

## Southern Unionists in a Fractured Confederacy: A Historiography

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*With the exception of recent scholarship, there is little monographic or article literature devoted exclusively to Southern Unionists in the Civil War. When Unionists are acknowledged, they are usually relegated to only a paragraph or footnote in most general studies. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, we re-examine the existing literature regarding Southern Unionists. Southern Unionist literature can be grouped into three eras. First, the era from 1865 to the 1890s was one that acknowledged Southern Unionists and their contributions to the Union war effort and Confederate defeat. Second, the era immediately following the war and stretching into the early twentieth century called the “Lost Cause” era. The final period runs from the Great Depression to the present, in which gradually, more and more literature is written regarding Southern Unionists and their contributions during the war. These works have evolved into more detailed studies that focus on the cultural, social, and other aspects that distinguish the Southern Unionists from their pro-Confederate counterparts in the South. Studying the historiography of Southern Unionists allows students, teachers and those with interest in the Civil War to see the biases that have existed in the literature over the years. In addition, it identifies other areas that need further research on the topic.*

With the exception of recent scholarship, there is little monographic or article literature devoted exclusively to Southern Unionists in the Civil War. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, we re-examine the existing literature regarding Southern Unionists. In addition, studying Southern Unionists allows us to realize the impact that Unionists ultimately had on Confederate defeat.

Examining Southern Unionists adds an important dimension to Civil War studies. As Eric Foner, Professor of American History at Columbia University, wrote in his article “The South’s Inner Civil War,” “To fully understand the vast changes the war unleashed on the country, you must first understand the plight of the Southerners that *didn’t* want secession.” Also, the author states that

... as the smoke of these historiographical battles clears, and a more complex view of the war and Reconstruction emerges, it has become abundantly clear that no one can claim to fully understand the Civil War era without coming to terms with the South’s Unionists, the persecution they suffered, and how they helped determine the outcome of our greatest national crisis.

Foner is correct in his observation. It is with this in mind that a review of the literature and its areas that need more research is required.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, “The South’s Inner Civil War,” *AmericanHeritage.com*, March 1989, under “Magazine,” [http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1989/2/1989\\_2\\_46.shtml](http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1989/2/1989_2_46.shtml) (accessed March 6, 2011).

This study will analyze the differences of authors' interpretation of Southern Unionists and their impact upon the Confederacy during the Civil War. Southern Unionist literature can be grouped into three schools, two of which overlapped. First, from 1865 to the 1890s one school acknowledged Southern Unionists and their contributions to the Union war effort and subsequent Confederate defeat. Also, beginning at the end of the war and stretching into the current century is the so-called "Lost Cause" school. This school depicted Confederate life as one of solidarity towards "the cause" and Unionists are rarely mentioned except as "tories" or traitors.<sup>2</sup> The final school runs from the Great Depression to the present, in which gradually, more and more literature has been written regarding Southern Unionists and their contributions during the war. These works have evolved into more detailed studies that focus on the cultural, social, and other aspects that distinguish the Southern Unionists from their pro-Confederate counterparts in the South. Studying the historiography of Southern Unionists allows students, teachers, and those with interest in the Civil War to see the biases that have existed in the literature over the years. In addition, it identifies other areas that need further research on the topic.

Historians of the era during and immediately following the Civil War did acknowledge the contributions of Southern Unionists on a small scale. This acknowledgement was often limited to the writings and memoirs of people who actually participated and lived through the war. Additionally, these acknowledgements tend only to contain first hand experiences with Southern Unionists that actually took up arms or in some way aided the Union Army. These writings do not tend to take into account areas that the Union Army was unable to penetrate. In addition, they are not detailed accounts of Southern Unionists, which study the social, geographical, and cultural aspects of each Unionist population.

General Ulysses S. Grant provides an example of this initial school of thought. Grant, after learning he had cancer, raced to complete his memoirs. Originally published in 1885, Grant's *Memoirs*, portrayed Southern Unionists as making a valuable contribution to the war effort. In referring to Unionist troops from the south, Grant said, "We had many regiments of brave and loyal men who volunteered under great difficulty from the twelve million belonging to the South." In addition, Grant wrote that many southern Unionists would greet him and his army along their marching paths. While marching through and around the Cumberland Gap, Grant noted that loyalists were supportive. Grant said that "I found a great many people at home along that route, both in Tennessee and Kentucky, and, almost universally, intensely loyal. They would collect in little places where we would stop of evenings, to see me, generally hearing of my approach before we arrived." The general also gives an account on how he averted potential capture with the help of a southern Unionist. While occupying Memphis, he was visiting a Union man by the name of De Loche. Mr. De Loche became agitated upon the visit of a neighbor, Dr. Smith, who was a pro-Confederate. Mr. De Loche later apologized to Grant that he did not ask

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<sup>2</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 143-145; Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

Grant to stay for dinner because he knew Dr. Smith would inform the Confederate General in the area of his presence.<sup>3</sup>

Grant also wrote about his sympathies for the disaffected in the South. He sympathized with the poor whites in the South and seemed to have an understanding of the class struggle that was behind the reluctance to support the Confederacy. Grant wrote, "Under the old regime they were looked down upon by those who controlled all the affairs in the interest of slave owners, as poor white trash who were allowed the ballot so long as they cast it according to direction." Grant also noted that poor southerners at the beginning of the war "...needed emancipation." Grant also was helpful to those Unionists in need whenever possible. He gives an account in his memoirs of meeting an elderly woman who was staunchly Unionist. Her husband and son had joined the Union army and she did not know their whereabouts. The woman and her daughter were low on food and nearly out. Grant ordered that they be supplied rations from the army.<sup>4</sup>

Another example of post war writings that acknowledge the existence of southern Unionists exists in the memoirs of Union General William Tecumseh Sherman. Originally published in 1875, Sherman released a second edition in 1886 to allow letters from others that disputed some of his accounts of events. Although Sherman did not have as strong of sentiments for the Unionists as Grant did, he did acknowledge a strong union presence in North Alabama. In 1862, Sherman received reports of this Unionist sentiment along the Tennessee River. He states "...several of the gunboats, under Captain Phelps, United States Navy, had gone up the Tennessee as far as Florence, and on their return had reported a strong Union feeling among the people along the river." It is from this same area of strong Union Sentiment that elements of the Union Army would recruit the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry United States Volunteers.<sup>5</sup>

Another interpretive school arose simultaneously with which Grant exemplified. This "Lost Cause" era in Southern Unionist literature is one that severely limits the study of Unionists in the South. In some ways, this literature takes a step backward from the historians who wrote about Unionists earlier. Extending well into the twentieth century, "Lost Cause" literature sought to paint a picture of a South that while defeated, was still proud of its past and those who had supported and died for "the cause." It was during this era that most courthouse squares began to see Confederate monuments being erected and the almost deification of General Robert E. Lee and other Southern leaders.<sup>6</sup>

Eric Foner describes the "Lost Cause" era as one that has hampered the efforts to tell the story of Southern Unionists more accurately. Foner states that "Perhaps this is because the story

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<sup>3</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), vii, 636; 397; 230-31, eBook available through Net Library at <http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=41690> (accessed April 11, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 133, 477.

<sup>5</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, (Norwalk, Conn: Easton Press, 1996), <http://www.netlibrary.com/Details.aspx?ProductId=17015&Terms=william+t.+sherman&ReturnLabel=lnkSearchResults&ReturnPath=/Search/SearchResults.aspx> (accessed April 7, 2011), 1121-22; 362; 245; G. Ward Hubbs, "Civil War in Alabama," in *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1429>.

<sup>6</sup> Karen L. Cox, "Lost Cause Ideology," in *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1643> (accessed March 7, 2011).

of Southern Unionism challenges two related popular mythologies that have helped shape how Americans think about that era: the portrait of the Confederacy as a heroic 'lost cause' and of Reconstruction as an ignoble 'tragic era.'" Foner points out that portraying Unionists in any way other than villainous traitors to the Confederacy did not mesh well with the romantic, celebratory picture that "lost cause" authors wanted to portray of the antebellum and Civil War South.

One of the most recognizable examples of "Lost Cause" literature is that of E. A. Pollard's aptly named *The Lost Cause*. Pollard was the editor of the *Richmond Examiner* during the Civil War. This work mentions virtually nothing about the Southern Unionist as a factor in the defeat of the Confederacy. Rather than focus on internal strife, Pollard focuses on Northern superiority in manufactures and manpower as a cause for defeat. In addition, he blames Confederate leaders for not taking advantage of the geographical space of the Confederacy. He compares the advantage of space that the Confederacy had to the advantage of space that the colonists had during the American Revolution. The author states that this advantage should have superseded any material or manpower advantage that the North had. Pollard also claims that the fact that the South was on the defensive should have been an advantage that led to victory. The author explains that these advantages should have been enough for victory and blames the mismanagement of these advantages on Confederate leaders. He asserts that this mismanagement resulted in the reduced will of the people to continue the fight but makes no mention of the significant portion of the population of the Confederacy that was in opposition to "the cause" as a factor in defeat.<sup>7</sup>

Another example is Walter L. Fleming's *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*. Fleming, a student of William A. Dunning, hailed from Brundidge, Alabama, and received his Ph.D. from Columbia University. Dunning, who exemplified the "Lost Cause" school of thought, was a professor at Columbia University. While at Columbia, Dunning taught a multitude of soon to be scholars. Dunning and his students were all white southerners and tended to write in response to the hated Reconstruction era.<sup>8</sup>

Fleming's work on Alabama, does give insight into Unionist activity in Alabama. However, it is with strong bias. The author constantly refers to the Alabama Unionists as either "tories," "traitors" or "mossbacks." Indeed, many Unionists were classified as traitors but Fleming goes overboard with the portrayal. For example, Fleming classifies the "tory" class as one of the lowest class of citizens in Alabama at the time. He writes that the Alabama tory was

...as a rule, of the lowest class of the population, chiefly "mountain whites" and the "sand mountain" people, who were shut off from the world, a century behind

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<sup>7</sup> Edward Alfred Pollard, *The Lost Cause; A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates, Comprising a Full and Authentic Account of the Rise and Progress of the Late Southern Confederacy--the Campaigns, Battles, Incidents, and Adventures of the Most Gigantic Struggle of the World's History* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1866), 129-33.

<sup>8</sup> Jean and Alexander Heard Library, "Special Collections: Walter L. Fleming, Overview," Vanderbilt University, <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/speccol/flemingwl.shtml> (accessed March 5, 2011); Clarence L. Mohr, "Bibliographical Essay: Southern Blacks in the Civil War: A Century of Historiography," *The Journal of Negro History* 59, no. 2(April 1974): 179-80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2717330> (accessed March 5, 2011).

the times, and who knew scarcely anything of the Union or of the question at issue.

Certainly, there were many poor white Unionists that fit the description Fleming gives, however, there were equally as many poor and uneducated whites that were pro-Confederates of which Fleming gives no account. In addition, Fleming portrays Unionists in Alabama as men not liked by the Yankees when they came. He says "...northerners who had dealings with the 'loyalist' did not like him, as he was a most unpleasant person, with a grievance which could not be righted to his satisfaction without giving rise to numerous other grievances."<sup>9</sup>

Fleming also gives multiple accounts of all the atrocities that Unionists committed against the good Confederate people. Indeed, the Civil War was a time of desperation throughout the South and Alabama was no exception. Unionists did commit atrocities as well as Confederates. However, Fleming once again is unbalanced in his accounts. He portrays Alabama Unionists as motivated mainly to "...rob, burn, and murder." Fleming mentions few of the atrocities committed by the Confederates against the Unionists.<sup>10</sup> The author gives only images of ruthless Unionist marauders. Fleming portrays the Confederate soldiers as heroes who took leave from the army to come home and "...clear the country of tories, who had been terrorizing the people."<sup>11</sup>

Although Fleming presents such a bias towards Unionists in his work on Alabama, his study does present a breakthrough in historical literature on the subject of Southern Unionists. Fleming, a trained historian, uses primary and secondary sources to present his work on the Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama. His use of the *Official Records* of the Civil War is extensive. It is not the methods of Fleming that are to be criticized but the lens through which he looks at the evidence. Fleming's writings reflect the times in which he lived as well as his particular training under Dunning. The era in which he lived was dominated by a white supremacist thought. In addition, the image of the "Lost Cause" could not be damaged by a patriotic telling of the story of Southern Unionists. Scholars can still effectively use Fleming's contribution to the literature today, as long as they keep in mind the biases he presents.

The contemporary period in Southern Unionist literature is one that examines the contributions of Southern Unionists more closely. This period in literature has gradually appeared since the Great Depression and persists into the present day where it overlaps the now-fading "Lost Cause" school. The works since the Great Depression have expressed a desire to examine Southern Unionism in all its aspects—social, cultural, and geographical—as well as their contributions to the defeat of the Confederacy. This era has produced many works that look at Southern Unionists as individual pockets of resistance to the Confederacy rather than one

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<sup>9</sup> Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, Micro-Offset Books (New York: P. Smith, 1949), 114, 122.

<sup>10</sup> David McRae, "Free State of Winston," in *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1850> (accessed November 2, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, 120-21.

individual entity. This is because each pocket of Unionist population often had its own individual characteristics and should be studied separately.

One example of this individual look at Southern Unionism is Hugh C. Bailey's "Disloyalty in Early Confederate Alabama". Published in 1957 in the *Journal of Southern History*, this article is an excellent example of a detailed study on one geographic area steeped in union sentiment. Although it promises a look at Unionism in North Alabama as a whole, it digresses solely to a study of Winston County, Alabama. Though narrowly focused on a particular locale, the article is still extremely useful as a social and political study of Unionism.<sup>12</sup>

Bailey gives many examples of how the Unionists in Winston County, Alabama, tried to undermine the Confederate government in Alabama. First, the largely pro-Unionist population of the county quickly elected pro-Unionist officers to any position in the local government that became available. Second, they elected pro-Unionist officers into the local militia. This effectively disabled the use of Winston County militia by the Confederacy from the outset of the Civil War. These examples serve to prove the author's thesis that pro-union sentiment existed in North Alabama prior to the spring of 1862 when the Confederate Conscription Act swayed many to a position of Unionism.<sup>13</sup>

Bailey's article gives examples of the consequences a Unionist family had to face for their loyalties. Unionists, always the minority in the South, had to live with the sobering fact that even family members could be against them. Bailey's work uses the primary documents of the Bell Family letters to show the internal strife of a family split over Unionists/Confederate sympathies.

Henry Bell, a loyal Confederate citizen then residing in Choctaw County, Mississippi, received letters from his father, James, and his brother, John, concerning their disappointment that he had sided with the Confederacy. James and John resided in Winston County, Alabama and expressed their strong Unionist sentiment to their brother in hopes of swaying his opinion. Their letters had the opposite effect and Henry turned their letters over to the then governor of Alabama, A.B. Moore. Henry wanted to express the dangers of the sentiments that existed in Governor Moore's state.<sup>14</sup>

In order to not rely on the letters of one family as the sole evidence to support his thesis that widespread disaffection existed in the county, Bailey also examines the results of the election of a secession convention delegate from Winston County. The Unionist candidate, Charles Sheets, was elected by a vote of 515 to 128. Additionally, letters from the concerned pro-Confederate citizens of the county to Governor John Gill Shorter explained that there was a strong Unionist sentiment in and around Winston County that threatened to undermine Confederate efforts in the area.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hugh C. Bailey, "Disloyalty in Early Confederate Alabama," *The Journal of Southern History* 23, no. 4 (November 1957): 522, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2954390> (accessed February 14, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 522-23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 524-28.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 523-24.

Bailey's article, while not entirely proving his thesis that widespread disaffection existed in North Alabama prior to 1862, is an excellent example of localized study of a particular area within the Confederacy that resisted the efforts of the Confederate government to control it. Bailey's study of this resistance to the Confederacy in North Alabama is a significant contribution to the literature of Southern Unionism and its contribution to a Confederate defeat.

Similarly, Donald Bradford Dodd's dissertation on Unionism in Confederate Alabama is an excellent study of one geographical area of Union sentiment. Dodd examines the social, economic, and geographical factors that led to a strong pocket of Unionism in North Alabama. Published in 1969, Dodd's work is of value to anyone studying North Alabama Unionism.

Dodd explains that one of the causes of Unionism in Alabama is related to a deep sectionalism within the state. This sectionalism resulted from the geographical differences that tended to isolate people in the hills from the planters of the more fertile regions of Alabama. He explains that this region of North Alabama was like other regions of the Appalachian chain that run from Virginia into North Alabama, stating, "...the causes of Alabama Unionism may well be the causes of Unionism in the hill and mountain sections throughout the Confederacy." This entire region shared some common factors. First, it displayed a tendency for strong Union sentiment. Second, it was mountainous and isolated. Third, it faced the threat of Confederate enforcement of conscription and tax laws. Finally, an opportunity existed to assist the Union army once it penetrated the region.<sup>16</sup>

Dodd also cites some socio-economic reasons for the sectionalism that resulted in the Union sentiment in North Alabama. One was the existence of mostly small subsistence farming there, which distinguished it from other regions of the state that thrived on large-scale plantation agriculture. More important, the hill country had few slaves compared to areas in South Alabama. This difference led to a less passionate stance on the defense of slavery by the hill people in North Alabama. In addition, the people of this area were strong supporters of Andrew Jackson and his belief in a strong Union. Dodd states that the people "...of the Plateau-Ridge and Valley were followers of Jackson and were still quoting 'Old Hickory's' statement that the Union must be preserved when the secessionists met in Montgomery."<sup>17</sup>

Dodd gives examples of how these Unionists affected the Confederacy. He states in his conclusion that the people of the hill country in Alabama "...rebelled against the aristocratic lowlanders," and "...joined the Union army, gave assistance to the deserters and conscription evaders, raided surrounding areas, furnished intelligence to the Federals, and in general refused to support the Confederate war effort." These examples are evidence of Unionist impact on the Confederacy in Alabama as well as other areas within the Confederacy. In addition, it proves that other factors were involved in a Confederate defeat than just the North's superior numbers in manufacturing and manpower, as Pollard claims.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Donald Bradford Dodd, "Unionism in Confederate Alabama," (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 1969), iii-iv.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

Another example of the contemporary era in southern Unionist literature is Richard Nelson Current's *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy*. Current received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1940 and is the author or co-author of several books on Civil War history. He has won several awards for his writing and has taught at institutions including Rutgers University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where he was professor and head of the history department.<sup>19</sup>

Current's main purpose is to tell the story of the "...forgotten men of the Civil War." Although the book is a holistic study of union troops from the south, it examines each individual southern state and the union troops they produced. In addition, Current explains the many hardships that Unionists within the Confederacy had to face in their own communities. Finally, the chapters included estimates of how many Union soldiers served from each Confederate State.

Current opens with the two states that had the largest Unionist populations, Virginia and Tennessee. From the outset, Western Virginia had a strong loyalist sentiment and more in common with neighboring Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland than with their fellow Virginians. This led it to send large numbers of volunteers to the Union Army. As in many southern states, the number who volunteered overwhelmed the supply system. Many tired of waiting for arms, ammunition, and equipment, so they simply went back home. The Unionists sentiment in Western Virginia was so great that it led to the establishment of a pro-Union government and later admission to the Union as the state of West Virginia. Likewise, in East Tennessee, there was also a strong Unionist sentiment at the outset of the war. President Lincoln realized this early on and desperately wanted to send assistance to help the constantly tormented Unionist population there. The mountainous terrain made it hard to evacuate these people, but thousands of Tennesseans found their way through the mountainous paths into Kentucky to enlist in the Union Army.<sup>20</sup>

Current then summarizes the Union troops from other southern states. One reoccurring theme in the book is that if the Union Army could have gotten into pro-Unionist areas quicker, they may have had the opportunity to crush the rebellion in half the time it did. Pockets of Unionists, while always the minority, were a significant resource of potential manpower for both sides. The Confederacy, already outnumbered in population by the North, needed every available man of fighting age to be in its army. This would not be the case for the Confederacy, and Current points out that as much as a tenth of the potential southern fighting force may have actually been in the Union army at some point. This was a major blow to the Confederacy. These men were not only lost to the Confederate cause, but they were also a gain to the Union army that already vastly outnumbered them.<sup>21</sup>

Current's study of the Union soldiers from the south is a beneficial addition to the literature of Southern Unionists. Written in 1992, it was a long overdue study that closed a huge

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<sup>19</sup> Wisconsin Library Association, "WLA Literary Awards Committee," Appleton Public Library, <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/readers/wlac/notable/notable1988.html#Richard> (accessed February 14, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Richard Nelson Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 5-27; 29-60.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

gap in the story of southerners' contributions to a Confederate defeat. Current uses primary and secondary sources to tell the story of the loyalist soldier. These sources include official records and testimonies of participants in the Civil War as well as a multitude of secondary monographs and articles. The only criticism of this work is that it spends a vast majority of its pages covering the Unionists from Virginia and Tennessee. This is understandable because a majority of the loyalist troops did come from those areas; however, the lower southern states require more research.

Another valuable contribution to the literature of Southern Unionists is Margaret M. Storey's *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Storey is an assistant professor of history at DePaul University in Chicago and has written extensively on Southern Unionists.<sup>22</sup> She combats the "Lost Cause" view that the Alabama Unionist was only of the poorly educated, backwoods type. She uses extensively the records of the Southern Claims Commission to show that Alabama Unionists came from a diverse background and that some were even slave owners. By using the records of the Southern Claims Commission, she is able to look at the names of the actual Southern Unionists and their claims of losses suffered during the war. Details that emerge are whether these Unionists were slave owners or not, their economic standing, and their geographic locations. This information is a groundbreaking look at the social, cultural, and economic makeup of Southern Unionists in Alabama.

Storey examines social reasons for the continuation of Unionism as the war progressed. She claims that their close network of family and community allowed Unionists to be able to resist Confederates, writing, "...Unionism prompted considerable social dislocation for its adherents, but it was also the shelter under which many intimate social ties were crowded together in mutual aid and comfort."<sup>23</sup>

Storey also challenges the works of Walter L. Fleming and other historians on the demographic makeup of North Alabama's Unionist population. In response to these other historians' writings that most of North Alabama's Unionists were "economically and politically alienated from wealthy slaveholding secessionists," she has some new findings. For example, she writes that "...closer investigation, however, reveals a more complicated demographic picture, a reality that challenges the usefulness of a class-based or narrowly antislaveholder/antislavery, explanation of Unionism." Storey also claims that classifying North Alabama as a monolithic sub region is misleading in the first place; that to properly study the area, scholars should consider North Alabama as containing the Hill Country and the Tennessee Valley. The author claims that the Hill Country "...*did* contain mostly small, subsistence farms, located on poor soil, which relied very little on slave labor." The Tennessee Valley Region, on the other hand, "...had long invested heavily in slavery and cotton production, moreover, the sub region

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<sup>22</sup> DePaul University, "Margaret M. Storey: DePaul University: Associate Professor, Department of History," The Berkeley Electronic Press, [http://works.bepress.com/margaret\\_storey/](http://works.bepress.com/margaret_storey/) (accessed March 12, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Margaret M. Storey, *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Conflicting Worlds (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 6.

exhibited a diversified economy, including lively commercial, manufacturing, and mercantile interests as well as yeoman subsistence farming in the more rolling areas.”<sup>24</sup>

Storey challenges the “Lost Cause” vilification of the Unionist population in Alabama as ruthless renegades. Rather, she portrays the Unionists as victims of the Confederacy. The author blames the Confederate Conscription Act for much of the Unionist resistance and the resulting friction between them and the Confederates. “...Conscription,” she maintains, “by making criminals of those who refused the Confederacy not only their hearts and minds, but ultimately their bodies—redefined a subsection of the Unionist population as treasonous, and therefore legally subject to arrest and imprisonment without trial.”<sup>25</sup>

Some of the Unionists did, in fact, refuse Confederate service “with their bodies”. North Alabamians enlisted in the First Alabama Cavalry U.S. Volunteers and, as Storey explains, served many purposes for the Union Army including scouting, conducting counter guerilla operations, and using their knowledge of their homeland to assist and recruit other Unionists. On the important issue of recruitment, Storey writes that “Because the soldiers who made up regiments like the First Alabama were intimate with area Unionists, they were perfectly suited for surreptitious recruiting missions.” These contributions to the Union Army are very different from the useless traitors that writers of the “Lost Cause” era depicted Southern Unionists to be.<sup>26</sup>

The author also recognizes Southern Unionists’ value to the Union Army as scouts, noting that Unionists “...functioned as the eyes and ears of Federal commanders” and were “...eager to serve in this capacity.” She also notes that wherever Union armies showed up, Unionists soon appeared to assist them.<sup>27</sup>

Storey’s work is a valuable contribution to Southern Unionist literature because it gives the reader a better picture of Unionists in Alabama than ever before. Her study of the Southern Claims Commission records has allowed her to explore more than other authors who these people were. One criticism is that she relies a little too heavily on these records, for they, themselves, might be tainted. At a time when Southerners sought recompense for property lost, destroyed, or taken during the war, almost anyone claimed to have had strong Unionist loyalties. Nevertheless, these records let us look more closely at whom these people were and the types of lives that they lived.

Victoria Bynum’s *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi’s Longest Civil War* is another example of why Southern Unionism must be looked at in its individual geographical pockets. Bynum gives multiple reasons to why Southern Unionism existed in Jones County other than patriotism. Often, Unionism was a result of deep underlying resentment between local populations. One underlying reason, according to Bynum, for disaffection in Jones County, Mississippi, was a class struggle that pre-dated the Civil War. Citing that a majority of Jones County settlers’ families originated from North Carolina, Bynum states, “...tensions over taxes and lands culminated in North Carolina when farmers organized the Regulator Movement to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 103-105.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 153-154.

overturn corrupt local governments dominated by elite planters, merchants, and lawyers.” In addition, Bynum says, “...these families were many ancestors of Jones County settlers who later shared a historical predisposition to F the Civil War as a ‘rich man’s war and poor man’s fight’”.<sup>28</sup>

Bynum does not limit her work to the traditional studies of Jones County, which restrict themselves to the narrative of the infamous Newt Knight and his band of deserters who resisted Confederate authority. Bynum however, provides a deeper study including women’s contributions to the Unionists, “women who shared the antiseccession views of their fathers, sons, and husbands often encouraged them to desert at the first opportunity,” thus demoralizing the Confederate soldiery and depleting its ranks. In addition, Bynum notes “...women who suffered from hunger, illness or abuse at the hands of Confederate soldiers also provided men with ample personal reasons to desert and return home.”<sup>29</sup>

The literature of Southern Unionists has evolved over the years through three interpretive schools that, while separate, often overlap. The first school resulted in the post war accounts from those who actually participated in the Civil War. While these accounts were limited in their scope, they are a valuable contribution to the literature and serve as early examination of Southern Unionists’ contribution to Union victory and Confederate defeat. The second school, the “Lost Cause,” gives more details about Southern Unionists but was often biased and told from a pro-Confederate point of view. The contemporary school that began around the Great Depression and continues to the present day has shed more light on Southern Unionists and their individuality. Studies have become more focused on specific areas of Unionist populations. In addition, these contemporary studies take into account the social and cultural conditions that Unionists had to face within the Confederacy.

Despite the new trend in contemporary literature, more extensive research is still needed. Although we are learning more about Unionists and what kind of people they were, most studies still focus on the men who participated in the war. Women, while beginning to get their due recognition, still need to be researched more along with their contributions to the family and local Unionist communities. Additionally, more research is needed on the states of the Deep South and their Unionist populations. A majority of the literature focuses on the upper southern states. While they did contribute the most Southern Unionists, this is not a reason to neglect the stories of the lower southern states that, being even more of a minority, possibly faced worse treatment by the larger pro-Confederate populations that surrounded them. Finally, additional research is also needed on the home front in Unionist communities. Often only mentioned as a side bar, Unionist communities had to face constant raids and terrorization by Confederate guerillas. Continued contribution to the literature in these areas will be much needed additions and help to expose the often forgotten side of the Civil War.

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<sup>28</sup> Victoria E. Bynum, *The Free State of Jones Mississippi’s Longest Civil War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), <http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=79148> (accessed April 19, 2011), 11-12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-95.

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