, the rights of political minorities—these, said the orators, had been the real issues of the war.

By this rationale the myth pulled attention away from the one issue in which the Old South and the Confederacy were the most vulnerable to criticism. The focus subsequently fell on arguments of constitutionality, an area of debate in which, conversely, the Old South had been the most secure. Such a shift in focus was immensely helpful to the apologist. Abstract principles could be defended without a close examination of the actual societal practices protected by those principles. By the same token, it was easy to claim victory for these abstract principles while acknowledging defeat in "less important" areas. Furthermore, principles, as opposed to practices, assume more of an aura of sacredness. A war waged to defend an idea may
be depicted as a holy war; a war waged to defend a practice is rooted, for its justification, in the mundane actions of men.

Furthermore, an image of a "Lost Cause" which was tied to slavery could not long endure. Advancements in theories of social morality would reduce such an image to a thing of ugliness. Add to this the fact that slavery was the one issue in which Confederate defeat was most obvious, and the reasons for minimization of this topic become clear. Therefore, Confederate veteran orators of the 1890's could not defend slavery, except to argue that it had civilized the Negro and protected him from unfair competition with the "superior" white man. Consequently, they were forced to ignore the institution or to make it a non-issue. The first alternative was chosen by what appears to have been a majority of these speakers. A significant portion of the remaining orators touched on slavery only to speak of property rights and the constitutional guarantees thereof. Only a few of the old veterans dealt directly with the issue, and then only to argue that the South had somehow been victimized by the institution. Therefore, one of the great myths fostered by Confederate veteran ceremonial oratory was this view of the war as one fought neither for slavery nor because of slavery, but for rights so allusive that they seldom became grounded in specifics. The "Lost Cause," so defined, could live forever, for it rested on no column made
vulnerable merely by its concreteness.

Myths Related to the Way the War Was Fought

Relieved of the touchy problem of justifying the war in terms of specific social or political practices, the orator-apologists could turn their attention to an examination of the virtues of the Southern people as these virtues were exemplified during the war. Here the raw material for myth building was rich, for abundant evidence existed testifying to the sacrifices which the Southern people had been required to make. First, their army had suffered heavy losses, with some regiments experiencing casualty rates of over fifty per cent,\textsuperscript{15} while other "Confederate units . . . [were] on record as having lost eighty-five per cent of their number without ceasing to exist as military units."\textsuperscript{16} In addition, the war had been fought primarily on Southern soil, and the destruction to private and public property had frequently been awesome. Sherman's march through Georgia and then through the Carolinas, for instance, had resulted in vast destruction to factories, cotton gins, railroads, bridges, warehouses, public buildings, and hundreds of farms and plantations. Furthermore, few Southern families escaped

\textsuperscript{15}"Minutes of the Third Annual Meeting and Reunion, U.C.V.," p. 41.

the agonies of personal loss resulting from death and de­struction. Such sufferings had been so widespread that most of the people felt that they had personally sacrificed for the cause.

Therefore, when Confederate veteran orators retold the stories of these sacrifices, the narratives took on the aura of heroic legend. In general this rhetoric told of a people wholly unified for a cause; of soldiers who wor­shiped their flag and their leaders; of leaders who stood ready to die with their men; of women who shouldered unbel­lievable burdens in the home and community while still sustaining the spirit of their husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers; of an entire region remaining true to God and to principle.

It was the Confederate soldier, however, who usually received the largest share of this praise. Motivated by the presence of this former Confederate soldier, the orators poured forth a flood of superlatives in his honor. The myth which emerged from these superlatives depicted this soldier as a loving husband, father, son, or brother who proved ready to make any sacrifice for the preservation of his home, his community, and his state. Completely dedicated to the Confederate cause and its leaders, he daily demonstrated his high sense of loyalty, chivalry, morality, and courage. As a man of God he carried his religion into the camp and into the field, thus providing him with the spiritual sustenance
so vital to his holy cause; as a true American patriot he demonstrated the same passion for freedom which had immortalized his Anglo-Saxon forefathers; as a skillful, courageous, and determined knight of battle he stood for four long years against overwhelming odds; and as a man of indestructible spirit and indefatigable patience he laid down his arms and rebuilt his society, even while all the forces of an alien government labored against his efforts. His sacrifice had often included an arm or leg, but always it had included the loss of comrades dear to him. Such experiences, however, had not embittered him, and in later years he was able to extend the hand of friendship to his former foe.

Such, therefore, was the myth of the Confederate soldier. It painted him as always being the epitome of what a soldier ought to be, except for less meaningful matters such as salutes and formal drill. His deficiencies in these areas, the orators suggested, only served to make him colorful. No mention was made of his desertions; no mention was made of his lack of discipline; and no mention was made of the artful methods by which his chieftains had to flatter him into taking commands. Such ideas would have implied that perhaps at sometime between 1861 and 1865 this soldier could have been a better fighting man. Such a suggestion apparently was never incorporated in this rhetoric and perhaps would never have been tolerated.
This myth of the Confederate soldier did not exceed in superlatives the myth of the Southern woman. This woman was frequently the topic for discussion, and the orators, as has been indicated, spared no degree of eloquence in proclaiming her virtues. The image which such rhetoric generated was one which depicted this woman as a creature of delicate and aristocratic breeding who, before the war, had been accustomed to the quiet gentilities of Southern plantation life. Nevertheless, when the perils of war placed upon her shoulders those responsibilities which had previously fallen to her husband, father, son, or brother, she responded with courage, fortitude and ingenuity. Assuming the full burdens of the home and fields, she struggled heroically, providing for herself, her children, and a host of devoted slaves. Throughout all of these sacrifices, she maintained such an undiminished spirit and dedication to the Confederate cause that she inspired the soldier to even greater effort in the field.

When not working in the home or fields, this delicate but determined creature searched out the hospitals and there performed all those tender tasks which endeared her to the wounded and the dying. Ironically enough, this angel of the hospital usually suffered the grievous fate of having loved ones perish on fields of combat far from the solace of her presence and the tenderness of her care. Finally, she had endured the ultimate horror of watching her home
and community destroyed by flames as the marauding "Yankee" tramped through her respective state. Then, when women of weaker character would have been reduced to emotional and spiritual ruin, she stood proud and welcomed home the returning soldier, encouraging him in his resolve to rebuild. In short, during the war she often provided that margin of courage and strength needed to sustain the Southern soldier, and after the war she directed that same courage and strength to the task of restoration. In every way—or so the myth proclaimed—she had been a full partner in the Confederate struggle.

The image of the Confederate leader was also heavily romanticized by this rhetoric. Such leaders were always depicted as men of sterling character, humble, honest men of impeccable standards, who frequently served as spiritual counselors just as effectively as they served as military commanders. As military men—and this was the type of leader which the orators most often wished to discuss—they had inspired the love and respect of their men by constantly demonstrating their willingness to suffer the same privations, to face the same dangers, and thus to lead the charge into any peril which they required their men to face. Furthermore, they had, the rhetoric proclaimed, constantly displayed their superiority over their Northern counterparts in military tactics and overall generalship, often carrying the day against overwhelming odds. But always they
remained true to the strict code of conduct which their cavalier heritage imposed upon them, and after Appomattox they had, in the true spirit of noble gentlemen, quietly yielded to the arbitrament of war without losing the love and dedicated following of the Southern people. Ever true to Confederate principles, these former military leaders then suffered through the madnesses of Reconstruction and finally threw off the incubus of alien rule to re-emerge as the indigenous leaders of the South. Subsequently they returned their state and local governments to systems of constitutional order, in the process rebuilding their region into a modern, progressive, industrialized society.

Such, therefore, was the myth of the Confederate military leader as promoted by this oratory. By contrast, his civilian partner in the cause did not receive nearly as much praise. In fact, of all the Confederate civilian leaders only Davis was given any significant attention in this body of rhetoric. Davis, however, was portrayed with such extremes of panegyrical oratory that the resulting image approached deification. In this process it was frequently charged that Davis was a great orator, a great statesman, a great soldier, and a great Christian. He was just as frequently described as a martyr to the Confederate cause and drawn as a Christ-figure for his "suffering" at Fort Monroe. Only rarely was it suggested that Davis might have had some faults as a civilian administrator, and such
minor criticism was always countered by praise for other virtues.

In general, the name "Jefferson Davis" became, within the Confederate veteran movement, as powerful a symbol as could be employed to unleash the passions for the Lost Cause. The former chieftain had died before the movement reached its main period of growth, but his wife, his daughters, and even his grandson were brought before old veterans to stand in his stead, and the resulting ovations fully demonstrated the depth of devotion which these ex-Confederates felt for this symbol of symbols.

In truth, this image of Jefferson Davis may have been the one Confederate least rooted in reality. As president of the Confederacy he had not been particularly popular, and it has been suggested by one modern historian that the ineptness of his administration may well have been the one factor which caused the Confederate defeat. All of these facts were forgotten, however, when these orators rose to proclaim the infinite greatness of their former chieftain. The myth apparently had become more important than the man. For the man had aroused controversy and not


just a little ridicule; the myth was unimpeachable.

Another myth, however, which rested upon extremely weak links with reality was the myth of a totally unified Southern people. The orator-apologists depicted Confederates of all classes and subdivisions as having been completely dedicated to the cause. They were, the myth declared, one people of one mind and one voice. They stood solidly behind their leaders, they served willingly in any capacity, and they offered up their fortunes and their lives without complaint. Finally, when it was all over, when it had become obvious that their cause was lost, they did not turn in wrath and vindictiveness upon those men who had led them into the conflict. Instead they demonstrated those special qualities of loyalty so basic to their regional nature and continued to follow these same leaders.

In relating this myth the orators said nothing of the pettiness exhibited by the Confederate congressmen and state governors, nothing of the controversies which erupted between Richmond and the military commanders, nothing of the complaints over conscription and the system of impressment to obtain military supplies, nothing of the charges of profiteering leveled against many Southern merchants, and nothing of the large number of "hiders" who fled to the mountains and forests to avoid military service. Such, no doubt, have been the circumstances of every war, but the Confederate myth argued that this war and these people were exceptions.
Myths Related to the Meanings of Defeat

This analysis of the Confederate myth has thus far established that these ceremonial orators found no fault with either the Confederate cause or the way the Southern people fought for that cause. Such preliminary conclusions, however, placed a heavy burden upon the apologists to justify Confederate defeat by other rationales. It no doubt seemed unsatisfactory to them to simply argue that fate had allowed a just cause to be defeated even though it was skillfully and courageously defended by a virtuous people. Such reasoning would have depicted Providence as being extremely indifferent to the cause of justice. A few speakers, it is true, went no further than to conclude that the sole reasons for Confederate defeat had been the numerical, economic, and industrial advantages held by the North. But for other orator-apologists this reasoning had been unsatisfactory. The Southern people had placed great faith in the ever-present hand of Providence; therefore, this defeat needed to be explained to them in terms of eventually obtainable worthy goal. That goal, the myth declared, was a return to the system of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and a general re-acceptance of the principles of government which had been defended by the American Founding Fathers. Such principles, these orators of the 1890's argued, were regaining dominance, thus demonstrating that the Confederate states had not struggled in vain. The courageous battles
waged by the South for constitutional freedoms, plus the many examples set by the Southern states after Reconstruction, had impressed the North with the wisdom of the original Confederate cause, thus turning the tide of centralism and assuring state and local governments a greater autonomy in the future. Therefore, it could be argued that the cause was not lost; it had only been temporarily subdued.

For those apologists who were convinced that the hand of Providence could be seen at work in all events of man and nature, this thesis provided a premise which could be expanded into a longer theological argument: God caused a just cause to be defeated, so that this martyred cause might receive greater recognition, thereby precipitating an eventual dominance of that cause. Thus certain aspects of this Confederate myth took on a distinct religious flavor and assured the Southern people that they really had been chosen by God after all. Furthermore, this aspect of the myth fit well with the images of sacrifice and martyrdom so prevalent in this ceremonial rhetoric.

For those apologists who viewed the world with less assurance of its being totally directed from above, the thesis allowed them to argue simply that man's own innate wisdom had finally prevailed. The states, they charged, had wandered temporarily from the ideological paths prescribed by the Founding Fathers; and the South, greatly disturbed by
this deviation, had tried to pull the nation back to the Constitution; but failing in this task she had finally seceded and by so doing precipitated the Civil War; nevertheless, the nation had discovered her error and was now returning to the original principles. Furthermore, this return, once completed, would generate an outpouring of appreciation for the South's steadfast adherence to the true American ideology. Thus, proclaimed the myth, justice and truth would prevail and the South would be recognized.

In general, therefore, the Confederate myth held that the Southern cause had not been lost. Slavery had been abolished, and the Union had been declared indivisible, but these facts were not as important as the fact that the states had been protected and their perpetuity guaranteed. The nation could survive and prosper without slavery, and the sections could live together in harmony, but the Constitution must be preserved at all cost. This, the myth declared, was exactly what the Confederate revolution had achieved.

The Confederate myth, when depicted in the oratory of this movement, was often shaded with the distinctive hues of New South ideology: the need for reconciliation between the sections was stressed; the oneness of the American people was proclaimed; the growth of industry and commerce was praised; and increased involvement of the South in national affairs of all kinds was championed.
Nevertheless, the term "New South" was seldom used except to criticize the idea. In fact, there appears to have been a concerted effort to proclaim this New South as merely an extension of the Old South. The veterans, for instance, were told that they personally had been responsible for the new era of industrial growth, since the urgencies of war had compelled them to develop their own native resources in the manufacture of the materials of war. They were also told that Southern progress had not been imported, that in truth the North, through the chaos of Reconstruction, had done just about everything she could do to thwart this progress. In general, they were told that every supposedly "new" characteristic which the old veterans could see about them in this expanded age was indigenous to the South and to Southerners.

Thus this rhetoric leaves the distinct impression that these orators were attempting to build bridges between the Old and the New and that they were frequently trying to mollify objections to the new order by making the veterans feel that it was their new order. There were exceptions to this general rule, as in the cases of Barrow and Walthall, both of whom severely criticized the basic values which they said were exemplified in New South doctrine, but the majority of these orators, particularly those who were selected to address the annual reunions of U.C.V., appeared to be promoting elements of the New South philosophy while
enthusiastically proclaiming the shibboleths of the Confederate myth. In fact, one of the most significant contributions of this movement may have been this propensity to blend the Old with the New. John B. Gordon, himself a thoroughly indoctrinated New South man, stood at the head of this movement as the perfect example of the Old South and Confederate ideals, and the old veterans found no contradictions inherent in this leadership. Debates did arise, it is true, over the amount of reconciliatory rhetoric which was voiced at the reunions, but Gordon remained on top in these disputes and continued to be the unanimous choice as commanding general of the association. Orators such as Curry, Stephen D. Lee, and Reagan also contributed significantly to this reconciliatory rhetoric, and yet remained popular figures on the U.C.V. platform.

The movement never became a political one. The main reason for this appears to have been that the U.C.V. constitution forbid the discussion of obviously political issues during the official affairs of the association. This prohibition seems also to have been accepted by the local and state societies of old veterans, a phenomenon exemplified by the fact that such political enemies as George Clark and John H. Reagan could share the same platform at the Waco reunion of Texas veterans. This apolitical character of the movement may have been one of the factors which contributed to its rapid growth, for the Confederate myth became the
possession of all the people of the South regardless of their ideological positions. It could provide the base for many degrees of political expression. Nevertheless, when one examines the men who became the prominent orators of the movement, one finds, as was indicated in Chapter Three of this study, a large number of individuals who were active promoters of railroad and industrial interests. Their sympathies probably lay with New South doctrines. They stood to benefit from investments of Northern capital in the region and thus also to benefit from generally improved relations between the sections. At the same time, however, they may have found it profitable to constantly demonstrate their loyalty to the Lost Cause.\textsuperscript{19} The activities of U.C.V. and its affiliate societies provided opportunity for such demonstrations.

\textbf{SOME FINAL CONCLUSIONS: THE CONFEDERATE MYTH AND THE SOUTHERN SPIRIT}

Reconstruction had done little to rebuild the Southern spirit. The experience had meant, for the most part, a further humiliation for the ex-Confederate. His former leaders had been temporarily stripped of political power, and his section had been rendered impotent in the halls of national government. Moreover, when this period ended there

\textsuperscript{19}For an example of this phenomenon see Woodward, \textit{Origins of the New South}, p. 158.
had been no immediate indication that the "glories" of the Confederacy would ever again be recognized, even within the Southern states. Early New South rhetoric seemed to suggest to the old veteran that both the Old South and the Confederacy were being repudiated. Such rhetoric, he felt, could only mean the total demise of the principles for which he had fought. Furthermore, this image of a South completely stripped of the symbols of her previous struggles and divorced from one hundred years of social and political heritage did not have popular appeal with the vast majority of Southerners, whether veterans or not. If the South was to be returned to her former state of spirited self-satisfaction, she would need to be provided with a self-image more pleasing than that suggested by Henry Watterson's Louisville Courier-Journal. The Confederate myth provided such an acceptable image.

Beginning around 1885, the South--slowly at first, but then quite rapidly--rebuilt a regional self-image which ultimately suggested to her people that they had not only fought courageously and skillfully, but that they had saved the nation from some awful deviation from a brilliant political heritage. Armed with this myth the region appeared more willing to adopt the nationalistic moods which precipitated, and gained strength from, the Spanish-American War.

The ceremonial oratory of Confederate veterans, delivered between 1889 and the close of 1900, functioned
as a medium for both the creation and the promulgation of this myth. The reunions and memorial occasions, as has been indicated, attracted large numbers of people to the respective events, and the oratory, pageantry, and martial displays made these people forget that they had ever lived in a defeated culture. Instead, they again became convinced that they possessed special qualities which would always lift them above the norm. By this oratory they were reminded that "grandiose events took place on earth," and, convinced of their important role in these past events, they were "elevated."
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