THEIR FALTERING FOOTSTEPS: HARDSHIPS SUFFERED BY
THE CONFEDERATE CIVILIANS ON THE HOMEFRONT IN THE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR OF 1861-1865

THESIS

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By

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It is the purpose of this study to reveal that the morale of the southern civilians was an important factor in determining the fall of the Confederacy. At the close of the Civil War, the South was exhausted and weak, with only limited supplies to continue their defense. The Confederacy might have been rallied by the determination of its people, but they lacked such determination, for the hardships and grief they endured had turned their cause into a meaningless struggle. Therefore, the South fell because its strength depended upon the will of its population.

This study is based on accounts by contemporaries in diaries, memoirs, newspapers, and journals, and it reflects their reaction to the collapse of homefront morale.
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CHAPTER I

AN UNPREPARED SOUTH DECLARES WAR

From 1861 to 1865, America experienced the tragedy of a division of her own people, North and South, whose hostilities toward one another exploded into a war which left the South devastated with defeat, and the North victorious, but uncertain of what that victory meant. It was to be expected that the armies on both sides would suffer hardships, but the southern civilians could not have been prepared for the lesson in privation which the war entailed.

From the beginning of the war, the South was faced with the superior strength of the North. The northern states could boast of 22,000,000 people while the states of the new Confederacy contained roughly 9,000,000 inhabitants with Negro slaves constituting about 3,500,000 of this sparse population.1 As compared to her Yankee rivals, the South was alarmingly deficient in factories. Confederate assets in manufactories consisted of only a few textile mills scattered over the states and the Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond.2 One of the difficulties of southern manufacturing was in obtaining skilled workers and

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technicians. The agricultural minded South had discouraged such vocations and had relied heavily on northern exports. The bulk of southern industrial supply came from outside, although the war brought home to Dixie a few patriots that had been trained in the industries of the north.³

No southern gunpowder factories existed at the outset of the war. Most of the supply of arms had to come from United States arsenals that were seized, or from abroad.⁴ About 190,000 weapons were reportedly stored in arsenals, but the number of guns in poor condition was astounding.⁵ One civilian recalling the search for equipment declared that 150,000 weapons could be put into immediate use in 1861, though President Jefferson Davis reported only about 135,000.⁶ Davis’s plea for rifles was lost under the darkening shadow of state rights. Furnishing the excuse that arms were needed to defend their own territories, many states ignored the government’s action, and took the first step that would hurt the Confederacy.⁷ Their continued struggle to preserve the dominance of individual states


⁴John Christopher Schwab, The Confederate States of America 1861-1865, A Financial and Industrial History of the South During the Civil War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), pp. 268-269.


⁶Horace Smith Fulkerson, A Civilian’s Recollection’s of the War Between the States (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: J. E. Ortieb Printing Company, 1865), pp. 48-49.

was carried to the extreme. The state rights advocates failed to achieve much needed harmony and served to pull the new federation apart.

A frustrating handicap facing the Confederates, never adequately solved during the war, was transportation. As late as 1860, southern railroads were fairly new and consisted of short lines; local companies with little money controlled them under few restraints of law. Most railroads were equipped for local transporting, such as delivering goods to towns near rivers or seaports. Poor construction of railroads caused frequent accidents and delayed travel. A common procedure was to place railroad ties and rails on unprepared ground, which made the line exceedingly dangerous in unfavorable weather. Often, a seasonal rainstorm would sweep away costly tracks, interrupting train service for weeks at a time. The railroads had not been overstocked with engines and cars in 1860, but they made no provisions to furnish any more of the equipment when the war began. When a shortage of trains soon resulted, the government took an indifferent attitude that placed the burden of repairs upon the railroads. As organization became necessary, various patriots would supervise the railroads to

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some degree, but it was not until 1865 that extensive government control of railroad repair began in earnest.\textsuperscript{10}

Wagons for carrying supplies would be a necessity, but not enough could be supplied. Mules and horses confiscated from citizens did not provide adequate transportation.\textsuperscript{11} Rainstorms turned the dirt roads into mud barriers\textsuperscript{12} and the dangers of plank byways created hazards regardless of the weather.

No complete maps existed, so at least the Confederates would not fear that the enemy could trace a path with the maps that then existed. The natives would have to serve as guides for southern rebels, and most natives lost their confidence if they strayed more than ten miles from home territory.\textsuperscript{13}

An abundance of rivers wound their way through the Confederate state, but their path beckoned to the Federal armies. If the Union could control the Mississippi's vast waters, then Texas, a portion of Louisiana, and Arkansas would be divided from their eastern allies. The states of Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee might be approached through the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, and Richmond stood vulnerable because of the James. The leaders of the North, recognizing the opportunities of the waterways, made their plans accordingly.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} Wesley, pp. 37-39.
\textsuperscript{11} Vandiver, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{12} The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 4 May 1861.
\textsuperscript{13} Clifford Dowdey, Experiment in Rebellion (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1946), p. 32.
\textsuperscript{14} Henry, p. 77.
A serious handicap to the South was President Lincoln's declaration that a blockade of southern ports would go into effect by April 19, 1861. The isolation of the Confederacy caused shortages on the home front and the war front since the South was largely dependent on the outside world for supplies. Though blockade runners brought in some provisions to the South, the Federal Navy managed to tighten control gradually until Wilmington and Charleston were the only ports remaining open that could effectively evade the blockade. Charleston continued to operate until Sherman's arrival, and Wilmington did not fall until January 1865. With no effective navy, the Confederacy was unable to counter Union naval operations.

In military power the Southerners boasted of their possession of some of the finest of army personnel. Three hundred Confederate soldiers had graduated from West Point, and their patriotism was that of loyal devotion to their states. Basking in all that glory, Southerners dismissed the reality that the enemy greatly outnumbered them in manpower. In truth, the northern army never stopped growing, for later in the war they added thousands of foreigners who marched to the lure of free land, and more than 100,000 slaves deserted the South to

15 Woodward, p. 96.
18 Roland, p. 39.
become troops for the Union. Further, thousands of southern whites scorned secession and staunchly supported the Union.19

A nation preparing for battle must have vast sums of money, and most of southern wealth was tied up in the Union's financial centers of the East. Nevertheless, the South remained undaunted, for they believed their money troubles would be solved by their monopoly of cotton. They contended they would be led to victory by cotton, as the world could not function without this commodity. If England and France had to shut down their cotton mills for lack of materials, then these countries would recognize cotton as king and rush to aid its kingdom.20 Agriculture had dominated the South for a long time, creating the belief in Dixieland that their territory must clothe the world. It was this deception that cost the Southerns much agony and led them to destruction.

There was some truth to the rumor that the North might be damaged by the boycott of cotton. New York was rapidly becoming a center for the exchange of foreign goods. Cotton from the South was sent to New York to buy foreign luxuries; then, New York paid its debts to Europe with the southern export. To halt the balance of trade with an embargo was a great risk for the Confederacy, but in 1861 it seemed imperative they must try.21

19 Ibid., p. 35.


The Richmond Enquirer offered reassurance for anyone who doubted the durability of the Confederacy. The newspaper declared that prices would probably not rise, and no scarcity was anticipated. The buoyant reporter insisted it was the North which would feel the effects of shortages, for the South was its largest market, as the West had never been profitable. It was unlikely that the Union could survive the blow to its finances. As for the South, it might be forced to give up luxuries, but only temporarily, for soon home manufactured goods would supply all the country's need. Was it too much to ask that loyal citizens give up conveniences for a time in order that freedom might triumph? A blockade of southern ports could not last indefinitely, for millions of England's workers depended upon southern cotton for their livelihood, and they would not tolerate any loss to their income. With this comparison of the resources of the North and South, the reporter concluded, "Who can doubt the result of such a contest?"

The bounty of that fateful spring of 1861 gave sustenance to the war cries that echoed throughout the South. The season had endowed the land with a peaceful beauty that defied every voice of doom. Crops were especially bountiful; corn was shooting up tall and green in the fields, cotton and rice looked promising, and ripe blackberries were ready for harvest.

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22 The Richmond Enquirer, 25 April 1861.

23 Ibid., 10 May 1861.

private gardens, blooming roses spilled over the lush green of the lawns. Trees, putting out new foliage, added to the freshness of the scenes.\textsuperscript{25} Any observer traveling through the countryside would have found the harsh reality of the future difficult to imagine.

Peace and serenity were far from the thoughts of exuberant rebels as they applauded the decision for war. In their written thoughts and loud speeches, they discussed feverishly the justice of their cause. Yet, it still was apparent they did not realize that the invader's fury would threaten their own existence. Fear was expressed for the safety of the departing soldiers, but most of the homefolk believed everyday living would remain virtually untouched by the war.

Judith McGuire wrote from her home in Alexandria, Virginia, in May, 1861 that she could not understand why the South could not part from the Union in peace. During the first days of May, Mrs. McGuire held out hope that Alexandria would be safe, thus enabling her family to remain at home during the conflict. She made clothes to send to the army and spent time in her garden preparing it for summer.\textsuperscript{26} On Looking Glass Plantation, in North Carolina, Catherine Edmondston went about her daily chores much like Mrs. McGuire. After sending her husband off to army camp, she set the slave women to work sewing uniforms and tents for the soldiers. Mrs. Edmondston planned to have a summer

\textsuperscript{25}Judith W. McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War (Richmond: J. W. Randolph and English, 1889), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., pp. 11-12.
garden as usual, believing the Confederacy would have an early victory. News of a northern blockade on southern imports did not stop her from preserving large quantities of strawberries even though sugar would soon be scarce. Her husband's order of salt, iron, coffee, and sugar arrived. The supply, she thought, would last until the blockade was lifted. By fall she looked for England to come drive away "the navies of Mr. Lincoln."  

In Alabama a schoolteacher on a remote plantation reflected that other than the blockade, "there was little or nothing to remind us of the conflict." In Alabama a schoolteacher on a remote plantation reflected that other than the blockade, "there was little or nothing to remind us of the conflict."  

Sheltered ladies of wealthy homes sometimes seemed greater fire-eaters than any soldier. Nineteen-year-old Leora Sims wrote a friend that her people would "cut the Yankee to pieces." Leora had no fear for her own safety for she said, "I am going to get a bowie knife." The war, in her opinion, would be short, but then she reminded her friend that she always looked "on the bright side."  

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that homefolks would have little to do but wait, while the 
soldiers could look forward to all that excitement.30

When the first call went out for volunteers, the women 
assumed responsibility for finding enlistments. They felt it 
was their patriotic duty to urge kin, friends, and even strangers 
to fight for their country. Any reluctant rebel found his 
choice a difficult one to live with, for he became a pitiful 
object of scorn and ridicule. Families were humiliated if one 
of their clan refused the military role. Young men left at home 
who chose to ignore the war were social outcasts. One assort-
ment of guards left to protect the town of Fayetteville, North 
Carolina, expected gratitude, but found only sarcasm greeted 
their appearances.31 An Englishman, assigned to be an observer, 
commented that the ladies treated him with contempt because he 
was not on the battlefield.32

Apparently, the women's extreme tactics had an impressive 
effect upon the male population, for enlistments rose as some 
men could no longer endure the insults hurled at them. Five 
clers who left their jobs at the same time declared the girls 
at the office chased them away. One woman told another that 
men who stayed home were a drawback to the war cause and were

30Kate Stone, Brokenburn, The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-
1868, ed. John Q. Anderson (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana 

31Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton, The Women 
of the Confederacy (New York: Garrett and Massic, Inc., 1936), 

32Ibid., p. 15
contemptible, to say the least.³³ A Virginia paper expressed the women's viewpoint quite well with this advertisement:

Men of Virginia, To arms To arms. Will you longer debate when infamy and disgrace are on one side, and honor and glory and independence on the other?³⁴

Most Confederates regarded every soldier as being a knight in shining armor. They were generous in their praise of valor shown on and off the field. Young women especially tended to romanticize the character of a soldier. Lucy Buck of Virginia exclaimed, "What deeds of high-souled daring, what sacrifices of life and fortunes and affections will not thy sun shine upon."³⁵

Another young lady said she was "paralyzed" by the appearance of her friend Poinsett Pringle in his new uniform. A girl in South Carolina admitted that formerly dull boys suddenly took on "charming" characteristics because of their devotion to the Confederacy.³⁶

A strange hero and one of the first Confederates to be honored at the beginning of the war was not a person, but a rooster, who achieved fame by his defiant crowing at every shot fired by the Yankees on Aquia, Virginia. This insignificant skirmish, it was told, cost the enemy $6,000 in ammunition and only one hen fell from their blows.³⁷

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³³Ibid., p. 16.

³⁴The Richmond Enquirer, 25 April 1861.

³⁵Lucy Rebecca Buck, Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven, The Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck During the War Between the States, ed. William Buck (Birmingham, Alabama: The Cornerstone Publisher, 1937), p. 17.

³⁶Simkins and Patton, p. 188.

³⁷Coulter, p. 72.
Every state planned celebrations to honor their soldiers and to show their enthusiasm for the war. In Louisiana parades kept the citizens in a state of wild excitement. Throngs of people lined the streets, as towns in a patriotic mood, closed their businesses to prepare for the occasion. As crowds waved and cheered, the parade of troops began. Hearts beat faster as the proud volunteers marched to the tunes of the pied piper of war.38 One group, the Delta Rifles, had many wealthy recruits who presented "a gallant appearance" in grey attire trimmed in black.39 One Louisiana boy recalled that his company, on a train, danced and sang most of the night. They feasted upon boxes of sardines that were meant to be saved for emergencies.40 In Savannah, Georgia citizens filled a theater to hear a two hour oration discussing the past and future of the South. A large parade, complete with ninety-three troops and one brass band added to the success of the day.41 In Alabama impatient volunteers lamented that the war might be over before they reached the battlefield.42

40 Winters, p. 28
42 Hague, p. 2.
All over the South the celebrations were repeated for the departing men. Even the youngest of citizens became caught up in the mood of the times. The Natchez Courier recorded that a small boy gave his and his little sister's savings to a Captain Blackburn. It was reported by the Courier that the crowd was reduced to tears when the Captain acknowledged the children's gift. Another emotional moment occurred when a little girl at Richmond threw flowers at the carriage of Jefferson Davis, but missed her mark. The new President captured the admiration of his audience as he stopped to retrieve the fallen tribute.

The Confederate government settled at last in Richmond, and it was here that the frenzy of the war mongers increased. The news of secession had previously attracted crowds of visitors who gathered at every hotel, street corner or courthouse to hear indignant speeches aimed at the North. As the war grew closer, the pace of events quickened. Troops, pouring into the area to defend the South's border, cast an aura of glamour over the city. Regiments from the different states came with their own uniforms and their own state flags. The streets were filled with

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44 Dowdey, p. 37.


excited people greeting each new arrival of troops. The city of Richmond took on the appearance of a carnival, and day or night, at any hour, newcomers continued to arrive. Hotels enjoyed a booming business, making large profits renting every available space. Billiard tables served as beds at the American and Spotswood hotels. In hotel dining rooms guests stood patiently awaiting a vacated chair. When or whether a guest ate depended upon his ability to outrun another customer to an empty table.

A person had to be exceedingly careful of conversing with strangers, for it was known that spies roamed everywhere. Rumor was that any traitor caught would be hanged, but several observers commented that the usual procedure for dealing with informers was to set them free after questioning. It probably mattered little, for the newspapers of Richmond pounced on every item and published their version for all eyes to read. Military leaders freely discussed battle plans in their letters home. John Jones noted that the War Department in Richmond suffered some confusion when it was discovered that important papers had

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47 Dowdey, p. 33.
48 Dowdey, p. 34
49 T. C. DeLeon, p. 86.
disappeared in the move from Montgomery. He surmised that some newsman from *The New York Tribune* or *Herald* had been the culprit.\(^{52}\) Shock ran through the Department when *The New York Herald* published a list of Confederate military officers and the location of their camps. Northern-born clerks working in the War Department were suspected, but Jones believed the traitor was a person of higher rank.\(^{53}\) One bright side was that the Yankees harbored no secrets either, for newsboys at Washington shouted out headlines of Federal advances only a little while after orders had been given out.\(^{54}\)

Although confusion and chaos increased, the Southern people grew in confidence. Their eagerness to build a self-sufficient nation was sometimes comical, yet strangely touching. One company in drilling their troops displayed their skill so effectively that an admiring civilian was wounded by a bayonet.\(^{55}\) This almost tragic accident failed to discourage feelings of grandeur. *The Southern Confederacy,* a Georgia newspaper, revealed the startling news that small bands of hometown guards could rid the country of one hundred Yankees a day.\(^{56}\) *The Richmond Enquirer* echoed the opinion that quality counted more than numbers. The paper took it for granted the rebels would display such military courage that the enemy, overwhelmed, would flee without their

\(^{52}\) Jones, p. 25  
\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 39  
\(^{54}\) Bill, p. 67  
\(^{55}\) *The Atlanta Southern Confederacy,* 15 May 1861.  
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 14 May 1861.
guns. The efficient Southerners could then obtain a new supply of arms, and fire upon the retreating foe.\textsuperscript{57}

This newspaper later declared that the Confederate soldiers were superior because they did not need as many weapons or men as did the northern armies. A "brave heart" was far greater than a "walking arsenal" and the vast numbers of Federal troops might prove to be a weakness for "a whole herd of sheep are not equivalent to one lion." \textsuperscript{58} John Jones pointed out in his diary that the South had the best of marksmen\textsuperscript{59} and Judith McGuire wrote that numbers could not compete with the strength of rebel soldiers fighting for their homeland.\textsuperscript{60}

So it seemed the course for war was set, the hour was too late to turn back, and the Southerners saw only clear sailing to victory ahead. Those who rushed blindly into the storm might have paid heed to the fears of Mary Custis Lee as she wrote her daughter:

> With a sad heavy heart, my dear child, I write, for the prospects before us are sad indeed and I think both parties are wrong in this fratricidal war, there is nothing comforting even in the hope that God may prosper the right, for I see no right in the matter. We can only pray that in His mercy He will spare us.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{57}The Richmond Enquirer, 13 June 1861.

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 1 November 1861.

\textsuperscript{59}Jones, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{60}McGuire, pp. 20-21.

It cannot be said that the Confederacy was a lost cause even before the guns sounded. Granted that the North had greater strength in resources, it was equally true that southerners believed they had the same potential for becoming self-sufficient and independent. It was apparent that those on the homefront were optimistic and did not envision a war the burdens of which would be borne by civilians as well as the military.
CHAPTER II

INFLATION DOMINATES THE HOME FRONT

Inflation soon became a dominant influence on the morale of the people. Each year of the war brought increasing prices until the burden of famine and want threatened the life of the Confederacy. The will to support the cause began to weaken when hunger spread over the land.

The northern blockade of the southern coast caused problems early in the war. The rebels found themselves in a dilemma, as the bulk of their economy greatly depended on cotton exports. Optimists who believed Europe could not live without southern cotton found encouragement when England, followed by France and Spain, announced a declaration of neutrality. The Confederate government put through their plan of keeping cotton at home and waited for England to break the blockade. The embargo on cotton was approved by the Confederate states, and cities such as New Orleans, Mobile, Charleston, and Savannah compelled planters to keep their cotton off the market until the blockade could be

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3 Clifford A. Dowdey, The Land They Fought For; The Story of the South as a Confederacy 1832-1865 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 81.
broken. Various states took action to prohibit shipments of cotton leaving their borders.\(^4\)

The Southern Confederacy soothed the fears of its readers by explaining that the blockade would harm the North far worse than the South. Union President Lincoln would have about "one vessel to every five harbors to watch" since the South was blessed with numerous ports. This costly Union endeavor would not hinder Southern trade with England, for the European country had always regarded northern United States as an economic rival and would not ignore her southern customers. Since most northern ships had been previously involved in southern trade, then the Union would not only lose a valued economic asset, but would also incite the wrath of her European competitor.\(^5\) This clever newspaper piece no doubt served to dispel apprehensions of future scarcity. However, one writer of The Charleston Courier did warn the government of the dangers of the embargo. The article claimed that prohibiting exports was just what the enemy wanted. It was suggested the South would fare better if she enlarged her exports in order to obtain foreign products.\(^6\)

Through it all, England and other European countries remained aloof from the debate over the powers of cotton. William Yancey discovered on his mission to England that over 500,000 bales of cotton were stored in British warehouses. The commodity had

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\(^4\)Schwab, pp. 250-251.

\(^5\)The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 16 May 1861.

\(^6\)Schwab, pp. 251-252.
been bought from Southerners for 14¢ a pound and was being exported to New England at prices spiraling up to 60¢ a pound.7

When the embargo failed, it became necessary to seek foreign business again. Through the efforts of blockade-runners, cotton was increasingly shipped abroad.8 Mexico became one source for acquiring supplies as Confederate agents could exchange cotton there in payment for goods to be channeled through Texas without Federal interference. Problems of speculation and thievery weakened the Mexican venture, but trade with British West Indies and Cuba helped to alleviate the frustrating difficulties of the blockade.9 However, over two million bales of cotton were destroyed from 1862 to 1865 as a result of invading Federal armies.10

Yankee trade flourished as many rebels were not above exchanging cotton with their foe. In an attempt to entice cotton trade, the Union removed all barriers from the Memphis market. It was a daily occurrence in the Tennessee city to see farmers from the Confederate lines riding down the streets with their load of cotton. New Orleans quickly became another center

8Clifford Dowdey, Experiment In Rebellion (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1946), p. 266.
10By 1862, it was considered patriotic to burn cotton before it fell into Yankee hands. Paul Gates, Agriculture and the Civil War (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1965), pp. 84-85.
for bartering with Federal agents. This was of considerable annoyance to Confederate officials, and efforts were made to suppress the unpatriotic activities. Though some southerners were executed for their devious business dealings, restrictions did not stop the trade. In 1864, with Vicksburg furnishing an outlet for Federal buyers, hundreds of bales of cotton came into the city in one day.\footnote{John K. Bettersworth, *Confederate Mississippi, The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 174-180.}

In all the scrambling to keep cotton moving, it was still falling from its throne, while the blockade and an oversupply of paper money were raising prices to a lofty height.\footnote{E. Merton Coulter, *The Confederate States of America 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), p. 219.} The watchful eyes of the speculators now saw that the time was right, and the road was clear for their plundering. From all ranks of society they came, each one gambling on the hope of easy money. The amateur, who bought supplies in small lots, was in the business for quick profits. The professional bought large quantities of commodities, anything from foodstuff to bonnets. Then the ones who really knew the game would patiently wait, like a hawk surveying his field.\footnote{T. C. DeLeon, *Four Years in Rebel Capitals, An Inside View of Life in the Southern Confederacy From Birth to Death* (Mobile, Alabama: The Gossip Printing Company, 1890), pp. 236-237.} If the opportunities came too slowly,
the speculator would panic his victims by warning of shortages, then he would raise his prices as high as necessary. No profiteer was really a true gambler, for his chances at winning were almost 100 per cent. He could always find a buyer; some bought out of necessity or dread of another price rise, and others bought hoping to sell again for their own profits.

In desperation citizens implored government officials to stop the rampage of the greedy. One irate citizen of North Carolina, stating that "...all harts is turned to gizards," further pointed out that corn was available but no one would sell as those who had a supply were waiting for better prices. Another letter addressed to Governor Vance quoted the rising prices of leather and cotton yarn which were out of reach to most soldiers and civilians. "Sir, how can we live at such rates?" asked the excited writer; "Have you not the power to stop this?" In Mississippi Governor Pettus was receiving letters of complaint against the rising tide of prices. Mr. R. C. Saffold rebuked the Governor for sending men to fight for

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14 Coulter, p. 224.
15 T. C. DeLeon, p. 237.
a country that gave free rein to profiteers, who grew rich while women and children starved. He pleaded with the administration to interfere so the poor would not die of hunger.\textsuperscript{18}

Public indignation continued as speculation increased. The Montgomery Advertiser condemned the actions of the "enemies at home" and warned that if the South fell, it would be the fault of the speculators who were strangling the Confederacy with their thirst for money.\textsuperscript{19} The Arkansas State Gazette reminded the farmer that he had no right to raise prices of farm produce, since he bought nothing in town from local merchants.\textsuperscript{20} John Jones reflected on the lack of patriotism in the city of Richmond, and angrily wrote, "When we have peace, let the extortionists be remembered."\textsuperscript{21} The Richmond Examiner's editor lashed out at the boldness of the speculator by declaring, "Had these contemptible wretches the power, they would bottle the universal air and sell it for so much a bottle!"\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{18}R. C. Saffold to Governor Pettus, 3 November 1862, Mississippi in the Confederacy as they saw it, ed. John K. Bettersworth (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 100-101.


\textsuperscript{20}The Arkansas State Gazette, 20 June 1863.


\textsuperscript{22}Coulter, p. 225.
State governments and private organizations attempted to combat the rising costs. In Alabama state officials seized all the supply of salt offered for sale and sold it at low prices or gave it away to the destitute. Governor Brown of Georgia confiscated salt for the citizens and in Louisiana, the government took pork and coffee away from the speculators. In Athens, Georgia, a company was formed to gather and sell provisions at a reasonable price. Some Confederate societies pressured merchants to sell goods at lower rates. Other groups promised to lower prices in order that soldiers' families might be able to pay for goods.

As the Confederate government issued more and more paper currency to pay for the heavy costs of war, prices spiraled upward to unreachable levels. John Jones in the first year of the war had grumbled about paying $10 in gold for boots and feared matters would grow worse. By 1862 Richmond prices for meat were 50¢ a pound, 75¢ a pound for butter, $1.50 for coffee, $10 for tea. Boots had risen to $30. Houses had doubled in rent since the last year, and boarding costs ranged from $30 to

24 Coulter, p. 225.  
26 Gates, p. 44.  
27 Roland, p. 89.  
$40 a month.\textsuperscript{29} Turkeys sold at Christmas for $11 each.\textsuperscript{30} In 1863 Jones copied a list from a paper that compared a small family's grocery bill before the war with the 1863 prices. They were as follows:\textsuperscript{31}

### 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon, 10 lbs.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour, 30 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar, 5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee, 4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea (green), 1/2 lb.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard, 4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter, 3 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal, 1 pk.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candles, 2 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap, 5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper and salt (about)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** $6.55

### 1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon, 10 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour, 30 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar, 5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee, 4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea (green), 1/2 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard, 4 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter, 3 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal, 1 pk.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candles, 2 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap, 5 lbs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper and salt (about)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** $68.25

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 79  
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 141  
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 159
On January 14, 1864, in Richmond, flour sold for $200 a barrel, butter was $8 a pound, and meat was from $2 to $4. By 1865 Jones said flour was $1,000 per barrel, meal $80 a bushel, and beans $5 a quart or $160 a bushel. Meat sold for as much as $6 a pound.

Prices varied in different cities or regions, as did the availability of commodities. In Marietta, Georgia, December 8, 1862, corn was selling for $2.50 a bushel as the result of a drought. The wheat crop had been lost, so no wheat products were mentioned. It was reported that sugar was 60¢ a pound and molasses $2.50 a gallon. By April 15, 1864, Atlanta prices had risen to $10 a pound for butter, and milk was $1.00 to $1.50 a quart. An entry in the diary of Dolly Lunt Burge lists prices at Covington, Georgia, on January 1, 1864: corn was $7 per bushel, calico, $10 per yard, and cotton sold at 60¢ to 80¢ per pound. Northern Alabama suffered raids from Federal troops in 1862, which helped bring on high prices in Mobile. Corn meal was $4 to $5 per bushel, beef, 50¢ a pound, and turkeys, $7 each.

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32 Ibid., p. 325.
33 Ibid., pp. 478, 480.
A family living on a soldier's income of $11 a month could not be expected to pay such costs. In the fall of 1861, New Orleans, Louisiana, was experiencing shortages which drive prices out of reach to many people. A cold spell in September had caused a fuel shortage. Coal prices were so high that few people could afford to buy. Coffee rose to $1.25 a pound, and a bar of soap cost $1.00. In Shreveport, where supplies could be shipped from Texas and Mexico, coffee was down to 40¢ a pound, flour, $3 per hundred, corn was 55¢ a bushel, and sugar, which was plentiful was 8¢ a pound. Salt could be bought at $4.50 a sack. Fruits and vegetables grown in the area were cheap. In 1862 Sarah Morgan wrote in her diary that her main bread was cornbread, because flour was not available for any price in Clinton, Louisiana. Beans, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes seemed to be in good supply for Sarah joked she was beginning to find them tolerable. By 1863 a pound of tea purchased by a plantation owner in Alexandria was reported to have cost $25. Other items on his list included soap at $4 a bar, pins, fine paper for $9, and one skein of thread costing $2.00. In Mansfield, Louisiana on May, 1864, eggs were high at $2.50 a dozen, but rose to the ridiculous price of $5 a dozen in June. Many wounded soldiers left in the town after a recent battle added to the problems of feeding a starving population. Shreveport no longer had reduced prices by the summer of

38 Winters, pp. 53-54.
40 Winters, p. 308.
1864, for butter was now $5 a pound, melons, $5 each, apples, 50¢ each, and beans, $2.50 a quart. They still fared better than Alexandria, where conditions grew worse until many people had to exist on blackberries.\textsuperscript{41}

Texas residents had a better supply of products. In January of 1862 Mary Byson wrote a friend that plenty of meat was available for sale. Turkeys were only 30¢ to 50¢ each, and eggs were 5¢ to 10¢ a dozen. Sugar and tea had become scarce, but sugar could be imported from New Orleans at 25¢ a pound. Confederate money was not accepted at Red River, but goods could be exchanged for food. A store in Paris, Texas, sold material for shoes at $3, and a shoemaker could be located nearby to make the shoes. Mary seemed to be living well in Texas during the war, but she said all the talk she heard was of hard times.\textsuperscript{42} By 1863 prices had risen in Texas for it was reported that a Texas resident sold his mules at prices ranging from $400 to $800 a pair.\textsuperscript{43} Kate Stone, a refugee from Louisiana, felt that prices had gone sky high in Paris by 1863, for her mother could not afford calico at $6 a yard. A small knife she wanted to buy was $25.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 386.


\textsuperscript{43}The Wilmington Daily Journal, 3 April 1863.

The Arkansas State Gazette declared in 1862 there was an abundant supply of pork at low prices. Beef was coming into the markets at 8¢ to 10¢ "sold by the quarter."\textsuperscript{45} Eggs were $1 per dozen and corn meal was $1.25 to $1.75 per bushel. By 1863 the paper was quoting higher prices, and scolding those who were trading with the enemy.\textsuperscript{46}

One of the costliest items was salt, which was essential for the diet of the southerner and for preserving meats. Salt had always been imported cheaply, but in wartime it became an item of luxury. In January, 1861, in Athens, Georgia, salt was 80¢ a bushel; in May, 1862, it sold for $25 a bushel, and by the end of the year it rose to $30.\textsuperscript{47} Savannah, Georgia in May, 1861, priced salt at 65¢ a sack, but in October prices were running from $7 to $8 for one sack. In six weeks the cost was up to $20 per sack. The efforts of Governor Brown of Georgia to stop rising prices by seizing large quantities of salt did not halt the upward increase.\textsuperscript{48}

All of the Southern states felt the tightening hand of inflation grow steadily more menacing as the war progressed. As commodities dwindled from the scene, the people whenever possible turned to substitutes and employed all the skills they knew in order to survive.

\textsuperscript{45}The Arkansas State Gazette, 6 December 1862.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., 20 June 1863.
\textsuperscript{47}Coulter, p. 220.
\textsuperscript{48}Wiley, p. 20.
The Natchez Daily Courier in 1861 urged Mississippians to preserve their own meat and plant grain crops so they would be able to live independently.\textsuperscript{49} H. C. Clarke published an Almanac that contained recipes on preserving beef and curing bacon or ham.\textsuperscript{50} The Southern Confederacy advised that bacon be cured at home and predicted an abundant corn crop in 1862 would furnish food for both the army and civilian population.\textsuperscript{51}

Corn became the popular substitute for cotton crops. Newspapers condemned planters who insisted on growing cotton; one Alabama paper went so far as to suggest a cotton planter be hanged for he was no better than the "meanest Yankee." The Charleston Courier advised that cotton or tobacco crops be plowed under; if the planter was unwilling, then it would be the duty of his neighbors. Many states passed laws restricting the amount of cotton that could be planted. Texas refused to go along with the measure and continued to plant large cotton crops.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1861 when the sugar-producing areas of Louisiana held promising crops, planters were told to feed the excess cane to their hogs so that corn might be saved. Two years later many of

\textsuperscript{49}The Natchez Courier, 6 September 1861, in Mississippi in the Confederacy As They Saw It, ed., John Bettersworth (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 280.

\textsuperscript{50}H. C. Clarke, Clark's Confederate Household Almanac for the Year 1863, in Mississippi in the Confederacy As They Saw It, ed., John Bettersworth (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University, 1970), pp. 281-282.

\textsuperscript{51}The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 30 August 1862.

\textsuperscript{52}Gates, pp. 16-18.
the plantations stood idle as Federal troops invaded the state. Sugar was no longer plentiful, thus sorghum began to take its place. Newspapers encouraged the production of sorghum cane by assuring planters it was a good money-producing crop. Evidence had been found by the news reporters that tempers could be cooled by drinking a portion of sorghum molasses, and besides its tranquilizing effects, the cane made excellent feed for hogs.53

Since nothing could take the place of salt, the product had to be found. The floors of smoke houses were taken up so that the dirt underneath could be dug up and washed to obtain any amount of salt that could be gotten.54 Salt was also acquired by boiling sea water.55

Parthenia Hague, living in Alabama during the war, recalled the ingenious talents of the people in a time of desperation. Coffee had always been a favorite drink in the South, and when no more coffee could be purchased because of its cost, efforts were made to find a substitute. It was discovered that the seeds of okra could be used in making a suitable drink. Sweet potatoes, dried and parched, ranked second to okra in flavor.56

53 Ibid., p. 103
54 *The Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, 21 September 1862.
coffee," which was brewed from ground corn and peas, was served in Richmond.57

Because of a drug scarcity, the forests of the South became the "drug stores" of the Confederacy. Quinine was made from berries of the dogwood tree, and the barks of poplar, wild cherry, and dogwood furnished remedies for chills and fever. The wild cherry tree was also useful for obtaining solutions used in making cough medicine. Poppies grew in many yards to be used for opium.58

Southern women became efficient in providing clothes, not only for their own families, but also for Confederate soldiers. Kate Stone proudly wrote in 1862: "It is like going back to the days of the Revolution to see the planters all setting up their looms and the ladies discussing the making of homespun dresses, the best dyes, and 'cuts' of thread..."59 Some of the poorer class women had been spinning and weaving their own cloth before the war; therefore their skills excelled those of the wealthier class, and many found they could add to their income by weaving cloth for sale.60

The most difficult clothing items to obtain was shoes. Tanning cowhides was a skill that few possessed since most of the experts had gone to war. Even if leather could be obtained, shoemaker's prices often were prohibitively high. Necessity

57 Coulter, p. 245.
58 Hague, p. 46.
59 Stone, p. 147.
60 Wiley, pp. 50-51.
compelled a portion of the population to go barefooted, but others turned to a variety of materials to make footwear. Shoes appeared in every form, from wood to cloth.\textsuperscript{61} The Meridian Mississippian furnished directions for making shoes from squirrel skins, assuring the ladies that the shoes had the advantages of comfort and durability.\textsuperscript{62} The Southern Confederacy gave simple instructions for sewing cowhide moccasins. The cowhide material was cut to the shape of the wearer's foot, and then holes were sliced so that the material could be laced together. The finished product resulted in a wearable, if not attractive, slipper.\textsuperscript{63}

The list of shortages mounted as the war continued. Pins and needles sometimes had to be replaced by thorns or splinters. Soot, mixed with lard, made an effective shoe polish. Envelopes, made from wallpaper, were used twice before discarded. Glass and china dishes were replaced by clay pottery, and baskets made at home substituted for boxes.\textsuperscript{64}

In contrast to the growing scarcity was the needless extravagance of those who had a plentiful supply of provisions. Fitzgerald Ross, traveling through the South during the war years, remarked

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., pp. 53-54.

\textsuperscript{62}Meridian Mississippian, 29 August 1863, in Mississippi in the Confederacy As They Saw It, ed., John K. Bettersworth (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 278.

\textsuperscript{63}The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 2 November 1862.

that hotels and boarding houses offered a wide variety of food to their guests. All kinds of meat, bread, and fruits were served at every meal "in quantities sufficient to satisfy an army of soldiers." Phoebe Pember of Richmond spent Christmas of 1863 with a wealthy family who entertained a large number of soldiers. Twenty-four gallons of egg-nog, one dozen turkeys, and seven gallons of oysters were consumed by the hungry visitors.

Wartime living took its greatest toll on the poor, whether they lived in the country or the city. Workers in the towns found their wages could not meet the rising costs of inflation. John Jones wrote from Richmond in 1863 that he was hoping his garden would provide for his family. He gloomily observed that: "the gaunt form of famine still approaches with rapid strides."

On April 2, 1863, a "bread riot" led by Mary Jackson occurred in Richmond. John Jones, watching the mob of people marching down Cary Street, was told by a young woman that they were going

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67 Charles W. Ramsdell, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University, 1944), p. 83.

68 Jones, p. 182.

69 Coulter, p. 422.
to get some food. Jones said he could not help wishing them success before he left them. Other witnesses reported the mob had broken open the closed shops, carried out food, clothing, jewelry, anything of value. As the mob grew worse, a military force came with bayonets to dispel the crowd. President Jefferson Davis appeared, reasoning with the people to go home. When quiet was restored to the city, the government issued rice to the starving population. A similar uprising took place in Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1863 as a large group of women raided several businesses. The startled proprietors offered them free goods in order to restore calm. The women accepted the peace offerings, only to resume looting a depot where flour was stored.

In the country, the poor families struggled to make a living from the soil. The burden of keeping up the farms was left mostly to women and children. Heavy tools made field work hard, and women or boys often found oxen too temperamental to handle. Then, too, the problem of commissary officers confiscating the animals for the army was a constant threat. As horses were needed for the war front, it became almost impossible to keep them at home.

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70 Jones, pp. 183-185.
72 Ramsdell, p. 24.
73 Wiley, Embattled Confederates, p. 115.
One determined woman "hitched her two boys to the plow" to make her garden.\textsuperscript{74} Despite obstacles, however, women tried to keep their farms up and save their children from starvation. An example was Mrs. Aaron Thomas of North Carolina, who was left alone on a farm with a large family of small children. She managed to care for the children in the daytime, and then went to work in the fields at night as the children slept. By limiting her family to two meals a day, she enabled them to survive the war.\textsuperscript{75}

Southerners rapidly learned that war was more than soldiers and guns. The bright banners that waved over the Confederacy in 1861 became dull and tattered, as the strangling rope of poverty tightened. "King Cotton" betrayed the cause and brought no aid to its subjects. Inflation was a wearisome burden that seemed to have no limits, and the rise of the speculators increased the bitterness of soldiers and civilians alike. Every day struggles to keep food on the table tended to put the war effort in second place, until both the army and civilians began to question the necessity of all the suffering. The promising dawn of independence now spread clouds of gloom over the land. Southerners looked around for something or someone to blame, and all eyes turned to the Confederate government.


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., pp. 59-60
CHAPTER III

DECLINE OF WAR ENTHUSIASM

As the war raged on, Southerners awakened from their dream world of romanticized glory, and faced the grim prospect of sacrifice. Opposition to the Davis administration grew, since government policies seemed to increase the people's suffering. The rising tide of despair was evident in the loud protests that followed unpopular legislation from Richmond.

By April of 1863, Congress had passed a tax bill that ordered farmers and planters to reserve a portion of their crop for the government. The tax in kind, as it was called, was highly resented by the agricultural population. Although produce valued up to $150,000,000 was brought in, transportation difficulties prevented most of it from reaching military forces.¹

Only a month before, a law of impressment was passed that authorized agents to confiscate goods from citizens so that provisions for the army might be obtained. The policy damaged Confederate morale, as the farmers declared the impressment policy was unfair. Letters poured in to state governors clamoring for justice to be administered and claiming that impressment officers

were harassing helpless farmers. John Richards of Florida wrote that impressment officers left his home driving several hundred head of cattle they had seized from various farms. The officers had turned a deaf ear to the pleas of the hungry people who begged that a few animals be left. Some of the farm residents had been without corn for weeks, and the actions of the impressment agents left them in critical danger of starving. It was requested that the governor reply to the letter at once and clarify the reasons for such extreme measures; Richards further advocated that the seizure of private property be halted.\(^2\)

In Virginia, the commissioners raised prices in 1864 to encourage sale of farm produce. The plan alarmed John Goode, a farmer of that state, who complained to the Secretary of War. Goode, expressing shock and indignation, pointed out that the scheme would only worsen conditions as market prices would go up to beat the prices of the government, and speculation would increase.\(^3\)

Difficulties developed in Alabama when an order by the Secretary of War went out that no supplies would be impressed if they were needed for private consumption or were in the process of being transferred to market; exceptions would be made only in extreme cases of need. Suddenly agents representing private firms and individuals appeared in every locality buying up large quantities of supplies. Prices skyrocketed, leaving the government

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 129-133.
\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 133-135
helpless to intervene as a result of its own policy. Another source of aggravation came from fraudulent agents who professed to be impressment agents, and literally stole provisions from unsuspecting victims. Complaints in northern Alabama mounted as further trouble erupted when army quartermasters left communities without paying for goods that were seized.  

Sometimes impressment officers met with stubborn resistance from the public. James Hammond of South Carolina refused an offer of $6 a bushel for his corn. He claimed he would sell at $10 a bushel, and furthermore he had contracts to sell a substantial amount of corn to other individuals. After much protesting, Hammond reluctantly agreed to negotiate a sale, but insisted later that the agents robbed him of $12,000.  

Many residents of Georgia became annoyed when horses were seized for the Confederate army. A plantation lady whose own son had lost his horse in battle lamented that her beloved horses would be taken by the government. Forgetting that her son might benefit from the impressment system, she instead wailed that her small children would suffer from broken hearts if their pets were taken away.

4 Walter L. Fleming, Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1949), pp. 175-176.


In Athens, the editor of the local newspaper denied that the seizure of horses was necessary. He felt sure that citizens preferred to have been given the opportunity to turn in the horses without force. Agents paid up to $600 for the better horses, but one citizen, Mrs. Howell Cobb, became upset when her favorite horses were taken. When arrangements were made to return the animals to their owner, however the lady declared she did not want to keep them after all. The South Carolina legislature met to adopt resolutions that requested the law of impressment be adjusted to insure that seizures of private property be limited and a fair and equitable system be adopted. The legislature's endorsements were sent to Secretary Seddon, who replied that measures were being taken to see that fair procedures were carried out. He offered to investigate any cases where unnecessary hardship was being inflicted on the people.

As war enthusiasm declined, volunteers for the army became increasingly difficult to find. A Conscription Act passed by Congress in April of 1862 empowered Congress to draft white men from 18 to 35 years of age in the military service. Soldiers already serving in the army had their terms extended for three years.

Objectors to the law declared the President had too much power and would enfringe upon the rights of states by destroying

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8Cauthen, p. 185.
their own militia. In Atlanta, The Southern Confederacy's editor alleged that Confederate officials were too remote from the needs of the people. Apparently other editors issued similar protests for Arthur James Fremantle noted in his diary that the newspapers were continuing to damage the war effort with "their violent attacks upon the President" and nothing was being done to stop them.

Conditions worsened when Congress exempted large numbers of citizens from military duty. Exemptions were granted to employees of almost every occupation that was considered important to the war effort. For example, many southerners seeking an escape from the military service became engaged in the apothecary business. The qualifications of a druggist entailed setting up a shelf that was decorated with a few bottles of insignificant drugs. This simple procedure would enable the "druggist" to stay out of the army. Exemptions could also be obtained by wealthy citizens who could hire substitutes to take their place on the battlefield. When planters and overseers were excused from military service if they had charge of twenty negro slaves,


11 The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 11 October 1862.


13 The Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 11 October 1862.

14 Woodward, p. 143.
the less affluent society proclaimed "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." One Mississippian wrote that wealthy young men in his state were obtaining "some safe perch where they can doze with their heads under their wings."\(^{16}\)

Cases began to appear before courts where lenient judges leaned on the writ of habeas corpus to grant releases to soldiers who wanted to go home.\(^{17}\) President Davis had been given the right by Congress to suspend the damaging writ as early as 1862 and he repeatedly asked that it be extended as desertions and exemptions were robbing the army of soldiers. The difficulties attending the suspension of the writ lay in the opposition measures undertaken by the civilians, which included top-ranking officials. One persistent critic was the Vice-President of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens. In 1864 he spoke before the legislature in Georgia and let his fury against the President be heard. He demanded the law suspending the writ of habeas corpus be declared unconstitutional for it was "dangerous to public liberty." He also exclaimed bitterly, "Tell me not to put confidence in the President!" He warned the public against "Independence first and liberty afterwards."\(^{18}\)

In spite of criticism, the Confederate government hardened its policy of conscription by 1864. Robert Kean, who headed the

\(^{16}\) Ella Lonn, Desertion During the Civil War (Glouster, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1966), p. 14.

\(^{17}\) Henry, p. 415.

\(^{18}\) Kirwan, pp. 209-214
war bureau recalled that cases brought to his office were dis-
allowed even when piteous tales were hurled at the bureau. Kean
declared it was driving him mad to see the women weep and plead
for their relatives.¹⁹

The drifting away of public support for the Confederate
government was also evident in the peace cries that grew louder
each day. The Peace Society in Alabama was gathering strength
and by 1863 succeeded in electing six new members of the Confed-
erate Congress who were in favor of ending the war by any terms
that could be obtained. This scheme led authorities into an
investigation of the Society's activities, and several arrests
were made throughout the state to rid the Confederacy of the
peace organization.²⁰ Perhaps the best known advocate of peace
without victory was William Boyce, a Confederate Congressman
from South Carolina. In a letter to President Davis he requested
that a convention be called for the purpose of formulating peace
negotiations. Boyce searched everywhere for allies to his cause;
in a letter to J. H. Hammond, he requested that his friend speak
out in public against Jefferson Davis and support the move for
peace.²¹ Governors Vance of North Carolina and Brown in Georgia
wrote letters to the President on their views for peace. When

¹⁹Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Inside the Confederate Government,
The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean ed. Edward Younger (New
²⁰Tatum, pp. 60-64.
²¹Rosser H. Taylor, "Notes and Documents: Boyce-Hammond
Correspondence" The Journal of Southern History, February, 1937,
pp. 348-354.
Governor Vance urged Davis to negotiate with the enemy, Davis replied that the Confederacy must be patient and not submit to ruinous terms. The words were carefully written to avoid offending Vance and other peace advocates but the President's feelings on the matter were made clear when he stated:

I cannot recall at this time one instance in which I have failed to announce that our only desire was peace, and the only terms which found a sine qua non were..."a demand only to be let alone"...Peace on other terms is now impossible. To obtain the sole terms to which you or I could listen, this struggle must continue until the enemy is beaten out of his vain confidence in our subjugation... Till then all tender of terms to the enemy will be received as proof that we are ready for submission, and will encourage him in the atrocious warfare he is waging.22

Amid the storm of protests that rocked the Confederacy, many citizens quietly continued the struggle to keep the federation alive. Thousands of workers were employed at various industries that had been quickly organized at the beginning of the war. The problem of employing workers was partially solved by hiring women. Since many women had to support large families, they were eager to take on jobs that were difficult and even dangerous. Serious consequences resulted when they were employed at arsenals, for more women died there in accidents than those in the battle vicinities. An explosion at the Confederate State Laboratory killed forty female workers and others died in a similar disaster at Jackson, Mississippi. Some of the ladies burned to death when

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their long skirts caught fire and ignited the clothing of others who were running to escape the blaze.23

The South's greatest strength in manufactories was concentrated in Richmond.24 The great Tredegar Iron Works had increased its production by tripling the amount of employees that it had in 1861. Tanneries, sawmills, brick factories, and other enterprises furnished jobs for the constant stream of refugees that flocked to the city.25 As long as the industries of Richmond were necessary to the war effort they prospered, as the government tended to favor certain ones with advantages such as contracts, railroad privileges, and military exemptions for top personnel. The factories that were unimportant to the war cause suffered; many a tobacco king saw his warehouses converted into hospital sites.26

Though various southern states encouraged the development of industries, vast shortages continued to plague the Confederacy. Transportation of manufactured goods and food produce became an enormous task because the railroads could not handle their increasing burdens when so little improvement was made to railway equipment.27

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25 Ibid., p. 112

26 Ibid., p. 72

Civilians did not overlook the inadequacy of the trains and frequently complained that the railroads were poorly managed. Phoebe Pember recalled that her train journey going through Georgia in 1864 was an unpleasant excursion of unscheduled stops and general confusion. At a depot in Columbus, the weary traveler waited hours for a train only to find it was reserved for wounded troops. After successfully pleading with an officer to let her on the train, she was detained again when the train stopped at another city. She was able to gain passage on a mail car and was later transferred to still another train where she was allowed to stay for the rest of the way. The journey resembled a nightmare, for the broken windows on the train let in chill night air on the miserable passengers, who sat in dark cars that had no light or heat. Almost every hour the train stopped for road repair and crowds of people either boarded the train or got off to walk. Mrs. Pember reported that the destination of Richmond was reached four hours late, and she left the train exhausted from her ordeal.28

Some of the difficulties of transportation were caused by poor management. Government interference with railroads often resulted in quarrels between Jefferson Davis and army officials. In April of 1863, Major D. H. Wood, quartermaster in charge of

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transportation through Richmond, was accused of transporting sugar on the railroads to be sold to a private company. He admitted he had profited from personal use of the railroads and was promptly fired by Davis. Efficiency of railroad operations was also impaired by the invasion of Federal troops who cut the lines whenever possible to halt the transfer of supplies to the Confederate army. Wagons loaded with provisions took the place of trains when no other means were available but they too were unreliable. Some wagons were heavy vehicles that were drawn by sixteen to twenty-four oxen, driven by specialized teamsters who demanded high wages that few could afford. Weather conditions affected the speed of the wagon trains, and other hazards made the success of the venture unpredictable.

The breakdown in transportation caused an unequal distribution of supplies since some localities had a surplus of goods but were unable to send their products to destitute areas. When supplies were repeatedly cut off from army and civilians, a kind of hopelessness afflicted the people and contributed to Confederate military defeats.

Added to the grief of the southern people were the numerous deaths of soldiers from wounds and disease. Hospitals, poorly managed and almost destitute of medical supplies, were filled to

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29 Kean, p. 48.
30 Ibid., p. 106.
31 Kerby, pp. 84-85.
overflowing with wounded soldiers. Civilians helped the doctors as best they could, but soldiers died by the thousands for lack of proper care. Kate Cumming described the condition of the hospital where she worked. Young and old men, Confederates and Federals alike, lay on the floor, "...just as they were taken from the battlefield, so close together it was almost impossible to walk without stepping on them."\textsuperscript{33} Fannie Beers, sent to Gainesville, Alabama, remembered that her courage fled when she arrived to work at the hospital. Rooms were filled with pathetic, wounded soldiers, some beyond hope, and others struggling to live, many of them babbling and raving as fever took possession of their minds. A few nurses came to the doors of the wards and spoke of their patients in an indifferent manner as if the soldiers "were sticks or stones." Mrs. Beers said she felt disgust and revulsion that such inhumane treatment was allowed, but a doctor explained to her that "red tape" tied up all efforts to improve conditions.\textsuperscript{34} Phoebe Pember recalled her grief at the death of a young soldier she was caring for in a Richmond hospital. He had almost recovered from a broken leg, when suddenly an artery burst. Mrs. Pember instantly stopped the bleeding by clamping her finger down on the artery. A doctor was summoned, but pronounced the artery too damaged to repair.


\textsuperscript{34}Fannie A. Beers, Memories, A Record of Personal Experience and Adventure During Four Years of War (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1891), pp. 60-61.
The boy asked how long he could live. Mrs. Pember sadly informed him, "...only as long as I keep my finger upon the artery."

He was quiet, then said, "You can let go..." She refused to let go until she fainted from exhaustion.  

Trains rolled in at all hours bringing the sick and wounded soldiers to the depots. The rumbling, mournful noises of ambulances on the streets contrasted with the laughter and music that drifted out of the mansions where the rich danced their fears away. Some wealthy citizens on their way to parties, would stop at the depot and lift the wounded soldiers into their carriages and send them on to hospitals. The eerie scenes were lit by the bright light of torches held by small boys who curiously watched the proceedings.  

One group of citizens in Georgia refused to give up their church, which was needed for an emergency hospital. A train bearing over two hundred sick and wounded soldiers was expected and no hospital was available. The arrival of troops was preceded by a heavy snowfall which increased the danger of pneumonia for the weakened patients. The doctor in charge insisted the church would become his hospital and was soon at work throwing the pews outside so that straw could be put on the floor for beds. A nurse helping tend the wounded as they were brought in said she had never seen such a "train of human misery." A red

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35 Pember, pp. 66-68.
36 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
line of blood marked the path to the church and foretold the suffering that waited beyond the doors.\textsuperscript{37}

Often devoted citizens who lived near the battlefields would rush to the grounds to aid soldiers who were shot in the conflicts. The horrors that greeted the rescue workers were beyond belief, yet few shrank away from their duties. Fannie Beers recalled that she ran down a road to a battlefield but was stopped by a doctor who told her to be prepared to witness a heart-rending sight. As she reached the field she could hear screams coming from a tent, but she did not go inside as the doctor told her to take canteens of water to the soldiers left in the field. When she turned to walk across the plowed ground, she saw Union and Confederate soldiers strewn in every direction, so thick that many lay in "groups and piles." Wounded horses, left unattended, struggled to stand and added to the screams and groans of the soldiers who were still alive. Cries for water came from those in agony, and as Mrs. Beers knelt to aid a wounded soldier, she noticed that her dress was covered with blood and parts of the field had turned to red. She became sick with fright and horror, but stayed until most of the soldiers were taken away.\textsuperscript{38}

A young girl was credited with saving the life of a boy who was severely injured in a battle near Winchester. The doctor had stressed that the boy had a slim chance of surviving, but if he could

\textsuperscript{37}Beers, pp. 80-83.

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., pp. 152-155.
be made to sleep through the night the needed rest might give
him strength to live. The doctor instructed the girl to hold
the patient's head still, and this she did; sitting on the damp
ground beside him, she kept her vigil until dawn, and the boy
awoke in a much improved condition.39

Another young soldier owed his recovery to a very persistent
nurse who argued with the surgeon that the boy was still alive.
The overworked doctor refused to try to save the dying boy, for
he said death would be the kinder fate for him. Emily Mason
found another surgeon to help her, and together they worked to
bring the patient back to life. They carefully fed him by a
tube and watched over him day and night. Contrary to the previous
surgeon's predictions, the patient recovered fully and was claimed
by an anxious family who had believed he was lost forever. It
was discovered that the boy had run away from England to fight
for his mother's former homeland, and relatives had been search-
ing for him through newspapers and letters of inquiry. He never
forgot the kindness of his nurse and returned years later to
thank her for her devotion.40

Susan Blackford wrote her husband that she was asked to
help care for sick and wounded soldiers who had been left in
a warehouse without food or heat. Many of the doctors, she said,

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39 General D. H. Maury, "Woman's Devotion," in Confederate Women of Arkansas in the Civil War 1861-1865: Memorial Reminis-
40 Emily Mason, "Hospital Scenes" in Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital, ed. Katherine M. Jones (New York: The
had been drinking the brandy that was stored for patients and were too intoxicated to be of any help. Some of the soldiers had been in the warehouse for days before a doctor could be found to see them.\footnote{41}

The discouraging losses on the war front and the depressing poverty on the home front caused numerous desertions from the army. A large number of citizens encouraged their relatives to leave the battlefront as they felt the end to the Confederacy was near. A soldier recorded that he felt the "worst feature" of the military setbacks was that the people "have gone into a fainting fit."\footnote{42} Letters from home relating pitiful stories of hunger and sickness prompted countless soldiers to desert their regiments and start for home. One particularly touching letter from a soldier's wife became famous throughout the South for it expressed the misery of the poor at home. The letter served as proof that many desertions were caused by the homefolk who could no longer stand the burdens of wartime living. The following was written by Mary Cooper:

My dear Edward: I have always been proud of you and since your connection with the Confederate army, I have been prouder of you than ever before. I would not have you do anything wrong for the world; but before God, Edward, unless you come home we must die. Last night I was aroused by little Eddie's

\footnote{41}{Susan Blackford to Charles Blackford, 12 May 1864, \textit{Letters from Lee's Army or Memoirs of Life In and Out of the Army in Virginia During the War Between the States}, ed. Charles Blackford III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 260-261.}

\footnote{42}{Blackford, Charles to Blackford, Susan, 28 July 1864, \textit{Letters from Lee's Army}, p. 197.}
crying; I called and said "What's the matter, Eddie?" and he said, "Oh, Mama, I'm so hungry."
And Edward, your darling Lucy, she never complains, but she is growing thinner and thinner each day....

Your Mary

Governors tried to stop the wave of desertions by accusing citizens who encouraged desertions of traitorous action. Governor Vance, North Carolina's dramatic governor, issued a violent proclamation against deserters in 1863. He declared that no excuse could be furnished for the disgrace of a man who left his country in need and went home. Indeed, the person who persuaded his kin to leave his post of honor, should be shot for he or she had destroyed the soul of "his deluded victim." To the deserter, Governor Vance issued a warning that no decent person would ever look upon him with respect again and he might be driven from his native land.

Deserters presented a problem to civilians living in remote areas, as small bands of deserters roamed the country in outlaw fashion, threatening homes and lives. The absence of law and order served to further break the spirits of the people. As the country grew more and more unstable, citizens ceased to believe in a victorious future for the Confederacy.

Loyal devotees of the war saw the country sinking lower in depression each day and sought measures to rally the people to renewed courage. Newspapers, aware of their influence on the

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43 Mary Cooper to Edward Cooper, Heroines of Dixie, p. 348.
44 Lonn, pp. 110-111.
public, implored the population to bear the burdens of war a little longer, for an end to conflict was coming soon. The Wilmington Daily Journal firmly declared that victory for the South was certain.46 DeBow’s Review, a magazine completely loyal to the Confederacy, admitted by 1864 that speculation and greed had turned the South into a land of suffering, but the editor reminded his readers to look back at history and they would see that the American Revolution also had its profiteers of war. If the South could be patient and endure sacrifice for another year then the North would likely "fall to pieces" for the Union's own people were becoming "disgusted with the weakness" of their government. DeBow assured the Southern people that Confederate finances were growing stronger and the army was still proudly defending the land. "The glorious light of liberty and independence is about to break upon us."47

It was a sad fact that words could not change the condition of the South, nor did the elegant language inspire the people to find strength to breathe life into a fading cause. Physical handicaps had put obstacles in their way, but increasing civilian hardships foretold a collapse of homefront morale coincident with military reverses.

46 The Wilmington Daily Journal, 1 May 1863.

CHAPTER IV

UNION TROOPS OCCUPY THE SOUTH

Throughout the war southerners lived in fear that their homes and lives would be endangered by the invasion of Federal troops. The dreaded cry of "Yankees are coming!" sent thousands of southerners packing their belongings to join the throng of refugees that wandered over the South in an attempt to escape the foe.

The majority who fled consisted of women, children, and aged men who could not protect their homes when the invaders came. They moved to homes of friends and relatives or to any place that afforded protection.1 Catherine Edmondston reported in February, 1862, that a steady rain was falling but the roads were still crowded with refugees.2 Joseph LeConte, on his way to rescue his daughter from an endangered Georgia town in 1864, saw many "panic-stricken" citizens walking from the city of Savannah. From the window of his train, Professor LeConte recognized a prominent doctor who had been forced to leave his plantation. The elderly man had to be carried to the train and

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1 Mary Elizabeth Massey, Refugee Life in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University, 1964), p. 29.

seemed to be in shock, as he spoke to no one. One famous refugee who fled his Mississippi estate was Joseph Davis, the President's elder brother. The wealthy planter was over eighty years of age when he and his wife and granddaughter bade good-bye to home ties and made their way to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Joseph Davis found that his position in life mattered little, for he and his family endured numerous humiliating experiences like other displaced southerners. His wife, unable to stand the trip to Alabama, died, and he and his granddaughter completed the journey alone. After settling in Tuscaloosa, he was several times forced to flee to the woods like an outlaw because of Federal raids.

The flight of the refugees was often difficult. On their journey through Virginia, Cornelia McDonald and her children reported seeing a man on the side of the road who had died from exhaustion and hunger. People hurried by the unfortunate man with little concern for the tragedy of the scene. As the road grew crowded with more refugees, clouds of dust rose from the dry ground, creating further misery for the travelers. Army wagons rumbled down the center of the path, rudely scattering the population to the sides of the road. The hot July sun glared down on deserted fields as no summer crops had been planted.

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4 Massey, p. 32.
Fences had been torn down, giving the countryside the appearance of a desolate waste land. The McDonald family was able to secure a place to stay for a few days, but the soldier father could not pay their board because the army refused him his back salary. A friend loaned the family the needed money to pay their bills so they could resume their search for a home.  

Kate Stone related her family's difficulties when they abandoned their plantation, Brokenburn, in 1863. They waited almost too late to escape, as Federal soldiers burst into a house where Kate was visiting friends. One soldier threatened to kill the youngest member of the family but turned away when the mother pleaded with him to leave her baby alone. While one soldier held a pistol at Kate's head, the others set fire to the hall. They left, taking household articles with them. Kate helped the frightened family put out the fire, then ran home to warn her own relatives they must leave. It took another day to persuade Kate's mother they must go. When they left, night had come and storm clouds threatened overhead. Discovering it impossible to find their way in the dark, they spent the night on the road waiting for dawn. By morning they managed to find a river and escaped in two dugouts. Federal troops spotted their group and chased them a distance before turning back.  

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eventually traveled on to Texas, where many other refugees had settled.\footnote{Stone, p. 223.}

A harrowing experience was recalled by a family in Alexandria, Louisiana, who planned to relocate in Texas. Before leaving their home, Fearn had made arrangements with the Confederate army that he and his wife would deliver provisions to Port Hudson, where their son was stationed. The government provided them with a steamboat to carry the supplies up the river. As the steamboat came in sight of the garrison, the couple could see Federal gunboats lining up as if they were preparing for battle. The captain of the steamboat urged the family to leave their provisions quickly, but they lingered in order to spend time with their son who came to meet them. By nightfall the steamboat started quietly down the river, but Yankee gunboats commenced firing shells. The horrified family and captain were caught in the middle of a battle and soon realized the Federals intended to capture their boat. A shell from the Confederate fort struck the pursuing Yankee gunboat just in time to permit the civilians to escape.\footnote{Frances Fearn, \textit{Diary of a Refugee} (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1910), pp. 24-27.}

Many refugees took their slaves with them when they left the plantations. Once incident recalled by Mrs. Fearn concerned a girl and her brother, who left with their slaves just as Yankee troops could be heard approaching the plantation. The girl's
brother had been severely wounded in battle and was in pain as his wagon hit rough stones in the road. The slaves traveling with them could not bear to see him suffer so much, so they took turns carrying him until they came to smoother roads. Although the young soldier soon died in Texas, the girl long remembered the devotion and loyalty of their slaves. 9 Joseph LeConte declared that his Negro servants begged him to take them and their families with him. He loaded them on wagons and they all set out for Columbia, South Carolina, but Yankee troops took the younger Negro men away when they spotted their campfire. The older slaves refused to leave and stayed with their owner. 10

Kate Stone described the plight of the wealthy slave owners in Louisiana who left their property as invaders moved into the state:

All have lost heavily, some with princely estates and hundreds of Negroes, escaping with ten or twenty of their hands, and only the clothes they have on. Others brought out clothes and household effects but no Negroes, and still others sacrificed everything to run their Negroes to a place of safety. 11

Her description of wealthy refugees and their slaves indicated that the Negro servants were forced to leave the plantations with their owners. Kate's brother returned to Brokenburn plantation after the family had escaped and informed the slaves they must follow him to Texas. He declared they did not willingly

9 Fearn, p. 31-32.
10 LeConte, pp. 86-104.
11 Stone, p. 191.
go, as they had enjoyed the taste of freedom when Brokenburn was abandoned. Yet, his sister did recall that one servant, referred to as "Uncle Bob," had remained loyal to the family and was trusted to guard a wagon loaded with clothes and household valuables.

As the refugees moved from place to place, they met all kinds of people and were often treated with "extremes of generosity and meanness." Cornelia McDonald wrote that she "could have wept" at the kindness shown to her and her children by strangers, as gifts of vegetables, butter, and milk were showered upon the newcomers. A shoemaker agreed to make five pairs of shoes for the family and informed Mrs. McDonald that she could wait until the end of the war to pay for the new attire. A new friend paid $250 for a necklace of Mrs. McDonald's so that the refugees could buy wood and other supplies for the coming winter. Two boys, Johnny and Jimmy Stone, did not find a cordial welcome waiting for them in Tyler, Texas. Trouble broke out in the local school when a few students vowed "to put down those refugee upstarts." Hostility toward the refugees grew so fierce that several boys appeared in the school with pistols. Other new students became the target for harassment until their parents withdrew them from

12 Ibid., p. 209.
13 Ibid., p. 200.
14 Massey, p. 139.
15 McDonald, pp. 189-193.
16 Ibid., pp. 195-197.
In Lynchburg, Virginia, the members of a church complained to the pastor that the refugees were occupying their pews every Sunday. One day, the pastor announced in church that all refugees should sit in the gallery. At the end of his statement a group of girls who were refugees rose and went quietly to the gallery. Unfortunately for the pastor, the hymn chosen to be sung next had lines that said, "Haste, my soul; Oh! Haste away to seats prepared above." Faint laughter was heard from the upstairs of the church, much to the embarrassment of the pastor and members of the church. Thereafter, the refugees were offered seats with the congregation but the amused visitors said they would be content with "the seats prepared above."18

Refugees in Monroe, Louisiana, complained that the townspeople were charging exorbitant prices to outsiders; one family paid $3,000 to rent a wagon and horses to take them a distance of four miles.19 Judith McGuire, who moved to Richmond during the war, wrote in her diary that the occupants of large homes had little regard for homeless southerners. Former friends of Mrs. McGuire became suddenly cool and indifferent, and made no offer to provide her with lodging, though she knew their spacious homes had several empty rooms. Passing by their lighted homes one evening, she could see the secure occupants laughing as they

17Stone, pp. 249-251.
18McDonald, p. 93.
19Stone, p. 194.
gathered around the dining room table. Others sat leisurely on their porches and waited for evening breezes to cool the night. She recalled how generous their hospitality had been before the war, and now they turned away from friends in need. The few rooms that were for rent in Richmond were mostly controlled by greedy landlords who were triumphantly aware they could get by with charging high rents and providing little conveniences for the renters. Some landlords even refused to allow renters to cook in the kitchens, and suggested the bewildered occupants could dine in a restaurant.\textsuperscript{20}

Some newspapers reprimanded citizens for their harsh treatment of refugees. \textit{The Southern Confederacy}, in 1864, reminded residents in Macon, Georgia, that they were charging unnecessarily high prices to the people who fled Atlanta. The editor said it was a painful sight to see the people of their own state so ill-treated.\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Charleston Daily Courier} and \textit{Charleston Mercury} condemned the actions of the city's profiteers and published accounts of refugees who were charged unusually high rents.\textsuperscript{22} One editor who took an opposite view was E. A. Pollard, whose colorful views appeared in \textit{The Richmond Examiner}. His distrust of refugees was cited many times in his newspaper articles in which he blamed most of Richmond's troubles on the


\textsuperscript{21} The Macon Southern Confederacy, 17 September 1864.

displaced citizens. He was not above using cruel language to describe his contempt for them and even held the newcomers responsible for the inadequate transportation in the city. The editor of a South Carolina newspaper had suggested refugees relocate elsewhere as the city was overflowing with people, but when he heard that refugees were not welcome in another part of the state, he became furious that southern people would behave in such a "cold...unsympathetic" manner. He declared that even Yankees, mean as they were, still had a sense of duty toward their own kind. He thought the "positively unfriendly" southerners should know that the refugees were not looking for charity and were willing to pay reasonable prices at the markets. The articles so impressed other editors that they reprinted it in their newspapers to serve as a reprimand for other towns that turned against the wanderers.

Most of the refugees took as little charity as possible and made every effort to support their families. Cornelia McDonald sold her finest dresses for $300 and gave French lessons to wealthy ladies for a small fee. Two of the McDonald boys cut wood for the government and were allowed to take firewood home. Judith McGuire found work at the Treasury Department but became alarmed when she heard the government was planning to transfer

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23 Ibid., p. 144.
24 Ibid., p. 145.
25 McDonald, p. 247.
workers to Columbia, South Carolina. She felt she could not leave her family in Richmond and wondered how the family would survive if she had to resign her job.\textsuperscript{26} One woman told Mrs. McGuire she could not find enough work in Richmond to support her three children, and they had been existing on turnip tops as no other food could be bought. Her husband had been killed in the war and no money was sent to her by the government.\textsuperscript{27}

Many southerners refused to leave their homes, preferring to wait out the storm, but when Union troops invaded the South, those in the path of destruction suffered the cruelties of war as much as any soldier. Sarah Morgan reported that when Federal troops shelled Baton Rouge, Louisiana, panic resulted as citizens tried to escape. She remembered her mother and sisters running through the house screaming as shells burst in the yard. Sarah tried to lock the back door as they fled, but renewed screams from her mother prompted her to leave. Dodging shells, they hurried to a road where other fugitives had gathered to leave the city. Some bewildered citizens were searching for lost children; other just "sat in the dust crying and wringing their hands." She recalled that the Negroes deserved praise for their loyalty as many walked down the road carrying white children they had rescued or property they had saved for their owners.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26}McGuire, p. 259.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 252.
It may be that the citizens' lack of understanding of the danger that was coming was one contribution to their suffering. Many who were caught in the battle range had known for days or even weeks that the Federals were likely to fire upon their town or countryside. Fitzgerald Ross stopped in Augusta, Georgia, during the war and found the shops of the town busy with customers engrossed in their daily business, though the enemy was rumored to be as near as a day's journey. Ross was amazed at the lack of concern shown by the townspeople. In 1863 citizens of Vicksburg, Mississippi, had been warned that Yankee troops were advancing, yet a large number of civilians remained in the town. One visitor actually refused to leave though transportation was available; she told her friends she could "meet troubles...cheerfully." Mary Loughborough continued her "pleasant" life of sewing and horseback riding for she doubted any battles would disturb the home where she was staying. Often, she and others walked up a hill to watch Yankee troops in the distance briskly engaged in carrying provisions to their camps. Tugboats moved briskly up and down the river taking messages to Federal gunboats that waited menacingly in the quiet stream. Still Mrs. Loughborough felt no alarm, and attended church on the morning of May 17th, though by this time loud cannon shots were


heard. In the afternoon weary Confederate soldiers passing through the town informed curious observers they were retreating from battle. At dark reinforcements marched down the streets and cheers rang out to welcome them. The soldiers promising "never to retreat" quieted any fears that arose. So calm was the city that by late nightfall the streets were nearly deserted as citizens had retired to their homes. Mary Loughborough stood on the balcony near her room and observed the silence of the night. She was now frightened over the coming siege, but the calmness of the town eased her anxiety. She recalled later that most people had believed they could stay in their homes until the battle was over.31

Outside of Winchester, Virginia, Cornelia McDonald and a neighbor watched a battle from the dining room window of the McDonald home. Though the fighting took place some distance away, they could see and hear the screaming shells whistling through air. By noon battle activity seemed to be in a lull, so the children ventured out in the front yard to play. Mrs. McDonald walked to the porch frequently to watch for any renewed firing from the battlefront, but did not realize until later that she and her family were in a dangerous situation. They had time to leave the vicinity, but stayed, unaware that their home afforded little protection from increased battle activity coming in the late afternoon.32

32 McDonald, p. 170.
In Suffolk, Virginia, tragedy resulted in 1863 when one family chose not to evacuate their home, which was in the path of a battle. When Yankee troops began firing on several residences, a woman with her seven children ran out of a house in an attempt to reach the woods, but the woman was shot by Federal soldiers. The woman's husband was allowed to carry her to town in a cart though nothing could be done to save her life. He was not permitted to return to the woods to search for his children and did not know of their whereabouts for four days, when a Yankee private rode into town to bring him the baby that was found. The other children were eventually located, but tragedy might have been avoided if the family had vacated the area or at least made some preparations to stay out of the line of firing.  

When Vicksburg came under fire in 1863, civilians fled to caves in nearby hills. Mary Loughborough and her daughter were among those who sought safety in the large caves outside the city. Since the siege was likely to be a long one, residents in Vicksburg moved their housekeeping articles to the caves. Servants of the family with whom Mary was staying prepared meals outside the caves and brought the food in the caves to be served. The main diet consisted of bacon and cornbread, as food was rapidly becoming scarce. Night after night people huddled in their

33 The Richmond Enquirer, 27 June 1863.
caves watching the sky light up with the explosions of shells.\textsuperscript{34} The cave occupants learned to listen for the "rushing sound" which indicated a shell was coming near. The noise was deafening, and the suspense of waiting for the shell to fall was terrifying.\textsuperscript{35}

Once when the cave began to tremble as if it could not withstand the explosions, Mary carried her child outside and called to the servants to follow. They ran to a large fig tree and stood there watching shells fall in all directions. One loud explosion shook the earth, and they saw a large shell directly in front of the cave. It was many hours before they could return to the cave in safety. When hot summer nights made cave living unbearable, Mary and her little girl stayed close to the entrance of the shelter, and their servant stood outside calling to them to run back in the cave when shells came too near. The Negro servant became so weary he fell asleep with shells falling all around him. Fortunately Mary looked outside and called for him to move; a shell whistled through the air, landing on the ground that the servant had quickly vacated.\textsuperscript{36}

A few days later the firing grew worse; suddenly a shell whirled into the cave and fell smoking to the ground. The group in the cave stared frozen in terror and waited for the explosion to occur. George, the Negro servant, seized the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34}Loughborough, pp. 60-64.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 56.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., pp. 67-70.
\end{itemize}
menacing object and hurled it outside where, it fell harmlessly to the ground. Other civilians were not so fortunate as many lost their lives in the explosions that occurred day and night. A small Negro boy was killed when he innocently picked up a live shell found in a yard where he was playing. A young woman, growing weary of cave life, wandered back to her house and upon returning was struck by a shell. Her mother, hearing "one wild scream," rushed out only to watch helplessly as her daughter fell to the ground. In the town a hospital was fired upon, killing several patients who had been unable to flee the building.

The suffering of Vicksburg citizens was described by Mrs. Loughborough:

The screams of the women of Vicksburg were the saddest I have ever heard. The wailings over the dead seemed full of a heart sick agony.... suddenly vibrating through the air would come these sorrowful shrieks!--these pitiful moans!--sometimes almost simultaneously with the explosion of a shell.

In the last months of 1864 and through the beginning of 1865, William Tecumseh Sherman marched his Federal troops from Atlanta to Savannah, then turned north to the Carolinas. His own words told of the ruthlessness of his army: "...we are not only fighting hostile armies, but hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of

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37 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
38 Ibid., pp. 91-92.
39 The Richmond Enquirer, 28 July 1863.
40 Loughborough, p. 131.
war..."42 In the areas overrun by the invaders, cities and their surrounding countryside underwent a vast change. Homes were burned or pillaged, railroads and other transportation facilities were destroyed, animals were shot or confiscated, and fields were left in ruins.43

Dolly Lunt Burge wrote in her diary in 1864 that Sherman's men had torn down fences to make a path through the backyard of her Georgia plantation home. Most of her livestock had been shot or taken away, her food provisions stolen, and some of the slaves forced to leave with the army. Her home was not burned, and she was able to recover a few sheep that had been hidden in a swamp.44 Mary Gay reported that she was saddened to see the pitiful condition of Atlanta's citizens after Sherman abandoned the city. She arrived on a chilly autumn day in 1864, and a drizzling rain was falling. Women and children, who had been forced to leave their homes, stood forlorn, not knowing where to go or what to do. "Aged grandmothers, young maidens, and little babies not more than three days old in the arms of sick mothers...were all out upon the cold charity of the world."45


45Gay, pp. 181-182.
Since Sherman's march left much of Georgia's population destitute of food, Mary and her servant Telitha had to find some way to get provisions. Late in November she heard that an Atlanta store would exchange food for war munitions. The two girls walked to a battlefield near Atlanta to search for minie-balls. As they filled their baskets, the wind grew colder, and their hands, unprotected by gloves, began to bleed. Mary weakened by hunger and the long walk began to cry loudly. Her servant, also disheartened, wailed sympathetically. The minie-balls were exchanged for a large supply of food provisions, which tended to cheer the girls somewhat.46

On February 17, 1865, Sherman's troops arrived in Columbia, South Carolina. Emma LeConte related that Sherman promised the mayor of the town that private property would be respected and only a few public buildings would be burned.47 By nightfall, however fire broke out in homes and buildings in the town. People rushed from their burning homes with food and blankets only to find soldiers waiting to take away any property saved. By midnight the entire town seemed to be one large blaze. A college building serving as a hospital caught fire. The doctors and nurses climbed to the roof to put out the blaze. The patients who were able crawled to safety. One doctor implored Federal officers to save the hospital as Yankee prisoners were among the

46 Ibid., pp. 256-259.
47 LeConte, Emma, p. 42.
patients. The officers brought help but encountered difficulties later when a group of Federal soldiers appeared swearing they would let the building burn. The doctor conducted a frantic search for General Sherman, who came with a guard to put around the hospital. By daylight order had been restored to the town. Emma heard talk that a few officers felt remorse over the burning and plunder of the town, but others insisted they acted under orders.  

Most southerners expressed intense hatred for the Yankee invaders and made no attempt to conceal their dislike for them. However, the rebel population did admit that some Federal soldiers treated the civilians with kindness and compassion.

After witnessing the burning of Columbia, Emma LeConte felt the Yankees were "devils" and "blue-coated fiends." She wrote, "Before they came here I thought I hated them as much as possible, now I know there are no limits to the feeling of hatred."  

One young woman, upon hearing that her sick brother was taken captive by the Yankees, boldly walked to Federal headquarters and demanded her brother be released. When her demand was refused, she leveled a pistol at the Colonel's head and swore to kill him if her order was refused. The astonished officer

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48 Ibid., pp. 44-50.
49 LeConte, Emma, pp. 49-50.
50 Ibid., p. 60.
signed a release, and she and her brother left the premises unharmed.\textsuperscript{51} Kate Stone wrote that Yankee prisoners at Tyler, Texas should be hanged for they were "detestable creatures."\textsuperscript{52} Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, so hated the Yankees that he requested that, after his death, his grave should be plowed over so that Yankees would not find it.\textsuperscript{53} However, Mrs. Clement Clay, who was staying with the Hammond family in 1864, did not express the intense dislike for Yankees as did others in the household. She even laughed over a letter written by her sister telling of Yankee raids in her home. The story told by her sister was that the daughter of a Yankee officer had been given "confiscated" articles belonging to Mrs. Clay. The general's daughter, wearing a green dress stolen from the home of Mrs. Clay, rode through the streets of Huntsville, Alabama, on Mrs. Clay's horse. As she passed a cottage, a girl called out, "Hey! Git off 'Ginie Clay's mare: Git--off--'Ginie Clay's ma--re!" The angry Miss Mitchell rode off to inform her father of the insult. In retaliation, a young man was arrested because his sister had not shown proper respect for the Federal conquerors.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52}Stone, p. 239.
\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., pp. 183-184.
After Vicksburg had fallen, Mary Loughborough reported that a Union soldier stopped by her cave home and spoke politely to her daughter. He turned and smiled at Mrs. Loughborough and she thought surprisingly that he was "a kindhearted polite soldier." Mary Gay, whose home was occupied by Federal troops, remembered that an officer sent her and her mother a large tray of food and during his stay at the plantation remained respectful to the family.

War in all its horrifying aspects had come to the very doors of the civilian homes and had driven the residents into a world where their own people were often hostile or indifferent. Those who refused to flee their homes faced further hardships as they saw their cities and countryside burned and plundered, while battles raged as near as their own backyard. Bewildered at the strength and immensity of the Federal armies, Confederates began to behave like a conquered nation and lost their will to fight.

55 Loughborough, pp. 144-145
56 Gay, p. 136
The last months of the Confederacy witnessed a strange mixture of flickering hope and deep despair as the weakened nation confronted the ever rising strength of the Union armies. The haunting whisper of defeat crept into the thoughts of every southerner, yet they clung to the faint hope that somehow the tide would turn in their favor.

Christmas of 1864 had been just another day to many southerners who were existing on two meals a day. In Georgia the burnt ruins of homes furnished a bleak setting as the December rain and sleet pelted down on women and children, who carried bundles of food obtained at an Atlanta commissary. As they walked along the road, a voice broke the silence by singing, "when this cruel war is over," and they all joined in, though sobs were heard among the group. In Richmond, the cold winter had brought a further rise in prices, and scarcity had driven rats and mice from the city. Still, some citizens brightened the churches and their homes with holly and evergreens in an

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1Judith W. McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War (Richmond: J. W. Randolph and English, 1889), p. 324.

2Mary A. H. Gay, Life in Dixie During the War, 1861-1865 (Atlanta, Georgia: Charles F. Byrd, 1897), pp. 263-264.
effort of pretended gaiety. Mrs. McGuire made sorghum cakes and regretfully wrote in her diary that her family could not afford a turkey at $50 to $100. Even milk had become a luxury as she recalled they had been able to buy it only twice that year. Susan Blackford bought a turkey that Christmas, though it cost nearly all of her husband's salary for that month. In the governor's mansion Varina Davis watched her family consume turkey, roast beef, mince pie, and plum pudding. The highlight of the dinner was a spun-sugar hen made especially for the children. Word reached the household that General Lee sent his apologies that he and his soldiers had dined on sweet potatoes that had been intended for the President. He was full of remorse that the mistake had not been discovered until the barrel was empty. Josiah Gorgas, chief of ordinance, could not enjoy Christmas because of his awareness that the soldiers had not

4 McGuire, pp. 323-324.
7 Ibid., p. 252.
eaten meat for several days. The holiday was a grim one for most, for news from the war front was frightening. On Christmas eve, Richmond's population heard that Savannah had fallen. A regiment of 15,000 enemy troops was just north of the James River, and clerks from the Confederate War Department had to be sent out to the trenches to guard the city. Wilmington was known to be in danger, as an immense fleet was reorganizing after a storm had delayed it from its destination. An employee of the Treasury Department wrote that she had never seen people so depressed.

As 1865 arrived Richmond alone remained as a major focal point of southern wartime urban society and the final symbol of southern resistance. Hiding its grief and fear, the capitol city ushered in the New Year with music and dancing. One citizen declared that the city seemed "to be crazed on the subject of gayety." Every night laughter and music could be heard and young men and women danced "as if there was no tomorrow." Soldiers, who were near the city, rode through the snow at every opportunity to attend a party. Officers kept their

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9 Bill, p. 247.

10 McGuire, p. 322.

11 Ibid., p. 328.

best uniforms in the city to be worn only on special occasions, so that they could make a gallant appearance at the parties.\textsuperscript{13} T. C. DeLeon remembered seeing one young soldier laughing as he left a party near midnight. His friends stood at a window and gaily waved good-bye until he was out of sight. The next morning a cart appeared in the city bringing home the boy for the last time.\textsuperscript{14}

A group of girls once asked General Lee if he disapproved of the merry-making in the midst of such tragedy and suffering. To the contrary, he insisted the parties did much to cheer the soldiers.\textsuperscript{15} Many of the events held were called "starvations," and no refreshments were allowed except water, which was plentiful.\textsuperscript{16} Such parties were widely approved for they boosted the morale of civilians and soldiers. Other more elaborate celebrations, held by the wealthy, became the subject of criticism. Judith McGuire, walking home from a hospital one cold night, could hear music coming from a home where a party was occurring. She felt ill to see such a celebration, for she had heard all kinds of delicacies were served at these occasions.\textsuperscript{17}

Susan Blackford, who attended several of the parties given in

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\textsuperscript{13}Davis, "Christmas in the Confederate White House," p. 252.
\textsuperscript{14}DeLeon, pp. 351-352.
\textsuperscript{15}Bill, pp. 256-257.
\textsuperscript{16}DeLeon, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{17}McGuire, p. 328.
\end{flushleft}
Richmond, declared that oysters and turkey were served, along with champagne. She said that, except for the ladies' out-of-date apparel and the men's uniforms, there were few reminders that war was going on.\textsuperscript{18} Josiah Gorgas attended a ball given by Judge Campbell which lasted most of the night. He noted that news from the war front was growing worse, yet the parties continued in Richmond.\textsuperscript{19} Other social events, such as amateur plays, became popular in spite of the Sunday sermons against them.\textsuperscript{20} Churches were lit almost every night for weddings, and at one such occasion an elaborate breakfast was served to the guests.\textsuperscript{21} A crowd gathered to attend the wedding of Hetty Cary and John Pegram, but tragedy struck three weeks later when the young general was killed in battle.\textsuperscript{22} Superstitious people pointed out that on the day of the wedding the horses had reluctantly pulled the carriage, balking more than once, and the bride had torn her wedding veil as she walked into the church.\textsuperscript{23}

The death of General Pegram cast a despondency over the city. Mrs. McGuire wrote that events had become "so dark and uncertain" that she could not bear to record them any longer.
Josiah Gorgas wrote in March that he believed people were so desperate that they were willing to give up their cause. He felt that all confidence was lost in the Confederacy’s leaders except Robert E. Lee, and the South put all their hopes on him. Yet, Gorgas doubted that Lee any longer believed that victory for the Confederacy could be won. The gloom reached as far away as Texas, for Kate Stone wrote “It is a dark hour for us now. Only bad news....”

Hunger was stalking the capitol city and the families of the military were hard pressed. Some had nothing more than bread to eat, as their income could not meet the rising costs. One citizen reported that salaried persons in the city were worse off than the paupers for the "Common Council" provided the lower classes with corn meal, flour, and bacon. Nellie Grey, a soldier’s wife, shared one room with her mother and another woman. They existed on rice, dried apples, and peas most of the time. Sometimes they scraped together enough money to buy a piece of a roast and paid a Negro woman ten dollars to bake a loaf of bread. In their room they kept coal, and bags of peas, rice, and potatoes, when they could get them. Wood was piled under the beds and laundry hung in the room completed

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24 McGuire, pp. 341-342.
25 Gorgas, p. 172.
the crowded scene. Colonel Taylor, who was engaged to a friend of Mrs. Grey, came one day to see the ladies, and casually remarked he had expected to come one day and see a pig and chickens wandering about the room. He would have been surprised to know that a chicken did occupy the room at one time and was fattened on peas to make a hearty dinner for the hungry rebels. It was necessary to stock provisions within sight, for robberies were on the increase in Richmond as supplies became more scarce.

March was a hectic month for Richmond as the city prepared for a possible evacuation. The constant whistles from the trains, brigades moving here and there, busy workers collecting machinery, medical supplies and guns to be sent to Danville; all foretold that the Confederate capitol would soon be abandoned. War department employees entered their offices every morning with a feeling of dread. Their eyes scanned the boxes, packed and waiting for removal. They felt reassured if no cartons were missing and went on with their work.

At least one copying clerk, sworn to secrecy, had known Richmond was doomed. Fannie Walker had opened a letter from Lee, who requested more supplies and troops. She began rewriting the words but stopped as her eyes rested on one line. General


29 Ibid., p. 354.

30 Putnam, "For a Name and for a Ring," p. 254.

31 DeLeon, p. 353.

32 McGuire, p. 334.
Lee said if his request could not be met, then "we cannot hold Petersburg." The chief clerk heard her exclaim, "If this is true, we are lost!" Shaking his head as he read the fatal words, he warned Fannie not to tell anyone of the letter.\footnote{Burke Davis, To Appomattox: Nine April Days 1865 (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1959), pp. 10-11.}

Even a doomed city must eat, and housewives searched the almost empty markets for food. For days the only vegetables seen were greens. Barrels of flour could be bought if one had $1,000. The population talked constantly of eating, and ministers even brought the subject up in their sermons.\footnote{Mrs. William A. Simmons, "The One Topic of Conversation is Eating" in Ladies of Richmond: Confederate Capitol, ed. Katherine M. Jones (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company), pp. 264-265.} Speculators, seeing that their days were numbered, brought out their goods but prices remained high.\footnote{Bill, p. 264.} One observer remarked that one blessing was evident; the danger threatening the Confederacy also threatened the rich harvest of the speculator. At least the population might be rid of "the human vultures."\footnote{DeLeon, pp. 354-355.}

By the end of March the evacuation of Richmond seemed a certainty. Many of the Davis household items appeared in the stores on Main Street. It was rumored that Varina Davis had
also sold her horses. One citizen remarked, "I don't at all like the look of things here." Mrs. Davis wrote a friend that she was "in the agonies of packing" as the President told her she must leave the city. She confessed in her letter that she was depressed and frightened of the future. Her husband had given her a small pistol and taught her how to fire it. He solemnly told her to keep running from the enemy; if necessary, she could take a ship out of the country. He did not expect to live through the calamity that was coming. Late one March evening Varina Davis and her children boarded a train as casually as if they were going on a brief holiday. The daughters of the Secretary of Treasury accompanied her, along with Mrs. Davis's sister and an assortment of servants. The train moved slowly out of Richmond, then stalled. Rain drizzled through the car's ceiling and the children cried. At dawn the train began to move again and this time it continued on to North Carolina.

On Sunday morning April 2, 1865, General Grant's army, reinforced by eight thousand of Sheridan's cavalrymen hurled their forces toward Richmond. General Lee and his ragged, hungry army were unable to stop the onslaught of the foe. Lee hurriedly


39 Davis, Burke, pp. 16-19.
telegraphed Jefferson Davis that the city must be evacuated without further delay. 40

Richmond was enjoying a quiet, beautiful spring morning. Church bells rang, softening the distant sound of cannon fire. 41 In the crowded churches the anxiety and grief of the war was reflected on the faces of the worshippers. Women in mourning sat silently in the pews, some men on crutches walked unsteadily to their places, and a few boys sat pale and weak from recent illnesses. All had come to pray for those who were fighting a desperate battle to save the Confederacy. 42 In St. Paul's church, President Davis sat among the congregation, but his stay was interrupted when Lee's telegram was handed to him. Hiding any feelings of alarm, he rose and quietly left the church. 43 The congregation sensing that trouble was brewing, became restless. Constance Cary, who had been sitting directly behind Davis, watched him receive the dispatch. She thought he turned pale as he read the news, and she wanted to leave the church but stayed until the service was dismissed. 44


41 Bill, p. 269.

42 DeLeon, p. 355.


44 Davis, Burke, p. 97.
Outside the church the President walked briskly to his office to organize a meeting of the department and bureau head personnel. Later he walked back to his home and was besieged with questions from citizens who had heard of the evacuation. He assured them the report was true and was pleased to see the crowd's loyalty and devotion to him.  

Mrs. McGuire had gathered most of her children at home for their usual Sunday family reunion when her son rushed in the room with the startling news. An excited neighbor repeated that many residents were leaving. By then every kind of vehicle had filled the streets and confused people were dashing about, eager to leave town. The banks were opened and property owners hastily grabbed all the valuables they could carry and left. Confederate bills totaling in the millions were thrown into the streets. The wind caught many of the worthless dollars and tossed them about, but no one noticed.  

The government ordered that the contents of the commissary stores be given to hungry citizens. Crowds of people hovered around collecting hams, flour, sugar, coffee, anything they could carry or drag home. Nellie Grey, her mother, and a 

\[45\] Davis, Jefferson, pp. 667-668.  
\[46\] McGuire, pp. 343-344.  
\[47\] Bill, p. 270.  
\[48\] DeLeon, p. 356.
Mrs. Sampson were among the citizens that desperately needed food. Trying to keep their dignity, the three women put on their bonnets that were decorated with chicken feathers, and started off to a commissary store. They had not gone far when they decided to turn back, for the mob was growing violent.  

By then, the swarms of people had turned into savage, quarreling vandals. Many in the crowd had become "maddened" by the whiskey that spilled over into the gutters. Even children were dipping up the liquid by the bucketful.

By evening President Davis and most of his cabinet had boarded a train headed south, but the city they left had not settled quietly to meet its fate. Citizens who were left to face the enemy were too restless to sleep; some huddled in small groups talking excitedly, and others walked up and down the streets, searching for some bit of news. Confederate officers appeared with torches and set fire to the storehouses, armories, and machine shops. The gunboats were fired next, and shooting flames cast an earie glow in the fearful night. The wind rose higher and spread the fire over the city. Convicts broke loose from the prison and followed the mobs who ran through the streets

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49 Avary, pp. 358-359.  
50 DeLeon, p. 356.  
52 McGuire, p. 344.  
53 DeLeon, p. 357.
trampling all in their path, plundering every building and house in their sight. An explosion rocked the city two hours after midnight, and still another just before dawn.\textsuperscript{54} The city seemed to be swallowed up in hysteria and chaos. Shells burst in the air, screams filled the night, and buildings crumbled from the fires.\textsuperscript{55}

For Willie Gorgas, the son of Josiah Gorgas, it was a night of terror. Later years would find Willie Gorgas being acclaimed as the great doctor who found the cure for yellow fever, but on that April night of 1865, he was just a small boy left with the responsibility of caring for his mother, brother, sisters, and one frightened cow. Willie and his mother worked through the night, dragging furniture out of their burning home. They later left for a relative's home, but there was no rest for the boy all night. Willie was sent to the roof to beat out any cinders that threatened to catch the shingles on fire.\textsuperscript{56} In another part of the city, a Confederate soldier was saying goodbye to his family. T. C. DeLeon was riding by the home of a friend and saw the soldier bound down the steps toward his horse. Two girls stood on the porch weeping. As the boy turned for one last look, DeLeon heard him sob, then swore bitterly as he rode

\textsuperscript{54}Bill, p. 273.

\textsuperscript{55}Rambert W. Patrick, \textit{The Fall of Richmond} (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), pp. 44-62.

\textsuperscript{56}Burke Davis, \textit{Our Incredible Civil War} (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1960, pp. 76-77.)
off into the night. Other retreating Confederate troops walked wearily by and guided their gaunt horses through the streets and over bridges.\textsuperscript{57} At eight-fifteen a.m., Federal troops watched a dilapidated carriage approach the outskirts of the city with a white flag waving in the hands of the driver. Richmond dignitaries in the carriage surrendered the city to Union troops.\textsuperscript{58}

For the most part, Richmond citizens complimented the good behavior of Yankee troops as they entered the city. The Federal soldiers worked unceasingly trying to stop the fires that were raging out of control. They put guards at the homes of civilians who requested them and restored quiet to the city.\textsuperscript{59} They handed out food rations to the needy. Nellie Grey was one rebel who refused to wait in line for Yankee charity, but her mother and another lady steadfastly walked to town to receive the rations. They returned shortly, each holding a codfish, a small piece of bacon, and a few potatoes. Nellie, who envisioned a supply of sugar, tea, and other "delights," became hysterical with laughing. The "melancholy" codfish turned out to be useful after all, for they traded pieces of it for other articles they needed.\textsuperscript{60} Other citizens did not see the humor of their situation as they

\textsuperscript{57}DeLeon, p. 358.
\textsuperscript{58}Patrick, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{59}McGuire, pp. 347-349.
\textsuperscript{60}Avary, pp. 369-370.
flocked into the city hall and capitol waiting their turn for food. The humiliation of the aristocratic women who came was plainly seen, but with their faces heavily veiled, they took their places in line, and waited patiently.\textsuperscript{61} One New York reporter remembered the scene as being pathetic as thousands made their way to the food lines.\textsuperscript{62}

The Confederacy disintegrated that same month. On Sunday, April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered formally to General Ulysses S. Grant at the home of Wilmer McLean in a village called Appomatox Court House.\textsuperscript{63} It was a strange destiny for the McLean family to have such an important event of the war occur at their home. In 1861, when the war began, the first important battle, Bull Run, had been fought on land belonging to the McLeans. Wilmer McLean had promised his family he would take them to a place in Virginia where they would be safe from future battles, and so they moved to Appomatox Court House, never dreaming the war would end at their home.\textsuperscript{64} As the two generals left the house, souvenir hunters entered the house like locusts and made offers for furniture that was in the room where

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{61}Patrick, p. 104.
\item \textsuperscript{62}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{63}Phillip Van Doren Stern, \textit{An End to Valor: The Last Days of the Civil War} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), pp.257-259.
\item \textsuperscript{64}Ibid., pp. 243-244.
\end{itemize}
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Lee surrendered. It was later told that McLean, disgusted at their greed, threw the money offered to him on the floor. The undaunted relic-seekers moved to the garden where they picked every flower that bloomed that historic day. They spied an apple tree and cut off pieces until the tree was gone, then they dug up the roots, leaving a gaping hole. That night an observer recorded the last hours before Lee's army was sent home. A bugle sounded over the field at Appomatox, then another answered, and still another. "Clouds rolled across the sky" and a gentle rain began to fall. The night seemed filled with a haunting loneliness, for distinctly heard was a band playing "Home, Sweet Home." 65

The first reaction of the civilians to the news of Lee's surrender had been shock and disbelief. Kate Stone reported that most of her friends refused to believe the Confederacy had fallen. 66 Another woman wrote "We do not yet give up all hope." 67 When at last there was no reason to hope any longer, many citizens expressed the thought that all suffering had been for nothing. Lucy Buck declared the southerners would become "slaves...to such a tyrant." 68 Nellie Grey wrote "Was it to this end we had

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65 Ibid., pp. 275-279.
66 Stone, p. 331.
67 McGuire, p. 353.
68 Lucy Rebecca Buck, Sweet Earth, Sweet Heaven: The Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck During the War Between the States, ed. William Buck (Birmingham, Alabama: The Cornerstone Publisher, 1973), p. 297.
fought and starved...?"69 Judith McGuire wrote only two lines in her diary on May 4, 1865; the last line read: "My native land, good-night:"

Southerners had sacrificed their land and people to a cause that now was gone. The American flag once again waved over the South, symbolizing freedom for many, bitter despair for others. Spring had come again, but how different it was from that other spring of 1861. Then, the South had bloomed in all the glory of hopes and dreams. Though their resources were meager, they were strong in spirit and shared a common belief that their cause was a just one. The southerners' blind trust in cotton caused them to be over confident and to rush to war too quickly. Cotton failed them; and then came the blockade, inflation, and the speculators. The day-to-day problems of living with poverty destroyed their enthusiasm for war and their declining morale lessened their chances for victory. The Confederacy faltered, and the people cried out for the Confederate government to set their footsteps in the right direction. They pleaded, scolded, and then turned away from a government which could not find the answers to the South's despair. The need for industrialization thrust new challenges upon the people, and though they were willing to make the venture, their lack of equipment and experience caused great difficulties. Transporting

69 Avary, p. 364.
70 McGuire, p. 360.
their manufactured goods and other commodities to the army and civilians was another problem which caused serious consequences. Then too, the long lists of casualties from the battlefields, and the pathetic suffering in the military hospitals dispirited the people so much that desertions were encouraged by the home front. As the war grew closer, many frightened people left their homes, and began their journeys across the South, only to find their presence resented by other southerners. The population left at home faced worse disaster as they helplessly watched the Yankee invaders destroy their homes and take away their possessions. The effect of all the hardships endured by the civilians directly influenced the Confederate army, which could not fight both the Federals and the depression that was sinking the home front. The southerners feared the end of the Confederacy, yet they did not want to bear the burdens of war any longer. When the end came, they wept, but in their hearts most were relieved that peace had come.
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