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RELATED ENTRIES

African-American Manhood; Black Panther Party; Feminism; King, Martin Luther, Jr.; Malcolm X; Military; Politics; Southern Manhood; World War II

—Steve Estes

CIVIL WAR

The American Civil War (1861–65) between the North (the Union) and the South (the Confederacy) was a conflict over issues of national identity, economic development, western expansion, and slavery. With roughly 2 million soldiers fighting for the Union and about 800,000 for the Confederacy, the war wrought transformations in the lives of both black and white men and altered ideas about manhood in both the North and the South. It served as a juncture between two regional sets of ideals of manhood and highlighted the race, gender, and class hierarchies on which they were contingent.

For men on both sides, the Civil War accelerated processes of maturation and of male gender-identity formation. Loyalty to, and sacrifice for, community, region, and cause played a significant role. Most troops (94 percent of Union soldiers and 82 percent of Confederate soldiers) were volunteers, and in many cases entire communities of men formed into military companies. Losses of 20 percent in a single artillery charge were not uncommon.

The war was an especially formative experience for the 40 percent of the soldiers that were 21 years old or younger. The

army imposed institutional discipline on soldiers, while at the same time promoting male bonding and competition and giving freer reign to the social impulses, such as sexuality and violence, that were a part of antebellum America. Sexuality was part of a military culture that consisted largely of single men, whereas violence was encouraged, and at times considered necessary, in conflicts between soldiers.

In the North, the war’s demand for discipline, courage, and physical strength changed men’s lives and notions of manliness. For middle-class men in particular, an emphasis on a “strenuous life” of struggle in overcoming obstacles replaced the idealism and transcendental intellectualism of antebellum reform causes. Wartime industrialization also affected constructions of middle-class and working-class manhood by emphasizing a class-based differentiation of manhood that had begun before the war. For middle-class men, wartime industrialization advanced an ideal of entrepreneurial self-made manhood based on marketplace competition, acquisition of property through work, and power over other men in the workplace. For working-class men industrialization further eroded a traditional ideal of artisanal manliness grounded in craftsmanship, autonomy, and workplace solidarity. The Republican Party slogan of the 1850s—“free soil, free labor, free men”—appealed to traditional republican conceptions of manhood grounded in Jeffersonian ideals of landownership and craftsmanship, but the wartime industrialization promoted by a Republican administration made such ideals increasingly difficult to realize.

For Southern white men, the Civil War represented a conflict between the ideal of the chivalrous Southern patriarch and the Yankee self-made man. Since the 1830s, Southern intellectuals and politicians had upheld ideals of patriarchy, honor, paternalism, morality, and community, while criticizing Northern ideas of liberty, entrepreneurial individualism, and self-made manhood. Although articulated by Southern elites, these ideals influenced Southern white men at all social levels, for in a society founded on slave labor, white men viewed unchallenged domestic patriarchy and personal independence as their right—and as the basis of their equality with other white men.

The defeat of the South also entailed a defeat of Southern ideals of manly honor and paternalism. Northern media now represented Southern planters as failed, effete dandies and as members of a quasi-feudal aristocracy out of step with Northern entrepreneurship and ideals of the strenuous life. For example, Northern newspapers generated the legend that Jefferson Davis, the president of the defeated Confederate

States of America, was disguised in women's clothes when he was captured in Richmond, Virginia.

Southern white men also felt emasculated by the emancipation of slaves. Their resulting hostility toward black men resulted in approximately 150 lynchings per year between 1889 and 1898 alone. Lynchings were typically justified with claims that the black victim had sexually offended a white woman. Such explanations reflected the participants' sense of lost patriarchal control over their households (and over the South as an independent political entity), as well as their perception of free black men as a threat to traditional definitions of Southern white manhood. Similar feelings underlay the activities of fraternal organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, established in 1866 in Tennessee to resist the power of blacks and Republicans in the South. In the absence of new constructions of Southern white manhood appropriate to a changing South, the traditional ideal based on patriarchy, racial superiority, and the protection of white Southern womanhood persisted into the twentieth century, finding cinematic expression in such films as D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915).

African American men—200,000 of whom served in the war—hoped the Civil War would end slavery and enhance their manhood by allowing them to achieve equality, independence, and mastery over their own households, free from white surveillance and control. From the beginning, black men realized the significance of a Union victory for their aspirations and sought to volunteer. The Union army at first refused to enlist black men, but the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 changed Union policies on black enlistment and dispelled the notion that the Civil War was a white man's war. African-American men joined the fight in large numbers—although they represented only 1 percent of the Northern population, they made up 10 percent of the Union army. Black recruiters relied on a racially universalizing language of manhood in their appeals for enlistment. In 1863, the politician and abolitionist Frederick Douglass confidently proclaimed that once black men would be allowed to join the Union army, they would be paragons of upright manliness and worthy of the rights of citizenship. The performance of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry—though a disaster in military terms—helped to reinforce African-American men's claim to equal citizenship and dispelled contemporary associations of black men with cowardice. Many African-American men, such as the African Methodist Episcopal church minister and Civil War army chaplain Henry McNeal Turner, continued to insist long after the Civil War that the war had liberated African men by proving their manhood.

One unifying factor of the Civil War, which affected many men regardless of region or race, was serious injury leading to disfigurement or amputation. During the Civil War, doctors performed approximately 60,000 amputations—more than during any other U.S. war—and 35,000 survived the procedure. Soldiers who lost limbs displayed visible evidence of heroic self-sacrifice, but at the same time they felt that their manhood had been compromised, for they had been left physically disempowered, dependent on others, and visibly altered at a time when American men were increasingly defining manhood in terms of body image.

The Civil War instilled among generations of American men the notion that war can build or regenerate manhood, by creating a notion of the strenuous life. By the 1880s, many young white men born too late to participate in the war articulated a new passionate manhood that emphasized courage, promoted physical exercise, and motivated men to support or participate in the Spanish-American War (1898).

The war's legacy differs for white and black men. Civil War re-enactors, mostly white, continue to represent men as heroic warriors and depict war as a masculine rite of passage and a way to reinvigorate manhood. For black men (and women), the Civil War remains primarily associated with the emancipation and the rights of citizenship, particularly as lingering Confederate sympathies continue to represent a challenge to black pride.

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RELATED ENTRIES

Abolitionism; Adolescence; African-American Manhood; *Birth of a Nation*; Citizenship; Douglass, Frederick; Emancipation; Gilded Age; Lincoln, Abraham; Middle-Class Manhood; Militarism; Military; Nationalism; Passionate Manhood; Slavery; Southern Manhood; Strenuous Life; Victorian Era; War; Whiteness; White Supremacism; Youth

—Thomas Winter

CLASS

The economic and social transformations engendered by industrialization, urbanization, and the emergence of a market economy in the nineteenth century led to processes of class formation, class difference, and class identity that have profoundly shaped definitions of manliness in the United States. A man's position in the process of production, the type of work he performs, and the amount of managerial and entrepreneurial control he exercises are determinants of class status and are intricately connected to notions of masculinity and gender. As an expression of a man's economic status, and of the cultural attitudes and perceptions that it engenders, class and class difference are connected to articulations of gender and manliness in U.S. society.

Manhood and Social Hierarchy in Preindustrial Society

The notion of class divisions did not exist in preindustrial America, but emerged with the separation of labor from managerial control and ownership of the means of production that were part of the Industrial Revolution. Yet preindustrial society recognized social hierarchies and status distinctions that were closely intertwined with definitions of manhood. Status distinctions were reflected in three different paradigms of manliness that prefigured subsequent class-based definitions of masculinity: patrician, artisan, and yeoman. The patrician, who inherited European aristocratic ideals of manhood based on honor, cultural refinement in taste and conduct, and substantial property ownership, saw himself as one of the trustworthy few who fulfilled his duties and obligations and served the republic

by providing leadership to society. In turn, the patrician expected and received the deference of those below him in social standing. The artisan and the yeoman both emphasized economic self-sufficiency and independence as the basis of citizenship and manliness, but they had different economic foundations. The artisanal ideal of manliness, rooted in craft-based production, emphasized workplace autonomy and craft-based solidarity, whereas the yeoman emphasized access to and ownership of land as the marks of autonomy and manliness.

Industrialization and the Market Revolution

In the early nineteenth century, industrialization and the market revolution fundamentally reshaped processes of economic production, manufacturing, and distribution, as well as the social experiences of work and business. These economic transformations created new forms of social stratification and new notions of manliness based on class difference.

Class-based constructions of masculinity were grounded in experiences of work, income-generating activity, and economic transactions. The control over one's labor power and the ability to participate in an expanding marketplace—called “transactional manhood” by the historian Scott Sandage—increasingly set the standards by which men defined themselves as men and as members of particular social classes. Industrialization and the market revolution slowly replaced an ideal of manliness grounded in propertied independence with an ideal rooted in acquisitive individualism and the ability to engage in economic transactions.

Merchants, lawyers, and those artisans who were able to expand their operations formed the core of an emerging middle class and conformed most closely to a notion of transactional manhood. For these men, entrepreneurial control over one's business operations, and one's workforce became fundamental both to class status and to class-based definitions of manliness. Middle-class manhood meant, above all, espousing an individualistic ethos, being continually “on the make,” and embracing those behaviors deemed necessary for economic success—particularly self-control, industry, sobriety, rationality, and competitiveness.

For upper-class men, ideas of manhood remained grounded in property, power, wealth, quasi-aristocratic status, and social leadership (not unlike the eighteenth-century patrician). They aspired through their wealth, social position, and political clout to conduct themselves as civic stewards, offering guidance and giving shape to an urbanizing and industrializing society by holding political office, performing charitable