

PECULIAR PAIRINGS: TEXAS CONFEDERATES AND THEIR BODY SERVANTS

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Peculiar Pairings: Texas Confederates and their Body Servants is an examination of the relationship between Texas Confederates and the slaves they brought with them during and after the American Civil War. The five chapter study seeks to make sense of the complex relationships shared by some Confederate masters and their black body servants in order to better understand the place of “black Confederates” in Civil War memory. This thesis begins with an examination of what kind of Texans brought body servants to war with them and the motivations they may have had for doing so. Chapter three explores the interactions between master and slave while on the march. Chapter four, the crux of the study, focuses on a number of examples that demonstrate the complex nature of the master slave relationship in a war time environment, and the effects of these relationships during the post-Civil War era.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the night of July 20, 2015, Anthony Hervey, an African-American resident of Oxford, Mississippi, died while driving on Mississippi Highway 6. An avid supporter of the Confederate flag, Hervey had been run off the road by a group of young African-American males who had had a verbal altercation with him at a convenience store earlier that evening. They had berated him for wearing a gray Confederate kepi at the store, at which point Hervey and a friend left and drove away.¹ One may wonder, what drove these young men to chase Hervey and run him off the road to his death? Was it Hervey's ignorance for donning a Confederate hat in an age of racial tension? Or was it the fact that he was a fellow African-American wearing Confederate apparel and openly supporting what had once been the largest slave holding republic of the Western hemisphere? As a black supporter of the Confederacy, Hervey actively participated in a debate that has raged since the Civil War ended in 1865. So now, one may wonder, did African-Americans actually serve in the Confederate army? Did they, like Hervey, really support the cause of the Confederacy?

Of all American wars, the legacies of the American Civil War seem to have resonated the loudest. This conflict between the states engendered controversies that Americans still debate both in academic and non-academic spheres. The issue over whether the war began because of state's rights or slavery has largely been decided in academia, but is still hotly debated by the general American public. Another debate that has raged since the conclusion of the war in 1865 concerns the role of Africans-Americans, both free and slave, in the Confederate war effort. This debate has sparked heated clashes between Confederate heritage groups and the general public

¹ Lee Stranahan, "Anthony Hervey, Black Confederate Flag Supporter, Dies in Suspicious Car Wreck," 20 July 2015, *Breitbart*, <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/07/20/anthony-hervey-black-confederate-flag-supporter-dies-in-suspicious-car-wreck/>. Accessed May 18, 2016.

and produced a number of scholarly works denying the military involvement of blacks in the Confederate army. This argument is undoubtedly true, for despite the efforts of Confederate generals such as Patrick R. Cleburne to arm slaves during the war, slaves and free blacks were not allowed to fight officially for the Confederate States of America until the final months of the war. By the time the Confederacy began to drill black troops to fight for the South, the conflict had almost reached its end.²

With this in mind, why then did Hervey call for the veneration of black Confederates? Was he alone in his advocacy for remembrance of black Confederates? On July 21, 2012, Norris White, another Africa-American admirer of black Confederates, marched in a full Confederate uniform on the Texas Capitol grounds advocating the acknowledgement of black Texas Confederates. Proclaiming “Confederate history is our history too,” White referenced Primus Kelly, a slave of several Texas Confederates, as the paragon of a black Confederate.³

According to a Texas Historical Commission road marker located eleven miles south of Navasota in Grimes County, Texas, Primus Kelly was a slave owned by John W. S. West, an affluent planter who moved to Grimes County from North Carolina in 1851. At the outbreak of the Civil War, West had Kelly serve as a body servant to three of his sons, Robert M., Richard, and John H., who all enlisted in the 8th Texas Cavalry (Terry’s Texas Rangers).⁴ The marker states that Kelly not only waited on his three young masters, but also went with them into battle, and at one point fought with his “own musket and cap and ball pistol.” Kelly nursed Richard West back to health after he was wounded twice. Kelly at the end of the war settled in Texas near

² For a dedicated study of Confederate emancipation, see; Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³ Norris White Jr., “Speech at Texas Capitol Grounds on July 21, 2012,” http://www.reaganscvcamp.org/Press_Releases/Norris_White_Jr_at_Texas_State_Capitol_July_21_2012.pdf. Accessed May 20, 2016.

⁴ The term “body servant” will be further defined and discussed in Chapter Three.

“Marse Robert” West and died in 1890. The marker concludes by stating that the “Courage and Loyalty of Kelly” was typical of hundreds of Texas slaves that went to war with their masters.⁵ These “hundreds” of “black Confederates” are whom Norris White spoke for at the Texas Capitol grounds, and it is the controversial legacy of slaves like Kelly that continues to exist in contemporary Civil War memory for whites and African-Americans. The question now becomes: were there really hundreds of Texas slaves that followed their masters off to war? And if so, what compelled them to remain loyal to men who fought to keep them as human chattels?

Questions such as these have been little considered since the end of the Civil War. During the golden age of the “Lost Cause” movement from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, publications such as the *Confederate Veteran* magazine spoke of the faithful slaves of the South who served both as body servants and soldiers. Beyond these magazine references and veterans' memoirs, there would not be a study of blacks during the Civil War until Bell I. Wiley's 1938 work entitled *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865*. In this book, Wiley discussed what black body servants did and the love they felt for their masters and the Southern Confederacy. The work discussed blacks in the Confederate army to some extent, but mainly focused on the debates that occurred within the Confederate government about arming slaves and emancipation. Wiley's 1943 book, *Life of Johnny Reb*, also discussed the roles of black body servants in camp life, highlighting their fidelity and usefulness to the Confederate cause through their service in camp.⁶

Since that time, there have been few works that have directly confronted the topic of black Confederates or body servants. Most works have tended to reference solitary instances in

⁵ *Texas Historic Sites Atlas*: "Details for Primus Kelly Historical Marker, Atlas Number 5185008592," <http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/Details/5185008592>. May 18, 2016.

⁶ Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (New York: Rinehart, 1938); Bell I. Wiley, *Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943).

which blacks served as soldiers or as body servants, without any explanation of the context, or the debate over general emancipation of slaves by the Confederacy. One such book is Richard F. Durden's 1972 *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation*, which contains primary sources that dealt with the Southerners' persistent refusal to free and arm slaves in lieu of forfeiting the cornerstone of their slave-holding nation. Other works that discuss the Confederate emancipation debates but do not discuss black Confederates or body servants are James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* and Gary Gallagher's *The Confederate War*, both of which are staples in Civil War historiography.⁷

Some recent works that are dedicated to the topic of black Confederates are almost exclusively compilations of sources that discuss the role of slaves in Confederate armies. *Black Confederates* and *Black Southerners in Confederate Armies* contain primary sources that discuss African-Americans in the service of the Confederacy. These works also delve into post-war accounts of blacks who faithfully "served" in the Confederate army, but they do not critically assess the reasoning behind their involvement or why these people were so revered. Ricardo J. Rodriguez's *Black Confederates in the U.S. Civil War* provides a rough list of over 7,000 African-Americans that "served" in the Confederate army during the war. Works such as these are good research aids, but they do not address the topic academically, and exude unapologetic sentiments of anachronistic "Lost Cause" ideology concerning slavery and the Civil War.⁸

⁷ Robert F. Durden, *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Gary Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁸ Charles K. Barrow, J.H. Segars, and R.B. Rosenberg, eds., *Black Confederates* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2011); Charles K. Barrow and J.H. Segars, eds., *Black Southerners in Confederate Armies* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2012); Ricardo J. Rodriguez, ed., *Black Confederates in the U.S. Civil War: A Compiled List of African-Americans Who Served the Confederacy* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010).

Lately there have been works, however, that give more scholarly attention to the topic of body servants and slaves in Confederate armies. Ervin L. Jordan's *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* discussed the role of blacks in the Confederate army, whether as laborers, body servants, or "soldiers," as well as their activism during the postbellum years. Joseph T. Glatthaar's *General Lee's Army* spoke of many Confederates in the Army of Northern Virginia that brought body servants with them to camp and of the special relationships that some of them shared. The most recent work to address the role of slavery in Confederate armies is Colin E. Woodward's *Marching Masters*, which dedicates an entire chapter to the role of black body servants in the Confederate army, but does not elaborate on the relationships that existed between master and slave-servant or the motives slaves might have had in faithfully serving their masters. All three works allude to rare circumstances in which a Confederate master and his body servant had special bonds that were uncommon in the realm of human bondage, but do not critically analyze the situation.⁹ These works also focus heavily on Confederates in the Eastern Theater, with most examples coming from Confederate states in that theater as well. These studies also tend to argue that only the planter elite brought body servants with them to war, begging the question: were non-planters unable to bring their chattel to war? A final theme that exists in these works is that by 1863 many body servants had been sent home by their masters due to the tumultuous environs of Confederate camp life by that point of the war.

The lack of a work dedicated to the understanding of the relationship between Confederate masters and their black body servants is surprising. Even in the historiography of American slavery, there are no works that examine this unique relationship. That is not to say

⁹ Ervin L. Jordan Jr., *Black Southerners and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1995); Joseph T. Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse* (New York: Free Press, 2009); Colin E. Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

that the study of the master-slave relationship has not been addressed in this massive field. The historiography of slavery is extensive, beginning with U.B. Phillips 1918 *American Negro Slavery* and continuing all the way to Edward E. Baptiste's 2014 work, *The Half That Has Never Been Told*. Important contributors to the field such as Kenneth Stampp, Eugene Genovese, and Edmund Morgan laid the foundations for future scholars, who later expanded (and attempt to refute at least in part) these early studies of slavery in the American South. Since the 1980s, great general studies of slavery include Robert W. Fogel's *Without Consent or Contract*, Robin Blackburn's *The Making of New World Slavery*, Ira Berlin's *Generations of Captivity*, and Walter Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams*. There have also been a number of scholarly works dedicated to understanding the slave owners themselves and their motivations for being slave-owners and the implications of owning slaves in the antebellum South. These works include James Oakes's *The Ruling Race*, Joyce Chaplin's *An Anxious Pursuit*, Bertram Wyatt-Brown's *The Shaping of Southern Culture*, and James Miller's *South by Southwest*.¹⁰

There are a number of works within the historiography of slavery that could contribute to understanding black body servants and the complex relationships they had with their Confederate masters. These works tend to emphasize the "humanity" of the slave, real persons whose

¹⁰ U.B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment, and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1918); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Knopf, 1956); Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975); Robert W. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: Norton, 1989); Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (London and New York: Verso, 1997); Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013); James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Joyce Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); James Miller, *South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

thoughts and feelings did in fact shape the world in which they involuntarily lived. One work in particular that has left a profound impact in this regard is Eugene Genovese's 1974 study entitled *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. Genovese described the central element of Southern slavery as "paternalistic," which brought out the incredible contradictions of the institution, where masters on the one hand treated their slaves as chattels, while treating them as humans on the other. Within this system of paternalism, slaves had more agency than their masters realized, and thus the humanity of each slave was indirectly identified in the complex interactions of slaves and their masters. One could apply this theory to that of black body servants and their Confederate masters, who shared in relationships that were not dissimilar to that of other house slaves on the plantation.¹¹ Walter Johnson's *Soul by Soul*, a case study of the slave market in New Orleans, seems to support Genovese's claims. Johnson notes that slaves played a major role in slave trading as sources of valuable information within slave markets, which made them more valuable and directly affected how they were treated by whites. One work that more clearly defines how slaves were able to "participate" in their own lives is Randolph B. Campbell's *An Empire for Slavery*. Campbell describes the incredible will of slaves to endure their time in captivity and do whatever they had to in hopes of improving their quality of life. By getting along, slaves could better their time in bondage and perhaps better shape their destiny within the institution of chattel slavery. Again, such principles could be applied in analyzing the relationships of black body servants and their Confederate masters.

Thus while the complex relations between slaves and masters prior to the Civil War has been the focus of some fine scholarship, the relationship between black body servants and their

¹¹ Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1999); Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 189.

Confederate masters is a topic unexplored, and perhaps avoided, in the historiography of the Civil War and slavery. The purpose of this study is to understand the complex bonds shared between military masters and their servants, as well as other Confederate perceptions of these relationships during and after the war. This study draws its evidence entirely from Texas, a relatively nascent slave-holding state by the outbreak of the Civil War, but nonetheless a perfect prism through which to study this fascinating topic considering the myriad Southern peoples that made up the state's population of 600,000 in 1860, of which almost a third were black slaves. Like the other slaveholding states of the antebellum South, Texans embraced slavery as their own "peculiar institution" due to its special place within their culture as a cornerstone of their Southern way of life. Texas sent between 60,000 and 70,000 of her sons to fight alongside men from her sister slave states in the crusade to defend slavery against the "abolitionist hordes" of Lincoln.¹² Some of these Texas Confederates brought black body servants with them, and not all who did were a part of the planter elite.

Through the use of both primary and secondary sources, an attempt will be made to understand the complex relations that some Texas Confederate masters shared with their black body servants. The primary questions to be addressed in this study include: who were these Texas Confederates who brought servants with them into the army? What circumstances allowed them to have a black body servant accompany them to war? What roles did these slaves fulfill on the march? Did masters reciprocate the care given to them by their body servant? What can be determined from analyzing the daily interactions shared between master and slave in a war time environment? Was this relationship different than master-slave interactions back home? What events might form deeper emotional connections between masters and slaves in a war time

¹² For general information on Texas during the Civil War, see Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 237-265.

environment? How did these shared connections affect their relationship after the war? And finally, did some Confederate masters and their black body servants share in unique “fraternal” bonds, and if so, did it contribute to creating ardent black Confederates long after the war?

These various questions are difficult to answer but could contribute much to modern conceptions of slavery and what the legacy of black Confederates means in the study of the Civil War. This work will not address black soldiers in the Confederate army nor will it discuss the involvement of slaves in combat. By this work’s end, it will be seen that some Confederate masters and their body servants did share in unique and complex bonds that shaped how some African-Americans viewed the Confederacy long after the war. The three main chapters of this work will demonstrate this argument. Chapter Two discusses slavery in Texas leading up to the Civil War, and it presents data from the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses to introduce and define a sample of Texas Confederates who were known to have brought black body servants with them to war. Specifically taken from the census are the age, place of birth, wealth, and slaveholdings of all of the discussed Confederates and their families, effectively establishing what class of slaveholder they were before the war. The chapter concludes by discussing reasons why these Confederates brought body servants with them, and how this potentially contributed to their later relationships. Chapter Three examines the roles of slaves on the march. Using letters, memoirs, government records, and other primary material, the day-to-day interactions of Confederate masters and their body servants will be evaluated. The chapter will look at how both master and slave took care of one another and demonstrate the large amounts of trust that some Confederate masters had in their slaves in the environs of war. The fourth, and most crucial chapter, examines specific incidents or cases that reflect the genuine “human” bonds shared between master and slave during the war and how these bonds affected the post war experiences for those former

body servants. This chapter again utilizes myriad primary sources, including letters, memoirs, newspapers, pension records, United Confederate Veteran camp records, and even film from the 1910s. The final chapter of the work assesses the significance of these findings and the effect they could have in shaping both Civil War memory and the study of slavery.

Having set the parameters of the work, it must be understood that this study in no way attempts to excuse Confederates from the horrors of owning another human being, nor does it at all imply that bondsmen were happy to be enslaved. The evidence used in this work by no means implies that all Confederate masters felt genuine affection towards their black body servants, and vice-versa. Slaves were incredibly resilient human beings who found the will to endure their time in captivity in a multitude of ways. It is in that powerful emotion to endure that a slave may have attached him or herself to their master, forging a connection to that person as a means to survive. And in that complicated bond, sentiments of personal attachment could be found. The term “human” is used in this work to describe these complicated relationships shared by Confederate soldiers and their body servants. The phrases “human connection” and “human relationship” refer to the attachments and interactions that human beings share throughout life, and it is in these attachments and interactions that notions of affection and belonging can be found. The unfeigned attachment of a slave to his master is hard to conceive and reflects the complex nature of the system of human bondage. This is a study of the exceptions found in slavery, not a work dedicated to defining these unique relationships as the rule. That being said, these relationships cannot be ignored if a better understanding of the attachments found between a master and their slave is to be achieved. If a proper understanding can be made of the complex relationships that Confederate masters and their black body servants shared, perhaps a more solid foundation can be laid for understanding the place of black “Confederates” in Civil War memory.

CHAPTER 2

TEXAS CONFEDERATES AS SLAVEHOLDERS

When the secession crisis accelerated in December 1860 with the secession of South Carolina from the Union, the rest of the Deep South did not lag far behind, including Texas. Texas's total slaveholdings may have only been five percent of the total slave population of the South by 1860, but slavery still played an ever present role in Texas society. This stemmed from the fact that 77 percent of the people living in Texas by 1860 were Southern-born, and they had brought slavery with them from their respective slaveholding states. Considering that one quarter of all families in Texas owned slaves, and thirty percent of the total population were black slaves on the eve of the war, it is no wonder that Texas sided with its sister slave states in secession.¹ A majority of Texans voted to leave the Union in February 1861, and upon hearing of the shelling of Fort Sumter on April 12, Texans prepared themselves for the fight to come as a war for the existence of their slaveholding Confederacy loomed in the distance. As Texas mustered her sons for war, it seemed fitting that a number of Texans brought slaves with them on their odyssey.

Most Texas Confederates that brought black body servants with them came from the primary cotton growing region of the state, East Texas. East Texas stretched from Bowie County in the northeast down the Texas-Louisiana border to Newton County, thence westward through Polk, Trinity, Houston, and Leon counties, then north through Freestone, Anderson, and Henderson counties, and then continuing on into the northeast into Red River County. The region's population mainly consisted of immigrants from the Upper and Lower South, all of whom brought along their "peculiar" way of life.² During the 1850s and 1860s, 93 percent of

¹ Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery*, 2.

² M. Jane Johansson, *Peculiar Honor: A History of the 28th Texas Cavalry, 1862-1865* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 4-5; Richard Lowe and Randolph B. Campbell, *Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas* (College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 13-17.

Texas's free population lived in the region, and 99 percent of the state's slaves also inhabited this area.³ A typical slaveholder in the region tended to be a male in his lower forties that migrated to Texas from the Lower South. These Texans flourished economically throughout the 1850s and owned two-thirds of the agricultural land in the state and produced nine-tenths of Texas's cotton in 1850 and 1860, despite accounting for only one-third of the state's farming population.⁴

Harrison County is an example of an East Texas county that had a large slave population. Established in 1839 along the border between Texas and Louisiana, Harrison County quickly became the center of the cotton-growing economy in northeastern Texas as waves of planter families from the South moved into the area. By 1860, Harrison County had more slaves in absolute numbers than any other county in Texas, with a slave population of 8,784. In terms of planters, defined as those who owned twenty or more slaves, Harrison County had 145 planters residing within its borders, which was a substantial portion of the state's total number of 2,214 planters.⁵

Because the coastal and Eastern portions of Texas were a region full of planter families of strong Southern heritage, it makes sense that many soldiers from this area were capable of bringing black slave-servants with them. What is somewhat of a surprise is that both planter families and non-planter families in the region had members who brought slaves with them to war. For those who enjoyed the luxury of being a part of the planter class, bringing a black body servant along seemed only natural, given their antebellum life style. Men like John S. Shropshire, Willis L. Lang, Theophilus Perry, Rene Fitzpatrick Jr., William R. "Billy" Hargrove, George A.

³ Johansson, *Peculiar Honor*, 2, 193.

⁴ Richard Lowe and Randolph Campbell, *Planters and Plain Folk: Agriculture in Antebellum Texas* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1987), 188-189.

⁵ Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery*, 193; Randolph B. Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis: Harrison County, Texas, 1850-1880* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983), 20, 4. For more on slavery in antebellum Texas, see Lowe and Campbell, *Planters and Plain Folk*.

Blaine, Nathan P. Ward, D.O. and Tom Hill, and the West brothers (Robert M., John H., and Richard) all had black body servants accompany them to war, and each either owned slaves or were the sons of wealthy slaveholding families.

Several Texas Confederates took their own slaves as body servants when they went to war. Major John Shropshire of the 5th Texas Cavalry was a native Kentuckian who resided in Columbus, Texas, in Colorado County. A lawyer and a planter, he ran a large plantation, holding over \$83,000 in total wealth and owning sixty-two slaves, one of whom was his slave Bob, who accompanied him into the war.⁶ Another member of the 5th Texas Cavalry and the planter elite in Texas was Captain Willis L. Lang. Born into a wealthy planter family in Mississippi, Lang had moved to Texas and settled in Falls County, where he lived with his seventy-four slaves and held over \$74,000 in total wealth.⁷

Some Texas Confederates that came from the planter class had black body servants provided for them by their affluent fathers. Such was the case for Theophilus Perry of Harrison County. Despite being a slave holder himself, Perry, who served in the 28th Texas Cavalry as a lieutenant, had a slave named Norflet who was provided to him by his father, Levin Perry.⁸ Rene Fitzpatrick Jr., who likewise became a lieutenant in the 28th Texas Cavalry, was also a son of a wealthy planter. His father Rene Fitzpatrick Sr. in 1860 owned fifty-five slaves, with his total

⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Texas, Colorado County, Schedules 1 and 2 (Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.); United States Department of War, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Texas (Record Group 109, National Archives, Washington, DC; [hereafter cited as CSR]), 5th Texas Cavalry: John S. Shropshire.

⁷ Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Falls County, Schedules 1 and 2, CSR, 5th Texas Cavalry: Willis L. Lang.

⁸ Theophilus Perry held \$13,000 in total wealth and owned seven slaves. His father, Levin Perry, owned a large plantation in Harrison County and owned seventy slaves and held \$38,600 in property according to 1855 tax roll records. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, Schedules 1 and 2; Texas, Harrison County, Tax Rolls, 1855 (Texas State Library and Archives, Austin) Levin Perry; CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry: Theophilus Perry.

wealth amounting to \$63,325.⁹ Rene Fitzpatrick Jr. in 1860 owned four slaves and had a total wealth of \$8,200.¹⁰ William R. “Billy” Hargrove of Harrison County was provided a black body servant when he joined the 11th Texas Infantry as a private in 1862. Hargrove’s father, William R. Hargrove Sr., a native North Carolinian, had passed away in 1856, and left his family forty-three slaves, one of which was Guy, who accompanied Billy to war. Private and later adjutant George A. Blaine of the 7th Texas Infantry, a twenty-year-old native of Alabama, had a slave named Nick accompany him to war. In 1860, he resided in Freestone County, Texas with his father, J.H. Blaine, a farmer who had \$27,816 in total wealth, with \$24,666 of this being personal wealth. Although the elder Blaine is not listed as owning any slaves in 1860, his large personal wealth indicates that he most likely did own slaves on the scale of a planter, and thus probably provided his son with a body servant.¹¹ Nathan P. Ward, who joined the 28th Texas Cavalry, also seems to have been associated with the Harrison County elite and was probably related to the wealthy William R. D. Ward.¹² The latter, a respected citizen of Marshall, owned twenty-two slaves and had a total wealth of \$71,115.¹³ Nathan Ward, at the age of twenty-seven, lived as a farmer in Louisburg, North Carolina in 1860, owned seven slaves himself, and had an overall

⁹ Rene Fitzpatrick Sr. had thirteen male servants between the ages of forty-two and eighteen, any of which could have been the servant that accompanied his son to war. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, District 3, Schedules 1 and 2.

¹⁰ Rene Fitzpatrick Jr. owned no male slaves of a reasonable age to accompany him into the service. This tells us that he most likely was given a male servant by his father. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, District 3, Schedules 1 and 2, CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry: Rene Fitzpatrick.

¹¹ Randolph B. Campbell, “Texas Confederate Veteran Pensions: The Curious Case of Guy and Dora Shaw of Harrison County,” *Touchstone* 33 (March 2014), 90-91; CSR, 14th Texas Infantry: William R. Hargrove; Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Fairfield, Freestone County, Schedule 1. CSR, 7th Texas Infantry: George A. Blain.

¹² The relationship between Nathan P. Ward and William R.D. Ward is not entirely clear. However, in Theophilus Perry’s letters are repeated instances of “Nath” being said to be more like “Old Dick” Ward than any of his other kin (they were also both from North Carolina). It is curious that Nathan Ward, who lived in North Carolina at the outbreak of the Civil War, would come to Marshall to enlist in Company F of the 28th Texas Cavalry for no particular reason. It also appears that Nathan Ward and Perry, whose family was also from North Carolina and who were familiar with the Wards, both knew each other in both communities, pulling Nathan Ward’s relation to William R.D. Ward even closer despite no corroboration from census data.

¹³ William R.D. Ward owned seven male slaves between the ages of forty-five and sixteen that he potentially could have loaned to Nathan P. Ward for a servant. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, District 5, Schedules 1 and 2.

wealth of \$12,630.¹⁴ But he did not own a male servant who was of age to serve as his body servant, thus indicating that he was provided one by a relative, possibly William Ward.

In some cases, a Texas father provided one black body servant for multiple sons. Two enlisted members of the 8th Texas Cavalry, D.O. and Tom Hill, were provided a slave named “Uncle Crock” by their father, Thomas B.J. Hill of Bastrop County. Thomas Hill, an influential planter, held \$155,000 in total wealth, and owned seventy-seven slaves.¹⁵ Like D.O. and Tom Hill, the three sons of John W.S. West—Robert M. West, John H. West, and Richard West—all shared one body servant that had been provided to them by their father. According to the 1850 census, while still residing in Wayne County, North Carolina, John West had \$18,090 in real estate value and owned fifty-three slaves. By 1860, after the family had moved to Texas in 1851, the elder West’s three sons apparently lived separate from their father in Harris County. Richard West held \$17,000 in total wealth and owned six slaves. John H. West and Robert M. West are recorded as each having held \$6,000 in total wealth and owning five slaves apiece. Richard West and his two brothers appear to have been a part of the lumber industry within Harris County by that time. Despite his sons' ownership of slaves, John West provided them with a black body servant, Primus Kelly, when they signed up with the 8th Texas Cavalry in 1861.¹⁶

Considering the wealth and status of the Confederates and their families who have been discussed so far, it is reasonable to think that only the wealthy elite of East Texas brought slaves

¹⁴ Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, North Carolina, Franklin County, Schedules 1 and 2; CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry, N.P. Ward.

¹⁵ Considering that both D.O. and Tom Hill did not own slaves in 1860 and still lived at home, it can be assumed that their father is the one who gave them their servant, whose given name was actually Crockett Hill, when they went to war. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Bastrop County, Schedules 1 and 2. CSR, 8th Texas Cavalry: D.O. Hill, Thomas Hill.

¹⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1850, North Carolina, Neuse (south side), Wayne, Schedules 1 and 2 (Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.), County; In the 1860 census, Richard West’s listed occupation is “Cutting Wood,” so it can be fairly assumed from the total wealth and slaveholdings of him and his brothers that they were somewhat invested in some form of logging industry. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harris County. Schedules 1 and 2; Texas Historical Commission marker #: 5185008592 “Primus Kelly.” CSR, 8th Texas Cavalry: Richard West, R.M. West, J.H. West.

with them into the war. That, however, was not the case. For some non-planters, even though their slave holdings did not come near those of the planter elite, they still had a black body servant accompany them on the march. Colonel John R. Baylor, who commanded the first Confederate expedition into New Mexico in 1861, lived in Parker County, on the western frontier of Texas, in 1860 and held \$12,500 in total wealth and owned a modest stable of seven slaves. One of those bondsmen, named Bower, accompanied Baylor to New Mexico.¹⁷ The founder of Company B of the 4th Texas Infantry (Tom Green Rifles) and later commander of the 5th Texas Cavalry in New Mexico, Thomas Green, also had a black body servant and did not qualify as a member of the planter class. A native of Virginia, this famous Texan in 1860 lived in Austin, Travis County, Texas, held \$23,000 in total wealth, and owned ten slaves.¹⁸ Colonel Horace Randal, commander of the 28th Texas Cavalry, was a career officer in the United States Army who had been stationed on the frontier in Texas before the war, and thus is not present in the 1860 census. Randal, though, is recorded in Theophilus Perry's letters as having brought a black body servant with him while on campaign, and therefore must have owned at least one slave when the war began.¹⁹ Lieutenant Pleasant J. Oaks of the 5th Texas Cavalry was a merchant in Colorado County, Texas, in 1860. He had \$17,000 in total wealth and owned five slaves. One of Oaks's five slaves, a young male named Mac, served Oaks on campaign.²⁰

¹⁷Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Parker County. Schedules 1 and 2; CSR, Baylor's Regiment Texas Cavalry: John Baylor; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Jerry Thompson, "Baylor, John Robert," accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbaat>.

¹⁸Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Austin, Travis County. Schedules 1 and 2. CSR, 5th Texas Cavalry: Thomas Green; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Alwyn Barr, "Green, Thomas," accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fer38>.

¹⁹Horace Randal does not appear in the 1860 US census, most likely because he did not have permanent residence. Before the war he had been stationed in Indian Territory, Arizona, and at Fort Bliss and Fort Davis Texas; CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry: Horace Randal; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Tom Jones, "Randal, Horace," accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fra28>.

²⁰Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Colorado County. Schedules 1 and 2, CSR, 5th Texas Cavalry: Pleasant J. Oaks.

There were of course non-planters from East Texas who became Confederates and took a black body servant to war with them. Captain Khebler Miller Van Zandt of Harrison County served in the 7th Texas Infantry, and he had a black body servant sent to him after he fell ill late in 1861. His mother, Frances Cooke Lipscomb Van Zandt, sent her ailing son a slave named Jack by the end of that year.²¹ Thirty-six-year-old J.S. Wagon of Tennessee, a member of the 28th Texas Cavalry, resided in Harrison County in 1860 and had only eight slaves and a total listed wealth of \$10,500.²² Another member of the 28th Texas Cavalry that had a black body servant was W.A. Tarleton, a thirty-four-year-old native of Alabama who had been an active teacher in Harrison County during the late 1840s and into the 1850s.²³ Georgia native Hinche Parnham Mabry of Marion County, Texas, brought a black body servant with him into the 3rd Texas Cavalry, a unit full of planter-class soldiers, and yet did not qualify as one himself. A thirty-year-old lawyer in Jefferson, Texas, in 1860, Mabry held \$15,000 in total wealth but only owned two slaves, neither of whom were males.²⁴ This leads to the conclusion that Mabry must have been loaned his body servant, Jeff, by a relative or close friend.

Even those Texans who ventured all the way to Virginia in 1861 brought black body servants. Lieutenant and later Captain Thomas Baber of Company E, 5th Texas Infantry, took a servant with him to Virginia in 1861. Baber, a twenty-seven year old Tennessee native, lived in

²¹ K.M. Van Zandt in 1860 held \$9000 in total wealth at the age of 23 and owned five slaves. F.C. Van Zandt held thirteen slaves and \$12,000 in total wealth. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, Schedules 1 and 2; K. M. Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare: The Autobiography of K. M. Van Zandt*, ed. Sandra L. Myres (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1968), 82, CSR, 7th Texas Infantry: K.M. Van Zandt; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Patricia P. Kinkade, "Van Zandt, Khebler Miller," accessed May 19, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fva13>.

²² J.S. Wagon owned three of age male slaves between the ages of twenty-eight and seventeen that could have potentially accompanied him. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Harrison County, District 5. Schedules 1 and 2, CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry: J.S. Wagon.

²³ Campbell, *Southern Community in Crisis*, 107; CSR, 28th Texas Cavalry: W.A. Tarleton.

²⁴ Mabry must have been provided his body servant Jeff by a family member or friend. In 1860, he owned only two slaves, with only one of them being a male who was only 13 years old, which is too young to have been Jeff; Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Jefferson, Marion County, Schedule 1 and 2, CSR, 3rd Texas Cavalry: H.P. Mabry.

Washington County, Texas, in 1860 and held \$21,930 in total wealth, including eight slaves. One of these slaves, Dan, acted as Baber's body servant and the cook for his company throughout the war.²⁵ Other non-planter members of Hood's Texas Brigade who brought black body servants included one-time Austin mayor Captain Benjamin Franklin (B.F.) Carter and Sergeant John T. Price. Both men were natives of Tennessee, resided in Austin, Texas, in 1860, and later became members of Company B of the 4th Texas Infantry. Having served as the mayor of Austin from 1858 to 1859, Carter in 1860 worked as a lawyer and owned just \$2,000 in real estate. Price acted as the local sheriff in Travis County, owned six slaves, and held only \$1,450 in total wealth.²⁶

Captain J.J. McBride of Company C, 5th Texas Infantry, is an interesting character in regard to his position and status in the antebellum period, as well as how he attained a black body servant for himself in 1861. A native of Virginia, McBride at the age of forty resided in Leon County, Texas. His 1860 occupation was that of a land dealer, which explains his total real estate wealth of \$90,000. Not owning any slaves in Texas, McBride was provided a black body servant by his brother when he arrived with the rest of the 5th Texas in Virginia in mid-1861. J. J.'s brother Robert McBride, an affluent farmer in Rockbridge County, Virginia, held \$45,162 in total wealth and owned seven slaves, one of which was a young male by the name of Levi Miller, who acted as the body servant for both J.J. McBride and another member of the 5th Texas

²⁵ Baber owned a twenty-one-year-old male slave who was most likely Dan Winston. Dan Winston died in 1909 at the age of eighty, which would have made him about twenty years old at the outbreak of the war, Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Washington County. Schedules 1 and 2, CSR, 5th Texas Infantry: Thomas A. Baber; "Aged Negro Dead," *Brenham Evening Press* (Brenham, Tex.), June 26, 1909.

²⁶ B.F. Carter's personal wealth is not listed in the 1860 census, which also explains why he is not listed as owning any slaves. According to Frank B. Chilton, a former member of Company B, 4th Texas Infantry, Carter had a black body servant by the name of Henry Johnson. He also speaks of "Uncle John," John T. Price's body servant. Frank B. Chilton, *Unveiling and Dedication of Monument to Hood's Texas Brigade on the Capitol Grounds at Austin, Texas*. . . (Houston, Tex.: F.B. Chilton, 1911), 292; Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Austin, Travis County. Schedule 1; CSR, Carter's Company Texas Infantry: B.F. Carter; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Aragorn Storm Miller, "Carter, Benjamin F.," accessed March 09, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fcafe>; Census Bureau, Texas, Austin, Travis County Schedules 1 and 2; CSR, 4th Texas Infantry: John T. Price.

Infantry, J. E. Anderson of Leon County, Texas. Anderson in the 1860 census is listed as a twenty-four year old school teacher from Ohio, and held no recorded wealth.²⁷

Regardless of their economic status, all of these Texas Confederates held positions as slave holders or were familial affiliates of slave holders, which allowed them the opportunity to bring a servant with them into the army. What reasons might they have had for bringing along a piece of property that was expensive and needed as much attention and care as the owner? For planters who had become accustomed to their pampered lifestyle, having a black body servant accompany them to war facilitated their transition from slaveholding business men to soldiers. For troopers like Theophilus Perry, having a body servant may have helped to appease his father, who insisted that he take his slave Norflet as a body servant.²⁸ This was also the case for Billy Hargrove as well as the Hill and West brothers.²⁹ It can be imagined that these families wished their sons to have servants with them so that they would know that while their sons fought for the Southern cause, they were at least being cared for off the battlefield. It can also be speculated that the planter's sons were just as accustomed to lives of leisure and required body servants to be with them to ease their hardships as soldiers. The same assumptions can be made about those non-planters who had slaves during the war. Non-planter families still worried about their sons, as seen when Van Zandt's mother sent Jack to care for her son when he became ill in late 1861.³⁰ Robert McBride sent his brother J.J. McBride a black body servant upon his request in Virginia, despite the fact that Robert did not own many slaves. Men like J.S. Wagnon and Thomas Baber

²⁷ Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Leon, Leon County, Schedule 1; CSR, 5th Texas Infantry: J.J. McBride; Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Virginia, Lexington, Rockbridge County, Schedules 1 and; "Levi Miller Has A Good War Record," *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.), Nov. 11, 1921.

²⁸ M. Jane Johansson, ed., *Widows by the Thousand: The Civil War Letters of Theophilus and Harriet Perry, 1862-1864* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 175.

²⁹ Campbell, "Texas Confederate Veteran Pensions," 91.

³⁰ Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 82.

owned few slaves themselves, and yet they chose to bring servants with them anyway, perhaps for the same reasons as the planters and their sons.

Beyond the speculations of black body servants accompanying their masters simply to make life easier, or to watch over loved ones, these slaves were given an immense amount of responsibility by their owners. Texas slaveholders, like those of other Southern states, tended to view the bondsman closest to the family as trusted family members themselves. One Texas slaveholder claimed that his slaves were part of his family, and that he would sooner “think of selling one of my [his] own Children as one of them.” Another Texan in 1861 expressed the deep emotional connection he had to his deceased slave, “Edmund... was an honest, truthful, and industrious man and a faithful servant and I shall miss his services and influence a great deal.”³¹ Statements such as these reflect the general trend among slaveholders to value their “Family Negro,” and thus those trusted slaves were perfect candidates for accompanying their master to war. Whether the body servant in question was trusted simply not to flee to Union lines, or rather trusted to perform their duties faithfully, the relationship between master and slave had to have been strong in order for this peculiar pairing to exist.

The study of the interactions between master and body servant on the march will be examined in the next chapter, but what a typical Texas Confederate with a black body servant looked like has been determined. These men came entirely from the South, and each had some connection to slavery through direct ownership or had family members who owned slaves. Age and ownership did not determine exclusively those that brought slaves with them and those that did not, nor did there place of residency in Texas. Rank in the Confederate army also did not determine the likelihood of a soldier bringing a slave. From regimental commanders to regular enlisted men, the accompaniment of a black body servant happened to be a common trait

³¹ Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery*, 195-196.

amongst the Texans of this study. Indeed, the bringing of slaves by these Texas Confederates symbolized their shared interest to protect their homes and their Southern institutions. They also apparently shared in the belief that slaves were nothing more than chattel but at the same time were trustworthy enough to care for them in the most trying of environments. For better or worse, each of these Texas Confederates participated in complex relationships with their black body servants during the war that in some cases produced unique bonds that brought to the fore a recognition of the slave's humanity by the master, thus blurring the lines between master and slave to create a curious pairing in the eyes of many modern scholars.

CHAPTER 3

“I WILL NOT COOK FOR MYSELF:” TEXAS CONFEDERATES AND THEIR BLACK BODY SERVANTS ON CAMPAIGN

Like those who fought in most wars, soldiers of the American Civil War led hard lives. Life on the march taxed soldiers, both those who wore blue and those in gray, physically and mentally. Forced to live in close proximity to one another, soldiers in camp often caught various maladies that left them unable to perform their duties or worse. In his autobiography, K.M. Van Zandt provides a perfect vision of his uncivilized surroundings:

“... a majority of them [K.M.’s company] take no care of themselves in camp. They lay down with impunity on wet blankets and damp straw. They eat their food half cooked. They are careless and unconcerned with the cleanliness of their persons or their clothing- they are irregular about their sleep and in fact wholly and unjudiciously ignore all the sanitary and wholesome laws which in their comfortable houses they would not have dared to disregard.”¹

Having a black body servant accompany one to war must have been a wonderful commodity, especially for those Texas Confederates that campaigned in New Mexico in 1862. Even when still in West Texas, John Shropshire wrote to his wife about his rough travels, “I candidly confess- I never would have come this way had I imagined this country was so mean.” Shropshire added that “If I had the Yankees at my disposal I would give them this country and force them to live in it.”² When considering statements such as these, it is not hard to imagine why any Confederate might want a slave with them to alleviate hardships found on campaign. Black body servants were that commodity for Confederate soldiers in the field, as they acted in their master’s interests so that they could focus on fighting the enemy, while also providing the comforts of home.

¹ Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 84.

² Shropshire to “Carrie” Dec. 26, 1861, Letters of John Samuel Shropshire, Major, 5th Texas Cavalry, Nesbitt Memorial Library, Columbus, Texas.

The term generally used to describe the slaves who accompanied their owners into the Confederate army was “body servant.” Bell I. Wiley described black body servants as “the aristocracy of all those Southern Negroes who engaged in military activities” in the Confederate army due to the large amount of trust and “freedom” they seemed to have had in comparison to other slaves back on the plantation or those used by Confederate forces as hard laborers.³ The responsibilities of black body servants differed from that of a slave who worked in the fields of a plantation, who were solely expected to maintain and cultivate their master’s crops. Black body servants on the plantation tended to work in the “big home,” waiting on their master and mistress, a role that usually required them to cook and clean. These slaves also typically held the trust of their owners, and at times received treatment as if they were family. Black body servants performed this same role in Confederate camps. Although servants on the plantation tended to be women, the servants noted in this study were young males.⁴ The primary actions performed by servants, at least for the Confederates in this study, were cooking and tending to their owner’s clothes.

Many of the Texas Confederates came from wealthy families and had lifestyles that did not require much hard work, and therefore they were not accustomed to performing these menial tasks. This was exactly the case for D.O. and Tom Hill, who had “Uncle Crock” to cook and clean for them.⁵ Throughout Theophilus Perry’s correspondence with his wife, there are many references to servants performing these actions. For Perry’s servant Norflet in particular, the upkeep of his master’s clothes was a role of critical importance. In his correspondence, Perry’s

³ Wiley, *Southern Negroes*, 134.

⁴ It is safe to assume that the unidentified black body servants in this sample are male, considering that e it is unlikely that families and wives would have been happy sending a female slave along with their young men to war. Women were also generally not allowed in the Confederate camps, and while servants were not considered a part of the army, the rule more than likely applied to them as well. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery*, 123.

⁵ “Uncle Crock,” *Galveston Daily News* (Galveston, Tex.), Oct. 30, 1913.

wife Harriet made multiple remarks to her husband about not letting Norflet “abuse” Perry’s clothes and to make sure Norflet took “time to wash them well, and not beat them out.”⁶ Even when Harriet sent Norflet patches to mend his own clothes, she emphasized in her letter that they were also meant for Norflet to mend any of her husband’s ragged clothes.⁷ In Van Zandt’s autobiography, there is also mention of his servant Jack washing the clothes of soldiers in camp. Beyond clothing, black body servants also had to maintain their masters’ grooming while on the march. Captain B.F. Carter’s body servant Henry not only acted as his master’s barber, but acted as the barber for his master’s entire company.⁸

A crucial role that black body servants fulfilled was that of cook. Having enjoyed lives in which mothers, wives, or slaves had done all the cooking, the preparation of meals must have been an adventure all its own for these young Southern men in camp. Perry put it perfectly in a letter to his wife in which he admitted, “I will not cook for myself, if I have to pay fifty dollars a month just for cooking. I was once without a servant for two weeks, during the sickness of Norflet, and I liked to have perished to death.”⁹ Even when Perry loaned his servant Norfelt to cook for his superior officer, Colonel Horace Randal, and his wife, Perry made sure to dine with his friend W.A. Tarleton, whose servant Sam cooked for both of them. Perry noted that Sam was a “fine servant and a good cook.” Though Perry wished to have his servant back, the wife of Colonel Randal, Fannie, claimed Norflet to be “all of their dependence” in order to have cooked meals. Still, Perry remained positive that at least while Norflet cooked for the Randals, having to please the apparently difficult Fannie would make for a good “school” for Norflet’s cooking.¹⁰

⁶ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 95; Chilton, *Unveiling and Dedication of Monument to Hood's Texas Brigade*, 292.

⁹ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 133-134.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

Perhaps the inability of the colonel's wife to be pleased had been the catalyst for her original slave-servants flight in the first place. Some black body servants even cooked for their master's entire company, as with Thomas Baber's body servant Dan, who was noted as the main cook for Company E of the 5th Texas Infantry from late 1864 through the end of the war.¹¹

In some instances black body servants foraged for their masters. W.A. Tarleton's servant Sam caught partridges for his master and even signed a contract with Theophilus Perry, who sometimes purchased the captured birds from Sam for twenty cents apiece. Perry also used Sam in scouring the countryside for peaches when Tarleton was not using him.¹² Perry's need for servants seemed to have been a constant priority. This became especially apparent after his servant Norflet disappeared in March 1863. Luckily for Perry, his distant relative Billy Hargrove, whose regiment served alongside Perry's, had a servant named Guy, whom he lent to Perry while Hargrove was on a sick furlough.¹³ Guy acted as Perry's servant until Hargrove's eventual return from leave, which began a period where Perry did not have a servant. During this period, Perry refused to room with Lieutenants J.S. Wagon and Rene Fitzpatrick because they both had "servants and being without a servant it may be best for me to mess alone or rather apart."¹⁴ Even in the absence of a black body servant, Perry found someone to cook for him. It was not long, however, until Perry received another slave from home named Doctor.¹⁵ Perry remarked that "Doctor is a very handy servant and very valuable to me. He is worth two or more of Norflet. He is a good worker."¹⁶ Doctor performed well in his role as servant to his master until

¹¹ "A Large Gathering of the Old Heroes," *Bryan Morning Eagle* (Bryan, Tex.), June 28, 1902.

¹² Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 106, 108.

¹³ Billy Hargrove seems to have been a very sickly young man, possibly the main reason why his family insisted he take Guy with him. *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁵ Doctor may have been a slave of either Theophilus or his father Levin Perry, both of which, according to the 1860 census, had male slaves that could have been Doctor due to their appropriate ages, which ranged from seventeen through forty-five. *Ibid.*, 293, 10.

¹⁶ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 215.

Perry fell at Pleasant Hill in April of 1864. Another interesting note on Doctor concerns the amount of trust the Perry family had in him to stay by Perry's side. This is evidenced by one of Harriet's letters to Perry, in which she commented to her husband that it was unfortunate that he had sold their horse, Brandy, for it would have been "so convenient for Doc to have a horse to ride about and find eggs and chickens for you."¹⁷ The thought of giving a slave a horse so that he might ride about to forage for his master is amazing, considering the ease with which Doctor could have made his escape to Union lines, but it also demonstrates the trust that some owners had in their property.

K.M. Van Zandt stood in stark contrast to Perry and his need for a slave in camp. Van Zandt did not receive a black body servant until he fell ill in December 1861. His servant Jack had actually been "trained as a body servant and made a splendid nurse."¹⁸ In Van Zandt's autobiography, he did not write much about Jack's specific actions while serving for him, but it can be assumed that in Jack's role as a nurse, he performed in the traditional role of a body servant by doing chores that contributed to his master's wellbeing.

John Shropshire's slave Bob appears to have been an invaluable asset to his master. As with Theophilus and his various black body servants, Shropshire expected Bob to cook for him. Early on it seemed that Bob did not know how to cook well, as Shropshire referred to Bob as the "damndest poorest bread cooker you ever saw."¹⁹ Apparently, Bob continued to "improve" and became a "very efficient servant," and this improvement extended to Bob's cooking skills. One evening in November 1861, Shropshire had "a sumptuous feast upon cornbread & molasses," and he wrote to his wife that "Bob is getting to be quite a famous cook with Charlie Schroeder to superintend him. I will try a new dish directly I think. Bob is making some soup out of a small

¹⁷ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 181.

¹⁸ Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 83.

¹⁹ Shropshire to "Carrie" Aug. 29, 1861.

dog, which I think will be good.”²⁰ On the march with the 5th Texas Cavalry, Shropshire had Bob maintain the four horses his master had brought with him, and Bob also drove Shropshire’s personal wagon loaded with baggage. Before the journey to New Mexico, Bob had asked his master if a Mexican was going to drive his wagon, and Shropshire replied that Bob was a “suitable person to perform this feat.” Bob also made Shropshire’s bed. In one letter to his wife, Shropshire said that “Bob has just laid down my bed... he first had it on a hill with the head down... I have made him change ends.” Shropshire added in the same letter, “I would like this life we are living, if I did not miss home so much.”²¹

Considering all of Bob’s contributions to his master, it is no surprise that Shropshire also commented in a letter that “Bob is a great Negro, a perfect scamp- yet I am attached to him, I can’t tell why. He professes a great interest in me & mine & I believe he does as well as his nature will allow him. If ever he gets back home, he will be the traveled uncle in our family.”²² It is easy to think that Shropshire felt so close to Bob because his black body servant made his life on the march not much different than back on the plantation. One must consider, though, how this affected not only the psyche of Shropshire, the master, but how it affected Bob’s mentality as well, a factor that will be further explored in Chapter Four.

Black body servants often were trusted with caring for their masters belongings in camp while they were absent fighting. An example of this can be seen with Lieutenant Pleasant J. Oaks’s slave Mac. According to Private Bill Davidson, another member of the 5th Texas Cavalry, Mac went “on every battle field, gets him a good safe place and watches the battle. If the day seems about to go against us, Mac goes to camp and prepares Lieutenant Oaks’s mess for flight. If, however, the battle goes with us, Mac begins to search the field for plunder, and [he] usually

²⁰ Shropshire to “Carrie” Sept. 5, 1861; Shropshire to “Carrie” Nov. 29, 1861.

²¹ Shropshire to “Carrie” Nov. 14, 1861.

²² Ibid.

kept Oaks's mess well equipped with horses and everything else likely to be found on the battlefield."²³ Mac's actions demonstrate that some servants went beyond just cooking and cleaning as they maintained their master's possessions while they were away.

Masters entrusted their slaves to find their body if they fell on the field of battle. At the battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, Lieutenant Colonel B.F. Carter, then commander of the 4th Texas Infantry, sustained serious wounds to his legs and face from pieces of shrapnel while leading his men up Little Round Top. The former Austin mayor died from his wounds in Federal captivity days after the battle. Henry Johnson, Carter's black body servant, eventually passed through Federal lines and buried his former master near Gettysburg. In this instance, it is curious to consider why Johnson went through the trouble of passing through the lines to bury his former master. One may consider that Johnson had a deeper human connection to his former master and genuinely wished to determine the fate of his master. More than that, he made certain that his master's remains were properly interred when he did find that he had died.²⁴

Many black body servants cared for their masters when they fell sick or were wounded. K.M. Van Zandt had gone off to war without a servant, but his mother sent her slave Jack to care for her son when he fell ill in December 1861. As noted earlier, Jack had been "trained as a body servant and made a splendid nurse." While imprisoned at Camp Chase in Ohio, Jack nursed Van Zandt while he battled a case of mumps.²⁵ Theophilus Perry's letters allude to similar actions by Billy Hargrove's body servant Guy.²⁶ Due to Hargrove having to go on sick leave, it can be inferred that while still in camp, Hargrove had Guy act as a nurse for him. Black body servants

²³ William Lott Davidson, "Reminiscences of the Old Brigade On the March- In the Front of the Field- As Witnessed by Writers during Wartime," *Overton Sharpshooter* (Overton, Tex.), Oct. 13, 1887.

²⁴ Simpson, *Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 276, Henry Johnson died in Baltimore, Maryland in 1864; see Chilton, *Unveiling and Dedication of Monument to Hood's Texas Brigade*, 292.

²⁵ Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 83; K.M. Van Zandt to "Minerva," Sept. 16, 1862. K.M. Van Zandt Letters. Private Collection of Edmund Pendleton Cranz, Fort Worth, Texas

²⁶ As noted previously, Billy Hargrove seems to have been a very sickly young man, possibly the main reason why his family insisted he take Guy with him. Johansson, *Widows by the Thousands*, 109.

like Levi Miller sometimes had to tend to their master's wounds in camp. J.J. McBride of the 5th Texas Infantry sustained wounds at Second Manassas and the Wilderness, and he perhaps would not have survived without Levi's support. The same could be said of Robert West of the 8th Texas Cavalry, who twice sustained major wounds and returned to Texas with his black body servant Primus, and twice he returned to the field with the assistance of his slave.²⁷

These various examples demonstrate what these Texas Confederates expected from their black body servants. Their slaves cooked for them, cleaned for them, and generally cared for their masters in extreme conditions. What these examples ultimately demonstrate is not only the dependence of Texas Confederates on their slaves, but also the incredible trust that these masters had in their black body servants every day, putting them in positions where the servant could potentially ruin their clothes, poison their food, or even run away. But this apparently happened only rarely, if at all, within the group on which this study focuses.

Body servants performed in their duties faithfully for many reasons, one of which could have been the treatment they received from their masters for their obedience. For most of the war, Confederate soldiers could not rely on getting support from their government in regards to clothing and rations, and so they had to fend for themselves. Masters had to be responsible as well for the wellbeing of their slaves, maintaining their clothing and nutritional needs, not unlike back on the plantation. In some cases, it appears that black body servants foraged for themselves and their master. As mentioned earlier, Sam, W.A. Tarleton's servant, did just that. This is most likely how most servants fed themselves, by foraging the countryside for whatever food that could be found. Jeff Mabry, the servant of Hince P. Mabry, prided himself on being the best "Chicken thief in the 3rd Texas Cavalry." Beyond food, black body servants had to be clothed to

²⁷ "Levi Miller has a Good War Record," *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.) Nov. 11, 1921; Texas Historical Commission marker #: 5185008592 "Primus Kelly."

keep themselves protected from the elements. Theophilus Perry from the beginning of his stint in the 28th Texas Cavalry showed concern for the health of his servant Norflet. At one point, he even considered sending Norflet home because he feared that his servant might get the measles, a disease that ravaged Perry's unit early in the war.²⁸ Perry throughout his correspondence with his wife asked her to send clothes specifically for Norflet. From shoes and size ten socks, to shirts, pants, and drawers, Perry requested clothing for Norflet as often as he could so that Norflet did not go "naked as can be." In one of Harriet's letters to her husband, she even mentioned that Norflet's wife Fanny intended to send her husband two pairs of socks and a comforter.²⁹

In one exceptionally strange case, two black body servants during the failed New Mexico campaign received some medical treatment from the Confederate camp hospitals. According to prescription book records from the military hospital at Dona Ana, Colonel John Baylor had his servant Bower treated for gonorrhea in January 1862. Major Edwin Waller Jr., Baylor's second in command, also had his body servant treated at a military hospital. Medical records from Fort Fillmore noted that Waller's slave, Simon, received treatment for myxiosis in August 1861, treatment for being "impotent" later that same month, and treatment for gonorrhea from September 20 through October 2, 1861.³⁰ What these records indicate is that the black body servants of Confederate soldiers could actually receive extensive medical care if suitable accommodations could be found. One must ponder the question, though, of how these two slaves contracted venereal diseases while under their master's auspices? One cannot imagine that their masters allowed them to have intercourse with any of the local population, or perhaps the servant while out "foraging" found themselves in carnal situations. Nevertheless, if Baylor and Waller

²⁸ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousands*, 6; J. H. Sagers and Charles Kelly Barrow, *Black Southerners in Confederate Armies: A Collection of Historical Accounts* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2007), 112.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5, 35, 102.

³⁰ Martin H. Hall, "Negroes with Confederate Troops in West Texas and New Mexico," *Password* 13 (Spring 1968), 11.

did allow their slaves to go out and procreate, this signaled that they gave their black body servants enough freedom to find a partner, and thus they trusted their slaves to return to camp.

Not all black body servants seemed to enjoy life on the march with their master. In the case of Thomas Green, his slave stole his horse near the Mexican border and made his escape on the night of January 1, 1862. Green attempted to get his servant back, sending out a detachment of men to hunt down the fugitive slave. Green's troops even gained permission from the local *alcalde* (mayor) to venture into Chihuahua to search for the runaway.³¹ The escape of Green's slave demonstrates that while some black body servants were content with following their master, others were not so happy. Colonel Horace Randal of the 28th Texas Cavalry also had his slave Peyton flee for his freedom, but he happened to be lucky enough to procure his subordinate Theophilus Perry's black body servant Norflet before receiving a new slave from Texas.³² Green's and Randal's slaves certainly were not the only ones to attempt escape. By 1862, with Union forces encroaching further into the South, thousands of slaves near the front fled their masters for freedom. Whether they were compelled to do so because of mistreatment or the will for freedom, not all slaves settled for a life of bondage, no matter how close they may have been to their master.³³

The potential for black body servants to be mistreated by their owners is not farfetched when one considers that whippings and beatings were common punishments for slaves who did not perform well in their duties or misbehaved. The darker side of the master-slave relationship reared its ugly head in Confederate camps as well when servants misbehaved. A glimpse of this

³¹ Hall, "Negroes with Confederate Troops," 11.

³² Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 105.

³³ Tens of thousands of slaves fled for Federal lines during the war. As Union forces penetrated into the Deep South, slaves began to flee in droves for freedom. Initially seen as "contraband of war," and in some cases even returned to their masters early in the war, newly freed male slaves by 1863 were given the chance to fight in Union blue against their former masters. Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 249-258.

can be seen in John Shropshire's letters to his wife Carrie, when on two occasions he related the misbehavior and punishment of his servant Bob. On the first occasion, outside of San Antonio during August 1861, Shropshire wrote that Bob "broke my gun off the stock and burnt one of my shirts." This called for Bob to be "brushed" by his master for the first time on campaign to get his "mean" servant back in line.³⁴ On the second occasion two months later, Shropshire wrote to his wife that Bob "stole a six shooter from me and exchanged it for two fine shooters which he gave away, to two other negroes." He added, "I got the sixshooter back & gave him a pretty good whipping."³⁵ Bob in these two instances received punishment little different than any other misbehaved slave back on the plantation. This demonstrates that Confederate masters such as Shropshire, despite their closeness to their servants, were not hesitant to remind their servants about who held authority.

The thought of these Texas Confederates taking care of their black body servants is not entirely outlandish. If anything it seemed in the master's best interest to care for their property. On the one hand, it is entirely impractical to think that these masters neglected the physical well-being of their servants, beyond punitive whippings. For if their slave fell ill or could not work due to malnourishment, how could they care for their master? From another vantage, one could also contend that these Confederate masters took care of their black body servants because they not only had prior relations with the individual, but they also had developed a deeper connection with their servant through their daily interactions. By engaging in these reciprocal relationships with their slaves in a desperate war time environment, both white master and black servant formed bonds that defy all reason in the face of modern conceptions of slavery.

³⁴ Shropshire to "Carrie" Aug. 29, 1861. Sometimes slave owners used the term "brush" to describe the act of whipping a slave.

³⁵ Shropshire to "Carrie" Nov. 27, 1861.

By the war's end, some Texas Confederates most likely regarded black body servants as valued members of their outfits, and certainly slaves could have felt the same way toward their masters and the men, white and black, with whom they served. Black body servants were given immense responsibilities and the freedom to operate on their own while they and their master acted apart. This incredible trust reflects a higher recognition of black body servants' humanity on the part of their masters and other Confederates in camp, further providing incentive on the part of the slaves to remain attached to not only their masters but the cause for which they fought. As one Texan in the 8th Texas Cavalry declared, "Our Reg't has had sixty Negroes with it all through the war and none has run away." The man explained that the blacks "had been taught to despise Yankees and do so. You can't make one of our black boys madder by calling him a 'fool abolitionist.'"³⁶

This statement is particularly curious, for it raises an interesting point. Slaves were taught to hate Federal troops by their masters, and most likely legitimately feared what might happen to them if they fell into their hands. Does this indicate that they felt safer within the confines of an independent Southern Confederacy? Or, does it mean that black body servants felt a sense of affinity for the soldiers with whom they had just spent as many as four long arduous years of war? The answer to these questions can be found through the analysis of specific interactions between Texas Confederates and their black body servants during and after the war, whereupon it can be determined whether these slaves felt a sense of duty to the Confederacy or the men who served within its armies.

³⁶ Larry J. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in a Confederate Army* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 14.

CHAPTER 4

PECULIAR PAIRINGS: MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONSHIPS AND POSTWAR “BLACK CONFEDERATES”

At the Terry’s Texas Rangers Reunion in October 1913, no other attendee stood out quite like Crockett Hill. Hill had never missed a reunion of the Rangers, always being welcomed by the other veterans as a member of their unit. Yet Hill’s presence still attracted furtive looks of curiosity. Like the men around him, he talked of his time in the war, recalling fondly his time with fellow Confederates D.O. and Tom Hill, who were actually the sons of Crockett Hill’s antebellum owner. Having lived through the war together as masters and slave, the three men had shared in each other’s hardships and welcomed each other’s company. Yet this relationship remained unusual. During the reunion, Crockett Hill attended every meeting, sitting quiet yet attentive, and even attended the elegant banquet thrown by the Daughters of the Confederacy on the second day of the reunion. Seated at a table with many other Confederate veterans, Hill was affectionately referred to as “Uncle Crock.” When all the veterans gathered for the unit portrait, He stood among them, sticking out more than anyone else in the group when the camera flashed. Crockett Hill was a black man in a sea of white veterans, his presence an irony that challenges human reasoning down to the core.¹

Crockett Hill had been a body servant to D.O. and Tom Hill of the 8th Texas Cavalry during the war. Brought to cook and clean, Uncle Crock, while not a combatant, experienced every step of the war with his masters, who fought to preserve his place in eternal bondage. This fact alone raises the question: why did Crockett Hill, as a free man, attend Confederate veteran reunions with those that once held him as chattel? Another question is: why did these former

¹ “Uncle Crock,” *Galveston Daily News* (Galveston, Tex.), Oct. 30, 1913; To view the Terry’s Texas Rangers 1913 reunion photo containing Crockett Hill, go to <http://civilwartalk.com/threads/terry%E2%80%99s-texas-ranger-reunion-photo.96578/>. Accessed June 15, 2016.

Confederates allow a man whom they must have believed was inferior to sit among them and even appear in their unit photograph? How could a former slave possibly feel connected to these former Confederates, and what events shaped Crockett Hill's relationship to the boys in gray? The answers to these questions are incredibly complex, but are nonetheless necessary to understanding the logic-bending relationships found within the institution of slavery.

A number of examples will demonstrate the complex bonds that some Texas Confederates had with their black body servants. These contemporary and post war accounts bring to the surface vexing questions concerning the institution of slavery and the relationship between master and slave. Within these examples trust, loyalty, and genuine concern for another human's wellbeing are put on display. This chapter also touches on "Lost Cause" mythology and the contribution of "black Confederates" to this movement. In particular, for many whites, the former slaves that paid homage to the antebellum South and the Confederacy represented a dying breed that truly represented the best of the black race compared to the younger generation of Africa-Americans who, to contemporary Southerners, were attempting to ruin Southern culture and society.² Whether from paternalistic or fraternal sentiments, former masters and their comrades assisted former black body servants and included them in their social organizations during a time when racial prejudice had reached even greater heights than during the antebellum period. Former slaves took advantage of this attention, and shared in the genuine affection and social advancement that came with celebrating Dixie.

² For works on the Lost Cause, see: Thomas L. Connolly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and his Image in American Society* (New York: Kampf, 1977); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 2000); and Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

Some masters and their black body servants either had firm connections before the Civil War or forged strong wartime bonds that continued after the war ended. And if some kind of amiable relationship did not exist between master and slave in either of these instances, then it must still be assumed that a certain level of trust existed between the two. Day in and day out, black body servants cared for their Confederate masters by cooking, cleaning, and performing various other menial tasks for their master. When pondering the room for error that lay in these various chores performed by body servants, such as poisoning their owner's food, ruining his clothes, or running away to Union lines, it is amazing that masters put so much trust in their slaves' loyalty. This feeling of trust in their slaves possibly resonated for many Confederates from their beliefs in utter black obedience to their white masters.³ Along with the Confederate masters' antebellum belief in complete slave fidelity, this trust potentially stemmed from semi-congenial relations that developed between master and body servant during the war. An example of one master's trust in his slave's loyalty can be seen in Theophilus Perry's correspondence. While Norflet acted as his body servant, Perry trusted his clothes, his food, and his wellbeing to Norflet, confessing that the slave was "of inestimable solace to me, and I do not know how I could get on without him."⁴

One may wonder then what that trust in Norflet meant when he disappeared from Perry's camp at White Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, in March 1863. In a letter addressed to his wife on March 8, 1863, Perry remarked regarding Norflet's disappearance that "I have indulged in the belief that he will endeavor to get back home." Perry continued by commenting that he "had the suspicion of his (Norflet) trying to get to the Federals. I have been led to this suspicion on the account of two of the Teamsters that drove our Staff Wagon (disappearing)... some think it

³ Woodward, *Marching Masters*, 105.

⁴ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 19.

likely that they seduced him to go with them. I cannot think so yet.”⁵ Perry eventually decided one month later that Norflet had “gone to the Federals undoubtedly carried off by Deserters.” However, an incredible turn of events in Norflet’s disappearance arose in December 1863.⁶

Astoundingly enough, Norflet made his way back home from Arkansas to Texas. He was retrieved by Theophilus Perry’s father, Levin Perry, in Bonham, Texas, where Norflet had been working for General Henry E. McCulloch. Norflet explained that he had been kidnapped by Jay Hawkers, or Union guerrillas, while buying eggs and butter for Colonel Randal's wife, and he was then taken by Union regular forces and drilled to fight in the Federal army. Told he was to join in the fighting around Helena, Arkansas, Norflet fled Federal captivity. He was then picked up by a man named Wheat, who promised to take Norflet home. Not trusting the man, Norfleet ran away from Wheat, and ultimately was found by Confederates in North Texas. According to Harriet Perry, after telling this story, Norflet had said that “he was very glad to be home and that no one had tried harder than he did” to make it back.⁷ Although it is easy to think that Norflet said that he was glad to be home and really had intended to get back to Texas so as to avoid punishment, it must be considered that Norflet had in fact returned to the only world he had ever known, a world that included his loving wife Fanny. For Theophilus Perry, his trust in Norfelt may have wavered with his disappearance while serving Colonel Randal, but Perry ultimately did not believe his servant had left by choice, but had been coerced by deserters. Had Norflet truly wished to run away to Union lines, he would have been abandoning everything he had ever known, including his wife, who he would probably never see again.

⁵ Johansson, *Widows by the Thousand*, 109.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *Widows by the Thousand*, 185.

The strength of Norflet and Fanny's love can be seen in this letter dated December 28, 1862. Though probably written for her by someone else due to the practiced handwriting on the letter, Fanny's longing for Norflet is evident:

My Dear Husband,

I would be mighty glad to see you and I wish you would write back here and let me know how you are getting on. I am doing tolerable well and have enjoyed very good health since you left. I haven't forgot you nor I never will forget you as long as the world stands, even if you forget me. My love is just as great as it was the first night I married you, and I hope it will be so with you. My heart and love is pinned to your breast, and I hope yours is to mine. If I never see you again, I hope to meet you in Heaven. There is no time night or day but what I am studying about you. I haven't had a letter from you in some time. I am very anxious to hear from you. I heard once that you were sick but I heard afterwards that you had got well. I hope your health will be good hereafter. Master gave us three days Christmas. I wish because you were not here. I went up to Miss Ock's to a candy stew last Friday night, I wish you could have been here to have gone with me. I know I would have enjoyed myself so much better. Mother, Father, Grandmama, Brothers & Sisters say Howdy and they hope you will do well. Be sure to answer this soon for I am always glad to hear from you. I hope it will not be long before you can come home.

Your Loving Wife,

Fanny⁸

This letter most likely never reached Norflet, for he was missing by March 1863 and the letter probably did not arrive until after the fact. However, this letter effectively demonstrates what Norflet had back at Levin Perry's plantation in Harrison County, an affectionate wife he surely wanted to be reunited with, a loving solace he would not give up even for freedom.

Another example concerns John Shropshire and his black body servant Bob during the Battle of Val Verde in New Mexico on February 16, 1862. At this costly Confederate victory, Shropshire for a time was accompanied by his servant Bob amid the chaos of battle. Private Bill

⁸ The letter was most likely written by Louisa Perry, a seventeen-year-old living on Levin Perry's plantation. The handwriting on Fannie's letter to Norflet is identical to the handwriting on other letters written by Louisa. Randolph B. Campbell and Donald K. Pickens, "My Dear Husband: A Texas Slave's Love Letter," *The Journal of Negro History* 65 (Autumn 1980), 361-364.

Davidson stood near Shropshire and Bob for part of the battle, and related what he saw of the two:

“When we went into the battle that morning, Shropshire’s Negro boy, Bob, went with us as he said, to take care of “Mass John.” When we were first dismounted the enemy was playing upon us with cannon balls, Bob did not seem to mind these at all but walked around joking with the boys, but already they commenced shelling us. The first shell went beyond us and exploded among some horses. Bob’s eyes got a foot wide, than another exploded about sixty yards in front of us... Bob put out and as far as we could see him he was making good time, the boys cheering him as he went.”⁹

This episode may seem like a group of Confederates jeering at a “cowardly” slave, but then again this instance is more telling of Shropshire and Bob’s relationship. Shropshire had no real reason to have his body servant Bob with him up at the front. As Davidson recalled, though, Bob made it clear that he intended to remain at the front to watch over his master, in spite of receiving “brushings” from Shropshire earlier. Davidson later recalled that Bob even fought alongside Shropshire during the first day of the battle of Glorieta a month later, where the slave did some “real fighting.” Interestingly enough, Davidson recounted that when the Federals overran the Confederate camp on the second day at Glorieta, Bob and Lieutenant Pleasant J. Oaks’s black body servant Mac refused to go with the other servants into Federal captivity.¹⁰ This instance provides a glimpse into the inexplicable loyalty that some slaves had for their masters. Whether Bob actually fought with Shropshire cannot be fully determined, but it can be said that Bob, despite his status as a slave, displayed a level of genuine care for a man that had beat him for burning a shirt. This example is a perfect illustration of the complex relations found in slavery, as practical decision making was set aside and replaced by a simple urge to protect another human being.

⁹ Davidson, “Reminiscences of the Old Brigade,” *Overton Sharpshooter* (Overton, Tex.), Oct. 13, 1887.

¹⁰ John Shropshire died leading his men at the battle of Glorieta. He was shot in the head. Davidson, “Reminiscences of the Old Brigade,” *Overton Sharpshooter* (Overton, Tex.), Oct. 13, 1887; Letter of James W. Carson to “Laura Hahn,” Sept. 11, 1921.

The suicide of Captain Willis Lang after the battle of Val Verde also demonstrated the trust and fidelity of black body servants. At Val Verde, Lang had led a company of forty lancers in a desperate charge against a line of Federals, who easily repulsed the Confederates. In the hail of bullets, Lang received a number of severe wounds. Following the Confederate victory, Lang, shamed and in excruciating pain from his wounds, asked his slave to hand him his revolver. In this incredibly personal moment, Lang's black body servant watched his master end his own life on March 2, 1862. When analyzing this moment, one might imagine Lang's slave was happy to hand his master a gun to kill himself. Then again, based on other relationships that have been discussed, Lang's servant perhaps acted in his master's best interest, obeyed Lang's dying wish, and took some comfort in his master's relief when he ended his own suffering.¹¹

Another example of the confounding nature of the master-servant relationship is that of K.M. Van Zandt and his black body servant Jack. In this case, Van Zandt trusted his slave to nurse him back to health, and Jack fulfilled this role well from his master's viewpoint. What happened in February 1862 at Fort Donelson marked a crossroads for this master and his body servant after Confederate forces surrendered there. According to Van Zandt, after the capture of his regiment at Fort Donelson, he and his men were transferred to Camp Douglas, a prison camp located outside Chicago. At that point Van Zandt told Jack that he must return home, for Jack could no longer be of service to him while a prisoner. Disregarding his master's instructions, Jack replied that "my missus told me to come up here to take care of you and I is going to do it."¹² Whether Jack truly declared this cannot be determined. Nevertheless, he accompanied Van Zandt and eight other officers and their black body servants to another prison at Camp Chase in Ohio.

¹¹ Donald S. Frazier, *Blood and Treasure: Confederate Empire in the Southwest* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 184; Thomas W. Cutrer, "LANG, WILLIS L.," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fla30>), accessed October 31, 2015.

¹² Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 91.

There, Van Zandt fell ill and again Jack acted as his nurse. Eventually, prison camp authorities ordered Jack to help nurse the wounded in the camp hospital. Even then, according to Van Zandt, Jack protested, apparently even going as far as having a conversation with the governor of Illinois, who was inspecting Camp Chase at the time, about why he could not remain with his master.¹³ Despite Jack's apparent steadfast resolve in staying by his master's side, Van Zandt and the rest of the officers from his regiment transferred to another camp, with Jack being forced to stay behind. With this anecdote of his life, Van Zandt revealed that he had a close relationship with his black body servant Jack, who stuck with his master despite the opportunity to flee after the fall of Fort Donelson.

Of course, it can be speculated that Jack may have only stayed because he had nowhere else to go. What is most curious about this relationship between Van Zandt and Jack is that twenty-five years after the end of the war, Jack found Van Zandt living in Fort Worth, Texas, and moved his family from Cleveland to live with the Van Zandt family.¹⁴ As strange as this story may seem, it is possible that perhaps in Van Zandt's and Jack's relationship as master and slave, a deeper emotional connection was fostered between the two during the trying times they faced. For if Jack did not have some kind of emotional connection with his former master, why did he stay by his side after his master's capture, and then years later search for him and move his family down to Fort Worth to live with the Van Zandts?

During the post-Civil War years, the "Lost Cause" phenomenon exploded across Texas and the rest of the South, and it lasted through the beginning of the twentieth century. This movement included both the veneration of the antebellum South and the glorification of the

¹³ Because it is Van Zandt relating the story of Jack and the Illinois governor, and not Jack himself, the story seems apocryphal. Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, 92-93.

¹⁴ Alice Williams, K.M. Van Zandt's daughter, in an interview from June 1965, reminisced about the day that Jack arrived in Fort Worth. Interview, Mrs. Alice Williams to Sandra Myres, June 19, 1965. Van Zandt, *Force Without Fanfare*, Footnote 21, 136.

Confederacy. The popular state rights defense for why the South seceded in 1861 flourished in this period as Southerners tried mightily to reject the idea that their whole war had been about keeping the institution of slavery alive. Racism flourished during this period like no other time in Southern history, and many believed that the newly freed slaves had actually ruined Southern society.

John W. Stevens, a veteran of Hood's Texas Brigade, perfectly reflected these complex and contradictory racist ideologies in a section of his book, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, entitled "The Negro Problem." Stevens claimed he had "always loved the negro" and that he would "never cease to love him." He added, "And I am sure this kindly feeling between the outgoing generation of slave-owners and of slaves is mutual." Stevens wrote that just as slaves had always come to their masters for their wants and needs, the current generation of freedmen acted just the same. However, Stevens emphasized that the current generation took advantage of the kindness of whites and with the power of the vote endeavored to destroy the political stability of the South.¹⁵ The current generation of blacks, Stevens argued, constantly had illegitimate children, transferred venereal diseases amongst one another, and performed criminal activities as their only profession. All such acts he firmly believed never happened while blacks were enslaved. Stevens believed these issues could all be alleviated if blacks learned their place in society as inferiors to "God's Kings," white men. And for those "brothers in black" that heeded this belief, they needed to spread the word to their "people" to "tender them good service" for future generations.¹⁶

Considering Stevens's beliefs, it should be no surprise that the glorification of loyal slaves that had "served," and cherished the role they played in the Confederate army, would be

¹⁵ John W. Stevens, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Hillsboro, TX: Hillsboro Mirror Print, 1902), 205.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 207-212.

the paragon examples of the proper “Negro.” Many Texas newspapers reported on and showed deference to “Confederate Negroes.” These “black Confederates” were noted as upstanding men, attendees of Confederate veteran camps, worthy of veteran pensions, and treated with a level of respect that is hard to understand considering the status of many African-Americans of the period. One prominent “black Confederate” that appeared in Texas newspapers was “Uncle Dick” Perkins of Brownwood, Texas.

As related by a news writer in *The Canoe Courier*, Uncle Dick prided himself on having been the only enlisted ex-slave in Texas, having served in the 17th Texas Infantry of General John G. Walker’s “Greyhound” Division. Dick claimed he sustained wounds at the Battle of Mansfield in 1864 and received his freedom from his master after the engagement. The paper noted that Perkins had been awarded the Cross of Honor by the United Daughters of the Confederacy for his steadfast devotion to the Confederacy. In July 1905, Perkins attended a massive Confederate veteran reunion in Mills County, Texas, where he gave a speech on his time in the Confederacy. Despite the shocked looks of some of the crowd during Perkins’s talk, he had been invited there by a number of former Confederates who belonged to the local camp of the United Confederate Veterans.¹⁷ *The Canoe Courier* stated that Perkins upheld himself as a “polite old negro” and a member of a “fast dying race of old time darkies whom we all respect, and who will not want for anything as long as one of them remains among us.”¹⁸ As his health failed him throughout the 1910s, newspapers continued to report on the support Perkins received from his friends, much of it from his Confederate “boys,” as he called them.¹⁹

¹⁷ Flora G. Bowles, *A No Man’s Land Becomes a County: A History of Mills County, Texas* (Austin, Tex: The Steck Company, 1958), 120.

¹⁸ “Negro Confederate Soldier,” *The Conroe Courier* (Conroe, Tex.), Sept. 17, 1908.

¹⁹ “Friends Remember Uncle Dick Perkins: ‘Stormed’ Him with Bountiful Supply of Good Things to Eat Last Night,” *The Daily Bulletin* (Brownwood, Tex.), Apr. 28, 1916.

“Uncle Nick” Blaine is another curious example of a venerated black Texas “Confederate.” Born in Decatur, Alabama, on April 10, 1841, the same year as his future Confederate master George Blaine, Nick moved with the rest of the Blaine family to Freestone County, Texas, by 1860.²⁰ From the outbreak of the war in 1861, Nick served as the body servant of the twenty-year-old George Blaine, an adjutant in the 7th Texas Infantry. During the disastrous Confederate charge at Franklin, Tennessee, in November 1864, George was killed, and his body was later found by Nick. Following orders his master had given to him prior to the battle, Nick took his master’s body to the home of nearby Blaine relatives in Spring Hill, Tennessee, where he buried his master. Here, three young girls watched Nick dig a grave for his fallen master. One of the girls noted that as Nick lowered George into the ground, he “shook with sobs and the tears rained down his face.”²¹ After burying his deceased master, Nick took George’s horse, watch, and the rest of his possessions back to his master’s homestead in Freestone County. George’s sister, Mary, confirmed the return of Nick in a letter, before passing away herself not long after the end of the war.²²

Nick Blaine spent the rest of his life in Freestone County. According to the 1880 census, he had taken up the occupation of a farmer, had married a young woman by the name of Alice, and had three children. What is most curious is that Nick named his first child George.²³ Along with becoming a farmer, Nick Blaine helped to found the W.L. Moody Camp of the United Confederate Veterans in Fairfield, Texas, and he travelled as a delegate to two conferences of the

²⁰ “Noted Character has Passed Away,” *The State Herald* (Mexico, Tex.), Feb. 22, 1906, Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Freestone County, Schedule 1 and 2.

²¹ David R. Longsdon, *Eyewitness Accounts of the Battle of Franklin* (Nashville, Tenn.: Kettle Mills Press, 1991), 68.

²² “George Blaine’s Grave,” *Confederate Veteran Magazine* 12 (Jan. 7, 1904), 30. The article does not mention George Blaine’s sister’s name, but according to 1860 census data, he had a twenty-two year old sister named Anna, who is most likely the one referenced in this article. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Texas, Freestone County, Schedule 1.

²³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth of the United States, 1880, Texas, Fairfield, Freestone County, Schedules 1 and 2 (Record Group 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.).

United Confederate Veterans Association. According to an article that appeared in the *Dallas News* in 1904, Blaine received a certificate from the Moody Camp to act as a delegate at the national reunion of the United Confederate Veterans at Nashville that year. Blaine even received a letter from the county judge at Fairfield, who described him as a “good citizen, good Confederate, and a good Democrat.” While he attended the reunion, Blaine was initially refused a badge, but he later received one from the commander of the Texas Division, General K.M. Van Zandt. Blaine later reportedly received a Confederate uniform from Van Zandt for Christmas, as well as a number of other gifts from former Confederates.²⁴

The *Houston Daily Post* later commented that Uncle Nick had to be one of the most noted black Confederate veterans around and that there existed “no braver soldier, or more faithful nurse [who] ever espoused the cause of the Confederacy or ministered to the wants of the wounded and dying.” The end of the article mentioned that old Uncle Nick had been hurt in a wagon accident and called for assistance in helping the elderly Blaine.²⁵ As reported in the *State Herald* of Mexia, Texas, Reverend Nick Blaine died on January 16, 1906, of consumption at the age of sixty-five. The paper noted that most of his eulogies had been done by ex-Confederates, each of whom told tales about Uncle Nick’s service during the Civil War and his dedication to the Confederacy. The paper ended by noting that Nick Blaine “would not only be missed by his own race but his white friends as well.”²⁶

Daniel Winston also avidly attended Confederate veteran reunions. After having served as a body servant for his former master, Thomas Baber, and the cook of Company E of the 5th Texas Infantry, Winston moved back to Washington County, Texas, where he farmed and raised

²⁴ *Dallas News*, Jan. 1904, cited from Sager and Barrow, *Black Southerners*, 152.

²⁵ “Nick Blaine Badly Hurt: Aged Negro is a Member of a Confederate Camp,” *Houston Daily Post* (Houston, Tex.), Dec. 25, 1902.

²⁶ “Noted Character has Passed Away,” *The State Herald* (Mexia, Tex.), Feb. 22, 1906.

a large family of seven children with his wife Marcelline. One of Winston's five sons shared the namesake of his former master, Thomas. Winston became an active member of the Hood's Texas Brigade Association, an organization established in 1872 for veterans to gather and reminisce. At the Association's 1902 meeting in Bryan, Texas, Winston was "recognized and vouched for by numbers of his company," and he was presented with a reunion badge. Winston at this meeting received a tribute before the Association from the aforementioned John W. Stevens. At the 1904 Association meeting in Ennis, Texas, Winston appeared in the meeting minutes as the only "Negro in the association." According to Winston's obituary in an issue of the *Brenham Evening Press*, he attended meetings as long as his aging body allowed him. Winston died on June 25, 1909 at his home near Independence, Texas, at the age of eighty. The paper noted that he had been treated with "the utmost respect" by members of the Hood's Texas Brigade Association. In attendance at Winston's funeral were a number of Confederate veterans from Brenham, along with other local white citizens.²⁷

In spite of the 1904 notation, Daniel Winston was not the only former black body servant to attend Hood's Texas Brigade Association reunions. In 1882, a former black body servant and cook for Company B of the 4th Texas Infantry, John Price attended the Association reunion in San Antonio. According to veteran Frank B. Chilton, Price during the war had been "faithful to the end; although he had many opportunities to go to his so-called friends, the Federals." Unlike

²⁷ Census Bureau, Tenth Census, 1880, Texas, Precinct One, Washington County, Schedule 1; Harold B. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade in Reunion and Memory* (Hillsboro, Tex.: Hill Jr. College Press, 1974), 105; "A Large Gathering of the Old Heroes," *Bryan Morning Eagle* (Bryan, Tex.), June 28, 1902; "Aged Negro Dead," *Brenham Evening Press* (Brenham, Tex.), June 26, 1909; "Aged Brenham Negro Dies," *Daily Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 3, 1909.

Winston, though, Price did not have an opportunity to attend later reunions. He was confined as an inmate at a poor farm in Travis County on February 13, 1900, where he later died.²⁸

It is evident that black body servants like Nick Blaine and Daniel Winston in certain circles held the title of loyal “Confederates.” They attended meetings, received support from ex-Confederates, and were remembered upon their deaths. As a body servant to George Blaine, a man born in the same year and state as him, Nick Blaine most probably had previous bonds of fidelity to his master, bonds later strengthened in the fires of war. This could also be speculated about Daniel Winston and Thomas Baber, who were born one year apart and in the state of Tennessee. Despite his master’s death, Nick Blaine held onto those bonds and memories by naming his first child after his former master, associating with other ex-Confederates, and promoting his loyalty to the failed nation for which his former master had died. Winston stayed with his master’s outfit even after Baber fell wounded in 1864, feeding other Confederates until the surrender and finally returning to Washington County, where Baber resided after the war. Whether or not Nick Blaine and Daniel Winston really embraced the cause of the Confederacy cannot be determined, but it is clear that they evidenced a strong connection to the men who fought for it, for there is no other explanation why they continued to associate themselves with the veterans who served the failed slaveholding nation even after the Civil War ended and they became free.

After the war, some Texas Confederates tried to get their former black body servants pensions as veterans of the Confederate army. The process of attaining a pension for former body servants, however, required the support of white ex-Confederates. The first step that any aspiring applicant had to take involved submitting an application to the state government. This document

²⁸ *Brenham Daily Banner*, (Brenham, Tex.), July 1, 1882; Chilton, *Unveiling and Dedication of Monument to Hood's Texas Brigade*, 292; Austin Genealogical Society, *Travis County Poor Farm Ledger 1900*, <http://www.austintxgensoc.org/records/travis-county-poor-farm-ledger/>. Accessed May 20, 2016.

provided one's health and monetary status, background information, service to the Confederacy, and two affidavits from ex-Confederates to vouch for one's service. The pension application also required a certificate from the local assessor of state and county taxes to indicate the value of the property owned by the applicant. The application then underwent a perfunctory review by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, who verified the applicant's military service with the War Department in Washington, D.C. (Most of the time records of Confederate service were dealt with leniently in terms of proof.) Once accepted, an applicant could expect to receive \$8.00 a month for himself and his family. This process tended to be heavily stacked against any "black Confederates" wanting a pension, for no African-Americans could take any part in the pension process. The system could be lax, however, and indeed some former Texas body servants who were black did receive pensions in Texas and other former Confederate states.²⁹

Billy Hargrove helped his former servant Guy receive a pension from the state of Texas as a Confederate veteran. After the fall of the Confederacy in 1865, Guy returned to Harrison County, adopted the last name Shaw (for unknown reasons) and lived out the rest of his days as a tenant farmer. When Guy passed away, he died in a rent house belonging to Mildred Fox, a friend of Billy Hargrove, leading to the idea that perhaps Guy and Hargrove had remained in contact during the post-Civil War era. What is known about Hargrove and Guy's post-war interactions is that Hargrove helped Guy receive a monthly pension of \$8.22 in 1922 from the state of Texas for his service in the Confederate army.³⁰ Even more surprising is that on his pension application, Guy was not mentioned as being a black man in either of the document's two affidavits, one of which was provided by Hargrove.³¹ In an ultimate twist of irony, Guy even

²⁹ \$8.00 in 1899 amounts to about \$229.76 in 2015. Campbell, "Texas Confederate Veteran Pensions," 89-90.

³⁰ Ibid., 90-91.

³¹ Ibid.

had his burial paid for by the state of Texas and received a Confederate Cross on his tombstone, acknowledging him as a private in the 14th Texas Infantry.³² Most likely Texas authorities did not know that Guy had been a black slave-servant, so they provided him with the title of private.

Theophilus Perry's letters show that Guy did not serve in the ranks while Guy served him, an occurrence Perry surely would have noted. Now the question must be asked, why did Hargrove vouch for his body servant if he did not have some kind of personal connection to Guy? Had Guy only been a troublesome slave who did not care for his master, Hargrove would not have supported Guy in the process of getting a pension. Without Hargrove's support, Guy could not have received that pension. Based upon this evidence, it is clear that while Hargrove was certainly in a position of superiority over Guy during the war, a meaningful relationship must have existed between the two during and long after slavery ended.

A similar situation occurred between a former member of the 5th Texas Infantry and his onetime black body servant, Levi Miller. Miller, like Guy Shaw, applied for a pension from a former Confederate state (Virginia) and required the assistance of ex-Confederates to receive a Confederate veteran pension. He had served not one but two masters in Company C of the 5th Texas Infantry, Captains J.J. McBride and J.E. Anderson of Leon County, Texas (hence the nickname Leon Hunters for Company C). Levi, though, did not journey with these Confederates from Texas in 1861, nor did either of these two men own him. Like so many Texas soldiers who were mustered and sent off during the summer of 1861, McBride and Anderson went to war with

³² Guy Shaw's wife Dora continued to receive Guy's Confederate pension after his death in 1931. Campbell, "Texas Confederate Veteran Pensions," 91-92.

only what they deemed necessary as they loaded onto steamers and trains during the long trip all the way from their rendezvous points in Louisiana to Virginia.³³

Upon arriving in Richmond, Virginia, in September 1861, McBride, a native Virginian, sent his brother in Rockbridge County, Virginia, a letter which requested that he bring a slave to Richmond to serve as McBride and Anderson's body servant. Levi Miller arrived in Richmond with McBride's brother, and Levi served both J.J. McBride and J. E. Anderson for the entirety of the war.³⁴ As noted earlier, Levi acted as a nurse for McBride when he sustained wounds at Second Manassas in August 1862 and acted in the general role of a body servant throughout the campaigns of 1861-1865 with the Fifth Texas Infantry. Miller at one point encountered a number of his relatives who had escaped from Virginia while General Robert E. Lee's army campaigned in Pennsylvania during the summer of 1863. They implored him to flee for freedom, and yet he remained with his masters.³⁵

During the Wilderness Campaign in the spring of 1864, Captain McBride sustained bullet wounds through both of his legs and remained incapacitated for the rest of the war.³⁶ While McBride convalesced far from the front, Miller exclusively served J.E. Anderson. Around the time of McBride's departure, according to a letter that Anderson later wrote, Levi was voted into Company C of the Fifth Texas for his service. Levi reportedly fought alongside Anderson at Spotsylvania Court House, fighting in the trenches with rifle and bayonet against the Federals.

³³ "Levi Miller has a Good War Record," *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.) Nov. 11, 1921; Simpson, *Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 25, 45-47; Matthew K. Hamilton, "FIFTH TEXAS INFANTRY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qkf11>), accessed February 05, 2016.

³⁴ According to the 1860 census, there was a Robert McBride of Rockbridge County who could be the brother referred to in Anderson's letter. Robert is listed as a farmer and held \$45, 162 in total wealth. Robert McBride also owned seven slaves, one of which was a 23 year old male. Levi Miller was born in 1836 (according to his tombstone) so would have been 24 by 1860. Therefore, one can speculate that the 23 year slave in the census is Levi Miller. Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Virginia, Rockbridge County, Schedules 1 and 2.

³⁵ "Levi Miller has a Good War Record," *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.) Nov. 11, 1921.

³⁶ Despite being told he required amputation or he would die, McBride kept his shattered legs and convalesced for the remainder of the war before returning to Texas. He luckily regained the ability to walk, albeit he was permanently three inches shorter and hobbled about. Simpson, *Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 404; "Levi Miller has a Good War Record," *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.), Nov. 11, 1921.

Levi surrendered with the remaining nine members of Company C at Appomattox in April 1865. He remained in Frederick County, Virginia, for the rest of his life, working as a water dipper at a mineral spring and later acquiring some land to become a farmer. Levi eventually applied for a Confederate pension from the state of Virginia, and acquired assistance in this process from his former “commanding officer,” Captain J.E. Anderson. From Texas, Anderson wrote a letter, dated June 6, 1907, which detailed the service of Levi Miller throughout the four years of the war and at the end stated, “No better servant was in General Lee’s army. If anyone was sick in camp he was always ready to wait on them... Thousands of faithful and generous acts I could write to you if space and time would permit.” Miller received his pension from the state of Virginia and passed away on February 25, 1921, his coffin draped with the Stars and Bars and his gravestone marked “C.S.A.”³⁷

Levi Miller’s case demonstrates a number of interesting points concerning the master slave relationship, and how “black Confederates” were perceived at the turn of the twentieth century. Miller does not appear in any of Company C’s muster rolls throughout the war, making it hard to determine if he actually had been voted into the company’s ranks.³⁸ If Levi did receive this distinction, it was likely an “honorary” position. The veracity of Miller’s war record as told by Anderson is hard to judge beyond his description of the actions that Levi performed, which were those that were normally done by a body servant. Miller’s participation in combat, like most of the described occurrences of black body servants taking up arms for the South, seems apocryphal without further evidence, but nonetheless his actions had a definite impact on how

³⁷ Ervin L. Jordan Jr., *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 196-197; The *Winchester Evening Star* included J.E. Anderson’s letter to the Chairman of the Confederate Pension board in Frederick County, B.C. Shull, and related his experience with Levi in hopes of assisting the elderly Miller in getting a pension; see “Levi Miller has a Good War Record,” *Winchester Evening Star* (Winchester, Va.) Nov. 11, 1921; Richard G. Williams’s *Lexington, Virginia in the Civil War* contains a photo of Levi Miller’s grave, showing very clearly the “C.S.A.” on his marker. Richard G. Williams Jr., *Lexington, Virginia in the Civil War* (Charleston and London: The History Press, 2013), 125.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

Anderson viewed and treated the former slave after the war. This impact is especially apparent when considering that despite distance, time, and no prior experiences with the slave before the war, J.E. Anderson wrote Miller a glowing letter to help the aged man receive a pension long after the conflict had ended. This reflects the strength of the bond that Anderson and Miller had developed over the course of four years of constant hardships.

The success that Guy Shaw and Levi Miller had in attaining Confederate veteran pensions was not shared by all black former body servants. Bob Shropshire for example, despite the assistance of ex-Confederates, did not receive a pension. His struggles to receive a pension were discussed in a Louisiana newspaper, the *New Orleans Picayune*, which contained an article entitled “Colored Confederate Who Has Applied To Legislature For Pension And Whom Sons and Veterans Are Aiding Pending The Issue.” The article stated that a seventy-three-year-old Robert (Bob) Shropshire, a veteran of Company A, 5th Texas Cavalry, had struggled to receive a Confederate pension from the Louisiana legislature. The article detailed Bob’s exploits with the 5th Texas Cavalry, initially with his former master John Shropshire, and later as Captain Ben Shropshire’s body servant after his brother John’s death at the Battle of Glorietta. Bob served Ben Shropshire throughout the remainder of the war, receiving a head wound from shell shrapnel at Holly Springs, Mississippi.³⁹

The article stated that Bob had a number of supporters who vouched for his loyalty to the Confederacy. The paper noted that “a well-known gentleman” of New Orleans wrote a letter to the Louisiana legislators that implored them to grant a pension to Bob. The author of the letter stated that from what he saw, Bob “was true and faithful and bears the marks of a wound which nearly rendered fatally, obtained at Holly Springs, Mississippi.” The author concluded by stating

³⁹ “Colored Confederate Who Has Applied To Legislature For Pension And Whom Sons and Veterans Are Aiding Pending The Issue,” *New Orleans Picayune*, (New Orleans, La.) November 18, 1906.

that the fine state of Louisiana could easily offer a pension to “a poor old negro in his old age.”⁴⁰

The article also included a more personal letter from a “white comrade in Texas” that addressed the former servant as “Dear Bob and comrade.” The letter read as follows:

“You did not say if you took part in the reunion at New Orleans. I wanted to come just to see you, but could not leave home. I wrote you about Charley Shropshire’s death, also Mr. Dick died sometime back. Only a few of our old boys are living. Bob, I will enclose you a one dollar bill and want you to acknowledge receipt of it and tell me if you had a good time at the reunion. Bob, I will never forget you and our trip home in 1862 through the mountains of New Mexico, when you had the smallpox and no one would go near you in the wagon but myself. And, afterwards, when you had gotten well and I had the measles, you stayed by me as I had you. On our trip alone from San Antonio you stuck to me when I was so sick. And this trip, Bob, in heart, found one white man and one negro together. You had lost your master at the battle of Glorietta. I had lost my health, but to each other we stood true, and are today enjoying the blessings that were bestowed on but a few of those old boys. Long life Bob. Nora and the boys all send love to the “Old Rebel Negro.” Write soon to your old comrade and friend.”⁴¹

The article continued by saying that since Bob did not have much longer to live, and a pension would demonstrate the state of Louisiana’s appreciation for Bob’s “bravery and devotion and suffering” for the Confederacy. In the meantime, Bob received \$2.50 from both the Army of Tennessee and Camp Beauregard Sons of Confederate Veterans as a token of their appreciation. Sadly, he did not receive a state pension before he died the following year (1907) at the age of seventy-four, reportedly buried in a Confederate gray uniform.⁴²

“Uncle Jeff” Mabry, former body servant of Hinche Parham Mabry, also failed to attain a pension despite the efforts of ex-Confederates. Born in Georgia in 1819, Jeff Mabry eventually found himself owned by the Mabry family, with whom he settled in Jefferson, Marion County, Texas, sometime during the 1850s. On June 13, 1861, Hinche P. Mabry, along with Jeff, joined Company G of the 3rd Texas Cavalry, a unit that primarily served in the Trans-Mississippi.

⁴⁰ “Colored Confederate Who Has Applied To Legislature For Pension And Whom Sons and Veterans Are Aiding Pending The Issue,” *New Orleans Picayune*, (New Orleans, La.) November 18, 1906 .

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.; “Confederate Negro: Will Be Buried In Gray Uniform He loved” *Times-Picayune* (Jackson, Miss.), Dec. 18, 1907.

During the war, Uncle Jeff proudly wore the moniker “Head Chicken Thief of the 3rd Texas Cavalry,” and was present with his master when Mabry surrendered in 1865. After the war, Jeff Mabry decided to reside in Hopkins County, Texas, with a number of other former Confederates. There he joined the Mat Ashcroft Camp of the United Confederate Veterans in Sulphur Springs, attending every meeting until his death. The camp's official records listed Mabry as “Uncle Jeff, Colored, Body Servant to Col. H. P. Mabry.” Jeff even attended the national United Confederate Veterans reunion in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1914 with several other members from the 3rd Texas Cavalry. At this reunion, Jeff Mabry made an appearance on a silent news reel that recorded the festivities, providing a glimpse of what Mabry looked like. In the film, he is an aged man wearing a suit adorned with a number of medals and tipping his hat to the camera.⁴³

It appears that the Mat Ashcroft Camp attempted to get Mabry a pension in 1923. However, a camp record dated November 3, 1923, states that a “Verbal report” of the local “committee to investigate whether Jeff Mabry could collect a pension” found “that there were no available funds for colored men in Texas.” Despite the failed attempt to get Mabry a pension, many of the members of the camp helped support the aged former slave in his later years. Mabry died on June 7, 1929, at the alleged age of 110 years old. At his funeral, the surviving members of the Mat Ashcroft Camp sent a floral arrangement covered in red, white, and gray ribbons.⁴⁴

Though Jeff Mabry and his former master after the war did not live in the same area (according

⁴³ This information comes from the research of Wilbur Thomas Myers of Sulphur Springs, Texas. Myers used census rolls, local county histories, the record minutes of Camp Mat Ashcroft #170 of the United Confederate Veterans, and old newspapers to compile a brief biography of Jeff Mabry. This is cited from J. H. Sagers and Charles Kelly Barrow, *Black Southerners in Confederate Armies: A Collection of Historical Accounts* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2007), 112; “Confederate Veteran Convention,” *The State Library and Archives of Florida*, <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/4051/#contributors=Florida+Commercial+Sound+Films+of+ Jacksonville>. Accessed May 20, 2016.

⁴⁴ *Black Southerners in Confederate Armies* 112-113. According to the 1920 census, Jeff Mabry was 101 years old and lived in Hopkins County, Texas. He is listed as a servant, presumably to the Rash family, with whom he lived with at that time. United States Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census, 1920, Texas, Hopkins County, Schedule 1 (Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

to the 1880 census, Hince P. Mabry resided in Fort Worth, Texas, where he practiced law), Jeff Mabry remained close to those he had spent time with during the war, men who knew Jeff from his time as Mabry's body servant. "Uncle Jeff" chose to remain among men who had fought to keep him in bondage, men who later attempted to get the former slave a state pension as a veteran, and men who helped care for him in his later years. The trials of war no doubt enabled this series of events in Jeff Mabry's life, events interwoven with human interaction and complex emotions found between some Confederates and their former slaves.

Robert "Bob" Shropshire's case follows the same general patterns found in Jeff Mabry's. In each, the former body servants were elderly, actively attended Confederate veteran reunions, and appear to have received the support of white ex-Confederates who were not even their masters. In Bob's case, the letter written to him from Texas expressed unfeigned affection and demonstrated his continued connection to those he "served" with during the war. This information is difficult to verify due to the limited sources and vagueness found within the articles, but the newspapers for these former servants do put on display the recognition by former masters, or their comrades, of the former black body servants' commitment to their cause and in turn their willingness to assist the ex-slaves in receiving proper compensation for it.

It is difficult to decipher from these post-war newspapers what can be seen as genuine affection for "negro Confederates" and what was Lost Cause propaganda. The fact that newspapers published articles on former slaves most likely meant they were propaganda pieces, but when one considers the complex relationships servants had with their masters and fellow Confederates during the war, a new realm of consideration is opened. The deeds and actions of some slave-servants from Texas had been recognized by their Confederate masters, deeds not long forgotten after the war. As Bill Davidson wrote concerning John Shropshire and Pleasant J.

Oaks's former body servants, Bob had been a "mighty warrior" and Mac "was a hero in his own way." Davidson added that "they were true to us when we needed friends," and he even claimed that if asked after the war about their service with their masters, Bob and Mac would both say "I belonged to A company, Green's Regiment, Sibley's Bridge' with as much pride as any one of the boys."⁴⁵ When looking at this statement on its own, it is easy to dismiss it as fictitious. When used in conjunction with the fact that some former servants received state pensions and attended Confederate veteran reunions, as well as contemporary accounts of black body servants during the war, one can begin to see that the bonds formed during the war between master and servant turned into unlikely loyalties after the conflict. Many of these servants in the postbellum years claimed their allegiance to the Confederacy, adding fuel to the fire for Lost Cause defenders of states' rights. In all actuality, though, these former slaves had enduring allegiances not to the Confederacy but to their masters, whom day-in and day-out had depended on their slave to help them survive while on campaign, and vice-versa.

The idea of black body servants forming bonds to their masters in a wartime environment is not dissimilar to the bonds formed between soldiers, white and black, during the Civil War. In his prolific work, *For Cause and Comrades*, James M. McPherson speaks to these bonds that soldiers formed in the trials of combat and the rigorous lives that soldiers shared in on the march. These bonds, formed out of the raw emotion of wanting to keep your "brothers-in-arms" alive, could break down societal stereotypes and class divisions between soldiers as they together struggled to survive. *Forged in Battle* by Joseph T. Glatthaar, carries this point further by demonstrating that black Union troops and their white officers, through their shared experiences in battle, were able to look past racial prejudices and created bonds that carried them through the war and changed many perceptions of blacks as "inferior" soldiers. Those same bonds certainly

⁴⁵ Davidson, "Reminiscences of the Old Brigade," *Overton Sharpshooter* (Overton, Tex.), Oct. 13, 1887.

could have been shared between a Confederate master and his slave on the march. Though not regular soldiers, some slaves did stand by their master's side at the front, and they lived through the very same dangers that their masters had throughout the war.⁴⁶

Whether from notions of paternalism or mutual sentiments of fraternity, some Texas Confederates and their slaves shared in bonds that had been formed before or during the war, and that likely shaped their relationship after the destruction of slavery. Former slaves received pensions and invitations to Confederate veteran reunions, and they joined in communities that supported them for their "service." This support, though, appeared behind the veil of Lost Cause mythology, for white support of these "black Confederates" on the surface came in part because they were the last of the antebellum "old time" slaves. For as long as these complex figures remained close to their former masters and "cherished" the values of the Old South, the Lost Cause and ideas concerning states' rights as the cause of the Civil War would be forever validated in the hearts and minds of Southerners. This is where the material for historical markers such as Primus Kelly's begin to appear, venerating those Texas slaves that sided with the Confederacy for no other notion than a love for the South and their white masters. Behind this conscious attempt by white Texans to mask the horrors of their now dead institution, are those former slaves who stayed true to their Confederate masters due to the complex attachments they shared.

Some black body servants cared for their masters to remain close to the only world and family they had ever known; such was the case for Norflet Perry. Some former slaves sought out

⁴⁶ For more on the relationship between soldiers during the Civil War, see: James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York; Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1997); For more on the experiences of black troops and their white officers see: Joseph T. Glatthaar. *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance between Black Troops and White Officers* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1990).

their former masters to remain close to them after the war, just as Jack [last name?] did in finding K. M. Van Zandt. Some slaves chose the companionship and community of Confederate veteran organizations and cherished their unique distinction as “black Confederates.” Some slaves, like Nick Blaine and Daniel Winston, honored the memory of their deceased masters by naming their children after them. Such examples are by no means the common rule of what the master-slave relationship entailed, but these exceptions cannot be ignored if scholars are ever to understand America slavery fully. To deny these complex figures is to deny the humanity that each slave held as a person, their indomitable will to endure servitude, and the peculiar legacies they left to perpetuity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The involvement of blacks in the Confederate army continues to vex scholars of the Civil War. The idea of some slaves serving faithfully under the auspices of their Confederate masters directly contradicts the widespread belief in the utter exploitation of African-Americans in the antebellum South, while for others this idea exonerates Confederates for the evils of owning another human being. Modern defenders of the Confederacy also continue to emphasize the minor involvement of some blacks in fighting the Union, further absolving their Southern forefathers and cementing their belief that some slaves were content with their state of bondage. Using a number of Texas Confederates with black body servants as a sample, the findings in this work have shown that the involvement of blacks, especially slaves, in the Confederate army is an incredibly complex subject, and that the relationships shared between some Confederate soldiers and their slaves embodies this complexity.

These Texas masters who took slaves with them into the army represented all levels of slaveholding society, from members of the planter elite to average farmers who had worked alongside their slaves in the field. Despite their disparities in age and wealth, these Texas Confederates shared in their Southern heritage and slavery, marking them as Southerners who had a true vested interest in the outcome of the Civil War. From privates to colonels, all manner of Texas Confederates brought black body servants with them to war, slaves whom they and their families trusted to stay true to their master and care for him with the utmost diligence.

Many of these body servants fulfilled these obligations and more. In camp, black body servants acted in their traditional role as cooks, cleaners, and general attendants. In some cases they acted in this role for their master and his compatriots. Body servants in camp foraged for their masters both for food and war material. Slaves tended to both their masters' personal effects

and acted as their masters' nurses when they fell ill. If their master fell on the field of battle, some slaves even went as far as retrieving their master's bodies and returning them for burial. All of these tasks required an immense amount of trust on the part of the master towards their body servant. Considering the large room for failure to serve faithfully on the part of the slave (running away, ruining their master's clothes, poisoning their food, etc.), most black body servants examined in this study performed dutifully. This fidelity could have been in large part due to the attention their masters reciprocated as their sole providers of clothing, food, and medical attention. This loyalty may have stemmed from the "freedom" they had as body servants on the march. The trust masters had in their slaves to a certain degree reflected their recognition of their slaves' humanity, an acknowledgement that they could be held responsible for their actions, and thus allowed more leniency within a system where slaves typically were only seen as untrustworthy chattel. This recognition may have drawn body servants closer to their masters and their comrades, for they were the only men they had ever known to treat them as something more than property.

These claims are further evidenced by the post war interactions of former masters and their black body servants. At the apex of Lost Cause ideology in the South, some former body servants from Texas regiments attended Confederate veteran reunions in both the state of Texas and elsewhere. These figures were venerated as the last of a dying breed of "old time negroes," and they often were genuinely accepted amongst the ranks of the former Confederates. Whether associated with a veterans organization or not, many former body servants applied for pensions as veterans of the Confederate army. Some, like Levi Miller and Guy Shaw, did receive pensions as Confederate veterans with the support of both former masters and their comrades. Even when

most of these body servants did not receive a pension, they still had the support of their community and Confederate veterans due to their “allegiance” to the failed Confederacy.

While it certainly can be argued that these former body servants were “misguided” by the kindness of their former masters and their comrades as an explanation of their faithful service, one must consider the incredible complexities found within the master-slave relationship before and during the Civil War. These former slaves in many instances had grown up with their former masters and their families, establishing complex relationships before the beginning of the war. These connections were further cemented during the war in some cases as master and slave weathered the rigors of war together. When one considers the constant contact that these two figures had every day, the circumstances they faced, and all their prior experiences with one another, it can be concluded that these body servants were more tied to their former masters rather than the cause of the Confederacy. In the post war era, in cases where their former masters had died during the war, some slaves still found themselves as members of veteran organizations. In such cases, perhaps the slaves respected the memory of their former master by attending veteran reunions, or they had attached themselves to their master’s colleagues.

One may also consider that these slaves had ulterior motives in associating with the memory of the Confederacy. By “going along” with late nineteenth and early twentieth conceptions of blacks in a white society, these former slaves benefited socially and economically by “playing the part” of a faithful antebellum slave. From this angle, one could argue that, much like their time in slavery, these former slaves were doing what they deemed best to endure a time during which they were held as property. This argument presents these former slaves as strong willed survivalists, who already knew what it took to prosper in their white-washed world.

This case study of Texas Confederates and their interactions with enslaved servants can contribute greatly to modern conceptions of “black Confederates.” These complex figures certainly were linked to the Confederacy through their masters and their associates, but claiming that they fought for the Confederacy is more complicated. The body servants examined in this study were not soldiers, and though they were at times mentioned as taking up arms, they did not fight with their masters typically, and certainly cannot be said to have fought for the Confederacy beyond rare instances. These men supported their masters despite the apparent differences in their social classes, and in some cases these slaves benefitted from this fidelity after the war. Scholars will continue to debate the relevance and veracity of any accounts that discuss the role of body servants and “black Confederates” during and after the Civil War, and many will find these sources as apocryphal and racist. If analyzed carefully, however, these findings will discover these characters to be dauntless survivors who shared in complex interactions with Confederates as a means to endure the turbulent decades after the Civil War. Slavery will continue to be a topic of crucial importance to understanding American history, and the inclusion of these peculiar pairings of masters and slaves during the war is crucial to ensuring a holistic look at the overall complex nature of this nation’s past.

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