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Military Occupation, Sexual Violence, and the Struggle over Masculinity in The early Reconstruction South

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Abstract

This inquiry centers on the way that sexual violence became the terrain upon which the struggles of the postemancipation and early Reconstruction South were waged. At the start of the Civil War, Confederate discourse played upon the fears of sexual violence engulfing the South with the invasion of Union armies. The nightmare never came to Southern households; rape was infrequently reported. However, Southern women, especially if they were African American, were subjected to sexual violence, which likely increased as the war dragged on. Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to, rape. Destruction of clothing, invasion of domestic spaces, and other actions could also constitute sexualized violence. With Confederate surrender came the ultimate humiliation to white Southerners: the military occupation of the South by United States Colored Troops. To white Southerners, occupation by USCTs marked the complete collapse of slavery and the inversion of Southern racial relations. Race and gender's link in the 19th century South meant that the racial instability caused by military occupation would frequently be depicted in gendered discourses. Southern newspapers continually reported on sexual crimes committed by African Americans during 1865 and 1866 to justify white supremacist violence. The newspapers reportage of a rape committed by black soldiers in South Carolina marked a transition in white Southern discourses about black sexuality. Once described as docile and obedient, white Southerners now articulated a vision of hypersexual black men who threatened the purity of white Southern men. In retaliation for real and imagined "outrages" committed by African Americans, white vigilante groups engaged in violence that attempted to demonstrate the superiority of white masculinity. Lynch mobs were the most common public demonstration of white masculine power. Lynch mobs and "night-rider" organizations engaged in brutal attacks against black men for alleged sexual indiscretions.

Keywords

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Comments

Written for History 425: Seminar on the American Civil War

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HIST 425: Seminar in the American Civil War

Abstract

This inquiry centers on the way that sexual violence became the terrain upon which the struggles of the postemancipation and early Reconstruction South were waged. At the start of the Civil War, Confederate discourse played upon the fears of sexual violence engulfing the South with the invasion of Union armies. The nightmare never came to Southern households; rape was infrequently reported. However, Southern women, especially if they were African American, were subjected to sexual violence, which likely increased as the war dragged on. Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to, rape. Destruction of clothing, invasion of domestic spaces, and other actions could also constitute sexualized violence. With Confederate surrender came the ultimate humiliation to white Southerners: the military occupation of the South by United States Colored Troops. To white Southerners, occupation by USCTs marked the complete collapse of slavery and the inversion of Southern racial relations. Race and gender's link in the 19th century South meant that the racial instability caused by military occupation would frequently be depicted in gendered discourses.

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white masculine power. Lynch mobs and "night-rider" organizations engaged in brutal attacks against black men for alleged sexual indiscretions.

Introduction

On or about August 20th in McPhersonville, South Carolina James Grippen, Ben Redding and at least five other men from the 104th USCT looted the home of Florence Mew's father, who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Union and had been promised protection from plundering soldiers. As Florence Mew fled the house, Grippen chased her through the yard before carrying her into the house and raping her. On the same night, the group burned Mary Heapse's house and raped her daughter Euselia and another woman, Mary McTier. Grippen was found guilty of ransacking Mew's house and raping Mew, while Redding was found guilty for aiding and abetting the rapes.[1] A simple notice in the December 06 *Edgefield Advertiser* notified the public "Two negro soldiers, James Grippen and Ben Redding, 104th USCT, were hung at Hilton Head, Monday, the 20th, having been found guilty of rape, burglary, and arson, committed on the 20th of August last, near McPhersonville, on the persons and property of some estimable white persons."[2]

Southern newspaper readers would not have been surprised to read a notice of occupying black soldiers engaging in criminal activity. In fact, it was exactly what they had been reading for since Appomattox. The newspaper accounts confirmed what white Southerners had expected with the collapse of slavery. The supposed bonds of mutual dependency, so essential to the "civilizing" of African American man, were forever severed. With many white men away

[1] Edward C. Johnson, *All Were Not Heroes: A Study of the List of U.S. Soldiers executed by U.S. Military Authorities during the Late War.*(self-published, Illinois, 1997), 381-382. Kim Murphy, *I Had Rather Die: Rape in the Civil War.* (Batesville, VA: Coachlight Press, 2014), 47.
[2] December 06 1865 *Edgefield Advertiser,* Edgefield, South Carolina.

fighting in the Civil War, there were fears among Southern women that they would now be subject to the sexual licentiousness of African American men. At the same point, Southerners were deeply suspicious of the Federal troops they came in contact with, depicting them as barbarous invaders. The enlistment of African American men in the Union armies, in white Southern eyes, now gave government sponsorship to what they expected to be widespread raping and pillaging of the South. Though no widespread raping of the South occurred, an investigation of moments where sexual violence was committed by black men against white women and the resulting public response can add a new level of complexity to scholarly understanding of the intersection of race and gender in Reconstruction. An investigation into these violent encounters and their representation offers a window into the contentious political and cultural issues of citizenship, manhood, and race at the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction.[3] A canvassing of Southern newspapers reveal that white Southerners felt humiliated to be militarily occupied by black soldiers, who they believed corrupted freedpeople. In response to what they perceived as the unrestrained sexuality of black men, white Southern men established organizations that used violent measures in an attempt to reestablish their power over the bodies of black and white women. Black men exercising their new rights was a challenge to the masculinity of white Southern men, who feared their exclusive grip on social and political power was slipping. Purported incidents of sexual violence committed by black men against white women were a challenge to white men's possession of women and were frequently responded to with brutal violence that attempted to demonstrate the superiority of white Southern masculinity. Sexual violence was an act with deep political implications in 1865 and 1866. It is the hope of

[3] Hannah Rosen, "In the Moment of Violence: Writing the History of Postemancipation Terror" in *Beyond Freedom: Disrupting the History of Emancipation*, ed. David Blight and Jim Downs. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 146.

this paper to recover how Reconstruction was not only a political process, but a gendered and racialized one.

Historiography

This inquiry's methodology is shaped by recent scholarly re-evaluation of the way that race and gender are represented in the archive. Marisa Fuentes' *Dispossessed Lives* reads through archival silences to understand the creation of race, gender, and sexuality in slave societies and "how those constructions of identity directed and influenced life experiences…"[4] Fuentes emphasizes that archival fragments uncover and obscure the racial, gendered, and sexual experiences of enslaved women.[5] The application of theoretical approaches to power, the production of text, and constructions of gender and race in the archival readings of source material uncover how gender and power obscured the voices of "subordinate" peoples in the archive.[6] Lisa Ze Winters warns historians against falling prey to the seduction of the dominant archive's coherent narrative that dictates and maintains the lines between slavery and freedom and determines who moves from one to the other- and how.[7] The dominant archive is bound in the mutually supportive social constructions where stability is depicted as whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality.[8] Interracial sex was used in transatlantic slavery as a way to "produce and preserve racial distinctions and power relationships" - a relationship that continues in archival documents. Control over the bodily self, to Ze Winter argues, marks the true distinction between slavery and freedom.[9] Mary Louise Roberts' study of sex and the Second

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[4] Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive.* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 2.
[5] Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives,* 3.
[6] Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives,* 6.
[7] Lisa Ze Winters, *The Mulatta Concubine: Terror, Intimacy, Freedom, and Desire in the Black Transatlantic.* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 180-181.
[8] Ze Winters, *The Mulatta Concubine,* 171.
[9] Ze Winters, *The Mulatta Concubine,* 4-6.

World War shows that the sexual body "is historically implicated in relations of power." Roberts recovers that sexual relations came to "possess larger political meanings and provided crucial models of submission and dominance."[10] These theoretical approaches are crucial in shaping the reading of 19th century archival documents about the intersection of gender and race.

Historians have generally agreed that white Southerners expressed their fears of emancipation through gendered language. In 1980, Leon Litwack noted that slaveholders paid close attention to enslaved peoples, looking for signs of resistance. The presence of invading Union armies made white Southerners hypersensitive to the behavior of African Americans. White Southerners believed it was impossible for them to coexist alongside freedpeoples: "behind every discussion and skirmish involving racial separation lurked the specter of unrestrained black lust and sexuality, with that most feared of consequences – racial amalgamation…"[11] In particular, black male sexuality was menacing because it was deemed uncontrollable and threatened the purity of white women.[12] Black men raping white Southern men was considered the ultimate repudiation of white male authority and Southern men acted quickly and decisively to reassert white power in the face of such an affront.[13] The invasion of the South by armies with African American troops was particularly shocking to Southerners who were haunted by their fears that black troops would lead a generalized slave revolt during the war's closing months.[14] Stories of Union soldier's brutality - real and imagined – became a

[10] Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 7.
[11] Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery.* (New York: Random Books, 1980), 65, 176, 265.
[12] Litwack, *Been In the Storm So Long,* 266.
[13] Clarence Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia.* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 219 – 220.
[14] Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom,* 280.

hallmark of Southern journalism and oratory, inspiring many to continue fight on, lest they find themselves subjugated to Northern rule.[15]

Scholars have noted an evolution in the usage of violence against civilians during the Civil War. Mark Grimsley's classic *The Hard Hand of War* charts how at the start of the Civil War, enemy civilians were considered exempt from the severities of war, but the private soldier eventually pillaged and vandalized, threatening the effectiveness of conciliation. Soldiers' destructive behavior evolved throughout the war with soldiers originally taking mainly foodstuffs and often showing reluctance to enter civilian homes, or venture into private spaces of the home.[16] Eventually, by 1864, raids into civilian homes became commonplace, particularly during Sherman's March to the Sea. Grimsley notes that while a commander's orders may have been to only gather food, soldiers "would not be gentle about it, and would frequently contribute their own gratuitous thefts, rapes, and assaults."[17] Sherman's March to the Sea has provided historians with ample evidence of gender's impact on military-civilian interactions. A recent reframing of Sherman's March has considered the household as a battleground and women as combatants during 1864 and 1865. Lisa Tendrich Frank argues that white Southern women stood their ground in the face of violence from Union soldiers.[18] Anne Sarah Rubin's study of Sherman's March to the Sea uncovered that soldiers often inflicted gendered violence on women that stopped short of physical rape. Even the very threat of sexual assault "had real import for

[15]Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 89.
[16] Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14,39, 104.
[17] Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 213.
[18] Lisa Tendrich Frank, *The Civilian War: Confederate Women and Union Soldiers during Sherman's March to the Sea.* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

Southern white women, leading them to question the ability of Southern white men to protect them…"[19]

Recent scholarship has focused on the relationship between violence and gender during the Civil War. Leann Whites and Alecia Long see Butler's Women Order and Sherman's March as "tips of an iceberg rather than as a first course and the dastardly dessert reluctantly served up by military men to unruly women in the course of the war itself."[20] Whites and Long challenge historians to take an expansive view of the battlefield, allowing for women to become direct military factors.[21] Whites has posed the Civil War as a crisis in gender based on the proper vision of "free manhood" and that white Southern men experienced a crisis in their masculinity because of their defeat in the Civil War.[22] Frank argues that the Civil War "turned the household inside out" and laid bare the significance of gender. Frank concludes that gender was a central factor in the conduct and outcome of the war.[23] Bill Blair has built on Whites to show how the battle for control over domestic space during military occupation throughout the war was also a battle for the political will of the Confederacy. Blair recovers how with the breakdown of the sanctity of the house, race and gender became crucial factors in soldier-noncombatant interactions. The breakdown of household order sent a strong message to Southern women that Confederate men could not protect them, leaving them vulnerable to the whims of Union soldiers. Blair contends for power of "symbolic rape", including invading women's bedrooms and defiling their

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[19] Anne Sarah Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman's March and American Memory.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 50.
[20] LeeAnn Whites and Alecia Long, ed. *Occupied Women; Gender ,Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 9.
[21] Whites and Long, *Occupied Women*, 6.
[22] LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War As a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890.* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 9, 10.
[23] LeeAnn Whites, *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction and the Making of the New South.* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 6.

clothing.[24] Like Blair, Leann Whites and Lisa Tendrich Frank recently argued that the war revolved around the homefront and household relations. Considering the Civil War as a household war allows for the examination of how gender influenced the war in a way that breaks the arbitrary division between household and battlefront.[25]

Historians have disagreed to the extent to which rape occurred during the Civil War. Susan Brownmiller argued that the Civil War was a low rape war. [26] Other scholars have agreed. In her study of elite Southern women, Drew Gilpin Faust contends that "white females, particularly those of the elite, were rarely victims of rape by invading soldiers."[27] Reid Mitchell agreed that "it was reasonable to conclude that one reason so few rapes were reported is that very few rapes occurred."[28] Crystal Feimster challenged Mitchell's assertion that sexual violence rarely occurred during the war. Feimster argues that most rapes most likely went unreported because it would have publicized the tarnishing of a woman's virtue. Of the 250 court martial cases for rape during the Civil War, the majority "involved black women raped by white men or white women raped by black men, suggesting that race played a key role not only in the cases the Union army sought to pursue, but also in who was willing to report rape."[29] Susan Barber and Charles Ritter have likewise challenged the notion that the Civil War was a low rape war. Barber and Ritter recovered that over 400 women, ranging in age from 5 to 82, brought charges of

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[24] Bill Blair, *With Malice Toward Some: Treason and Loyalty in the Civil War Era.* (Chapel Hil: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 129- 152.
[25] Lisa Tendrich Frank and Leaan Whites, "The Civil War as a Household War", *Household War: How Americans Lived and Fought the Civil War* ed Lisa Tendrich Frank and LeAnn Whites. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 5.
[26] Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 89. Reid Mitchell engages with Brownmiller, see Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 104.) Drew Gilpin Faust likewise cites Brownmiller, see *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 296n6.
[27] Faust, *Mothers of Invention,* 200.
[28] Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair,* 105.
[29] Crystal N. Feimster, "General Benjamin Butler & The Threat of Sexual Violence during the American Civil War" *Daedalus* 138 no.2 (Spring 2009), 127.

sexual violence against Union soldiers and civilians working for the army. Similar to Feimster, Barber and Ritter attribute the under reporting of rapes to 19th century ideas about white women's purity and an unwillingness to expose such sexual matters to public scrutiny. Barber and Ritter definitively conclude that the Civil War, like countless other conflicts, saw women's bodies as a legitimate terrain to wage war.[30]

Military Occupation of the South created a tense relationship between Southern whites and USCT troops. Joseph Glatthaar argues that as the public navigated the new relationship between whites and freedpeoples during Reconstruction, USCT's were exposed to the tension and hostility of being unwelcome occupiers. Continuing to keep units composed of freedmen on occupation duty gave the government more time to figure out the questions of labor that were at the forefront of Reconstruction, at the expense of increased hostility to black troops, who white Southerners perceived as corrupting racial boundaries.[31] The social tension, at moments, exploded into outright violence between USCTs, white Southerners, and freedpeople. In North Carolina, white residents accused occupying soldiers of brutality, insolence, and giving false hope to the freedpeople. Mark Bradley captures that white citizens "invariably claimed that they were victims of unprovoked outrages at the hands of brutal African American troops…The reports were often based on hearsay and lacked such essential details as names, places, and dates."[32] Newspaper reports of these imagined outrages were publicized by white Southerners to

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[30] E. Susan Barber and Charles F. Ritter, "Dangerous Liaisons: Working Women and Sexual Justice in the American Civil War." *European Journal of American Studies* 10 no.1 (2015), 3. See also, Barber and Ritter "Physical Abuse…Rough Handling' : Race, Gender and Sexual Justice in the Occupied South" *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War* ed. LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 49-64.

[31] Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers.* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 209-214.

[32] Mark Bradley, *Bluecoats and Tar Heels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina.*(Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 60.

illustrate the danger of continued military occupation by black soldiers.[33] White Southerners were attempting to deny or illegitimate the social changes emancipation required, hoping to maintain their system of racial subordination. USCTs actively used violence to combat injustice against themselves and freedpeople.[34]

The questions of land and labor that long dominated Reconstruction studies have been strengthened by new studies of gender. After the Dunning school and Revisionist trends faded, Eric Foner's *Reconstruction* has stood as the single best volume on Reconstruction. Importantly Foner stresses that the Klan was a "military force serving the interests of the Democratic party, the planter class, and all those who desired the restoration of white supremacy."[35] Building on Foner, Lisa Cardyn finds that the sexual violence frequently used by the Klan had its antecedents in antebellum slavery, where white men frequently used sexual violence to demonstrate their power.[36] Victoria Bynum has demonstrated that during Reconstruction defeated Confederates "were determined that no matter what level of violence it took, or what changes in the law, men of color must not become the equal of white men…"[37] Frequently, members of the Klan had been veterans of Confederate armies – demonstrating their commitment to the ideology of white masculinity. Breaking from Cardyn's and Bynum's monolithic focus of the on the ground violence Elaine Parsons has recently argued for the existence of two Klans: the thousands of real men on the ground inflicting violence and the disembodied Klan that relied on public discourses

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[33] Bradley, *Bluecoats and Tar Heels,* 64.
[34] Andrew Lang, *In The Wake of War: Military Occupation, Emancipation, and Civil War America.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017), 198-202.
[35] Foner, quoted in Michael Fitzgerald, "Reconstruction Politics and the Politics of Reconstruction" *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on Postbellum America* ed. Thomas Brown (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 98.
[36] Lisa Cardyn, "Sexual Terror in the Reconstruction South," in *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War* ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 144.
[37] Victoria E. Bynum, "Disordered Households: Reconstruction, Klan Terror, and the Law," in *Household War: How Americans Lived and Fought the Civil* ed. Lisa Tendrich Frank and LeeAnn Whites (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 240.

about the meaning of organized white on black violence. Widespread heroic depictions of the Klan legitimized such brutal methods of control.[38]

The most important new addition to scholarly understandings of Reconstruction is Hannah Rosen's *Terror In The Heart of Freedom*. Rosen shows how the instability of race-based citizenship during Reconstruction led to debates about citizenship being fought using gendered language. Gendered rhetoric about race worked with sexual violence to produce "a climate of terror in which black men and women were forced to maneuver as they sought to claim their rights as citizens."[39] Black men having public power as an occupying military force threated not only white political dominance, but the private and patriarchal power of white men. Rape, as Rosen analyzes it, was a performance of social and political meaning conditioned upon discourses of gender and sex with racist meanings to rearticulate and reproduce the gendered discourse of race that made it possible.[40] More recently, Rosen has called for a deeper analysis of the moment of violence as a way to explore the political and cultural conflicts of their time, including the issues of land of labor. Analyzing attacks on black gender and sexuality can reveal how specific attacks "can best be understood as a manifestation of and a participant in discursive contests over what race was going to mean in a society without slavery."[41]

Sexual Violence in the Civil War Pre-1865.

The system of slavery depended on gendered rationale, including that white Southern women needed to be protected from the alleged threat of black men. Within slavery, race and

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[38] Elaine Frantz Parsons, Ku-*Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 10.
[39] Hannah Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the PostEmancipation South.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2009) 6.
[40] Rosen, *Terror in The Heart of Freedom*, 8.
[41] Hannah Rosen, "In The Moment of Violence: Writing the History of Post emancipation Terror" in *Beyond Freedom: Disrupting the History of Emancipation* ed. David W. Blight and Jim Downs (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 146.

gender were mutually constructed.[42] White men were the dominant, protective force in the South. Femininity in the antebellum South lauded docility, deference, dependence, and frailty, all of which would be challenged by the experience of war.[43] The removal of a significant number of white Southern men to war meant the loss of the "protection" they provided to their women. Southern diarist Kate Stone wrote in 1863 "I can stand anything but Negro and Yankee raiders. They terrify me out of my wits."[44] Implied in Stone's entry is a fear of sexual violation at the hands of black men and Union soldiers. Stone's fears were rooted in widely circulated "horrible stories of the outrages of the Yankees and Negroes that is an anxious time for only women and children."[45] Similarly, Richmond diarist Mary Chestnut recorded "Women can only stay at home - & every paper reminds us that women are to be violated – ravished & all manner of humiliation. How the daughters of Eve are punished?"[46] Southern women were dually afraid of sexual violation by Union invaders and from the enslaved peoples in their midst, whom they viewed with increasing suspicion.

The violence of the hard war of 1864 only increased Southern women's fears that they would be violated. By the first quarter of 1864, approximately 80% of Confederate men between the ages of seventeen and fifty were mobilized for war, leading one diarist to write "we would be practically helpless should the Negroes rise…It is only because the Negroes do not want to kill us we are still alive."[47] Southern white women's previous confidence that they would be spared from the violence of the war because of their gender eroded during Northern military advances

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[42] Feimster, "Impact of Racial and Sexual Politics on Women's History", *The Journal of American History,* vol. 99 no.3 (December 2012), 823.
[43] Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the 19th Century South*, 122.
[44] Kate Stone, *Brokenburn: The Diary of Kate Stone, 1861-1868.* Edited by John Q. Anderson. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 202.
[45] Stone, *Brokenburn*, 137.
[46] Mary Chestnut as quoted in Feimster "General Benjamin Butler and the threat of Sexual Violence during the Civil War", 127.
[47] Blair, *With Malice Toward Some,* 149. Stone, *Brokenburn*, 298.

of 1864.[48] Invented stories of brutality became commonplace in newspaper accounts, fueling a discourse that purported racial and sexual anarchy would follow Union victory. To one Augusta, Georgia woman, the thought of "negro rule" "withers my heart and paralyzes my will."[49] Messaging from newspapers and official proclamations found grounding in everyday experience, but much of the evidence recorded verbal assaults from black soldiers, not physical ones. A Southern diarist recorded how black soldiers "were very rough and insulting in their language to the ladies, tore the pockets from their dresses and the rings from their fingers, cursing and swearing, and frightening the helpless folks nearly into fits."[50] Following that entry was the reflection: "The Yankees know they make it ten times worse for us by sending Negroes to commit the atrocities."[51] Southern white women expected widespread raping, but that never occurred.

White Southerners equated the usage of black troops with slave revolts. Armed black men violated the treasured, paternalistic notion that enslaved peoples were docile by nature and forever loyal to their owners. With the absence of most white men physically capable of controlling enslaved peoples, the hegemonic relationship between enslaved peoples and masters teetered on collapsing. One planter wrote on the eve of the Emancipation Proclamation "our negroes are being taught by the abolition officers…they are all to be free, and will have a right even to kill their masters who may attempt to restrain them, which has aroused a lively apprehension in the minds…of a servile insurrection…"[52] Combined with the arming of black men in Federal units, one Louisiana planter wrote "Having been deceived in their expectation,

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[48] Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 199
[49] Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 86-89.
[50] Stone, *Brokenburn*, 297.
[51] Stone, *Brokenburn*, 297.
[52] *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War,* edited by Ira Berlin et. Al, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 83.

great crimes might be committed by them. The negro regiments, in particular, being organized and armed are especially to be feared."[53] The ultimate humiliation for white Southerners was seeing African American soldiers – some of them former slaves – patrolling city streets as military occupiers. This position inverted antebellum racial hierarchies and forced white Southerners to be compliant with the orders of black men.[54]

White Southerners often responded violently to black assertions of freedom during the Civil War. A freedwoman and widow of a USCT veteran dictated in a statement to the Freedmen's Bureau about an incident that happened in 1864 while she was still enslaved. While watching a company of USCTs march by the house, her master "knocked me to the floor senseless saying as he did so 'You have been looking at them darned nigger soldiers.' When I recovered my senses he beat me with a cowhide…When my husband was killed my masters whipped me severely saying my husband had gone into the army to fight against white folks…" The violence became sexualized when the master "tore all of my clothes off until I was entirely naked, bent me down, placed my head between his knees, then whipped me most unmercifully until my back was lacerated all over, the blood oozing out in several places so that I could not wear my underclothes without their becoming saturated with blood."[55] The feminine values that white Southerners expected would spare their women from sexualized violence during the war did not apply to enslaved women, whose bodies were often sexually brutalized and exploited under the system of slavery. Attempting to hold onto the institution of slavery for as long as possible, masters used sexualized violence to coerce enslaved women to continue to work, even though their husbands had received tentative freedom through enlistment. Frances Johnson

[53] *Free at Last*, 84.
[54] Litwack, *Been In The Storm So Long*, 97.
[55] *Free at Last*, 401.

recalled how her master tied her hands "to make an indecent exposure of my person" as he whipped her for refusing to perform labor.[56] Sexual violence intersected with white Southern attempts to continue to control labor, though the usage of such brutal violence demonstrates that the hegemonic relationship between enslaved and master had fallen apart.

Such brutal and sexualized violence colored Union soldier's perceptions of a seemingly wayward South. Many Northerners held Southern women responsible for encouraging their men to maintain fighting past the point of reason, creating an image of Southern women as "hysterical, irrational, treacherous" and a woman that could be considered an enemy. Northerners even dubbed Southern women "she-devils" as a way of demonstrating that their political activism during the war had transgressed past what was acceptable gendered behavior.[57] Northern soldiers would use violence – both symbolic and literal – against Southern women. Violence could be sexualized and still fall short of rape. A Southern preacher recorded that during Sherman's March to the Sea "a lady of delicacy and refinement…was compelled to strip before them, that they might find concealed watches and other valuables under her dress." Anne Sarah Rubin notes that such incidents were a close second to rape in terms of both trauma and dishonor. [58] Such incidents of "symbolic rape" included breaking into bedrooms, defiling women's clothing all sent a strong message to Southern women that their men had failed to protect them. Though military and civilian leaders did not condone harm to civilians, let alone rape or assaults on women, soldiers in practice did "contribute their own gratuitous thefts, rapes, and assaults."[59]

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[56] *Families & Freedom: A Documentary History of African-American Kinship in The Civil War Era*, edited by Ira Berlin and Leslie S. Rowland, (The New Press: New York, 1997), 111.
[57] Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair*, 91-102.
[58] Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie*, 50.
[59] Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 152. Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 213.

The Fall of Richmond

Residents of Richmond closely observed the behavior of African Americans in and around the city. Mayor Joseph Mayo was elected for more than a dozen years on a platform that included "to make all negroes and mulattoes know their places and obey the laws."[60] Newspapers that circulated through the capital seemed to depict increasing lawlessness among African Americans as the war continued. In 1862, the *Whig* reported that a majority of the city's black residents were "thriftless and lazy vagabonds" while the *Dispatch*'s editor called free blacks in particular "idle, trifling, and good for nothing."[61] Black crimes were suspected of a result of their Union sympathy, as the *Examiner* wrote in 1864 "our free negroes are very disorderly, many of them doubtless disloyal. In the towns, and especially the city of Richmond, they are guilty of many outrages on persons and property…"[62] The term "outrage" was used to refer to crimes of an unspeakable nature, traditionally sexual assault of some sort. Richmond papers frequently reported sexual misdeeds of locals, including an incident where a white woman was "committed to the cage on the charge of associating with a negro, who was also locked up."[63] Antebellum Southerners had tolerated sexual interactions between black men and white women, but as slavery collapsed, power dynamics required tightening and interracial sex became frowned upon, if not punishable by law.[64] Newspaper accounts throughout 1864 emphasized to Richmonders amorality of Union soldiers and freedpeoples. In response to the Stoneman and Averill raids, the *Examiner* warned readers of the "mad dogs and mad oxen" of

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[60] As quoted in Stephen Ash, *Rebel Richmond: Life and Death in the Confederate Capital*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019), 163.
[61] As quoted in Ash, *Rebel Richmond*, 161.
[62] *Daily Richmond Examiner*, December 9, 1864.
[63] Ash, *Rebel Richmond*, 177.
[64] Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999), 6.

the Union forces who intended to commit "outrages."[65] The same article also laid the groundwork for post-war vigilante organizations by calling men to defend their homes in the name of chivalry and Christianity, even if the government failed to mobilize protections for them.

The destruction of Columbia, South Carolina foreshadowed what Richmonders feared would become of their own city. An eyewitness account from a newspaper reporter claimed "while thousands were plundering, pillaging, and burning, others were abusing, drinking, and insulting, others were committing rape, adultery, and fornication…The most brutal, horrid crimes were committed this night."[66] For those soldiers who stopped short of rape, one historian demonstrates that they understood looting and destroying private possessions as a way to humiliate female civilians without physically violating their bodies.[67] More than two months after Columbia's capture, newspapers were still reporting alleged accounts of the city's downfall, including three full columns of alleged crimes in the *Columbia Phoenix* that reported knowledge of "horrid narratives of rape are given which we dare not attempt to individualize."[68] Newspaper accounts seem to demonstrate that the army had little respect for the sanctity of private domestic space and were particularly keen to take advantage of women who lived on isolated farms. Despite white Southerners paying special attention to crimes and widely circulating stories of sexual violation, historian Anne Sarah Rubin has rightly asserted there was "no wholesale raping and pillaging of white Southerners" during the war.[69] That the discourse of sexual violence committed by Union soldiers persisted throughout the war and into Reconstruction demonstrates

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[65] *Richmond Examiner*, March 11, 1864.
[66] *Edgefield Advertiser*, n.d.
[67] Joan Cashin, "Torn Bonnets and Stolen Silks: Fashion, Gender, Race, and Danger in the Wartime South." *Civil War History* 61, no.4 (December 2015), 352.
[68] *Columbia Phoenix*, April 8, 1865.
[69] Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 152.

the white Southern commitment to the belief that equated defeat to the sexual violation of their women.

In the conquered city of Richmond, both Federal military officials and white city residents would pay close attention to the behavior of USCTs. On April 8th, Major General August Kautz, commander of a division of USCTs in the XXV Corps wrote in his journal that he "found [Brevet] General Draper's men were straggling beyond the entrenchments committing depredations."[70] Draper's brigade contained the men of the 38th USCT who would be charged with raping Southern white women in the coming days. Within Richmond itself, Samuel Mapp of the 10th USCT was executed for inciting mutiny. Mapp's public execution was made a grand affair, complete with a viewing crowd of the public. Nelson Lankford argues that such a spectacle was intended to punish Mapp and to warn his comrades not to attempt anything similar, while also impressing Richmonders with the army's strict discipline and intolerance for crimes committed by its soldiers.[71] The strong opposition of Richmonders to the continued presence of black soldiers occupying the city was a significant factor in the decision to send USCTs out of the city and leave white troops to occupy.[72] Implicit in this fear was apprehension that black men had a proclivity to crime, particularly sexual violence.

The Rape of Fanny Crawford and Eliza Woodson

The rape of white Southern women by USCTs demonstrates how race and gender impacted the exercise of military authority. The studying of these moments of violence aims "at

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[70] August Kautz Personal Diary, *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ed. Janet B. Hewett, Noah Andre Trudeau and Bryce A. Suderow, 34 + vols (Wilmington, Broadfoot, 1994), ser. 1, VII, 707. Original discovery of this source was Mark Lause, "Turning the World Upside Down: A Portrait of Labor and Military Leader, Alonzo Granville Draper," *Labor History* 44 no.2 (2003), 204 n.304

[71] Nelson Lankford, *Richmond Burning: The Last Days of the Confederate Capital*, (New York: Penguin, 2002), 239.

[72] Frances Casstevens, *Edward Wild and the African Brigade in The Civil War*. (Jefferson, McFarland & Company 2003), 204.

developing useful interpretations of the symbolic universe of the assailants that made particular kinds of violence both meaningful and legitimate to the perpetrators, and that shaped in part the experience of the victims."[73] Hannah Rosen argues that the language, gestures, and scenes can add a new level of understanding to post-emancipation terror.[74] The "post-emancipation terror" can and should be applied to the brutal and often sexualized violence experienced by African Americans, something scholars have investigated. This inquiry seeks to understand how white Southerners also perceived a "post-emancipation terror" where sexual violence was perpetrated by black men against white women and laid the foundation for white Southerners discourses about black sexuality that would persist until well into the 20th century. Martha Hodes has successfully argued that white Southerners "conflated black men's alleged sexual misconduct toward white women with the exercise of their newly won political rights."[75] That the rape cases happened and how they were – or were not – reported demonstrates the rapidly changing Southern discourse about black male sexuality.

On the night of April 11th, 1865, 8 men of the 38th USCT broke into the house of Mrs. Fanny Crawford.[76] Crawford's 13-year-old niece, Eliza Woodson, was also in the house. Among the eight men who were in the group, four fled, leaving at the house at Dandridge Brooks, William Jackson, and John Shepherd, all of whom would be charged for crimes they committed that night. Another man, John Adams, eluded capture.[77] Brooks was born in Essex County,

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[73] Rosen, "In The Moment of Violence: Writing the History of Post emancipation Terror," 147.
[74] Rosen, "In The Moment of Violence: Writing the History of Post emancipation Terror," 145.
[75] Hodes, *White Women, Black Men,* 6.
[76] Mrs. Fanny Crawford was married to Washington Crawford, a farmer who was born in Baltimore and worked in Henrico County, Virginia as a Farmer until his death at age 64 in December 1867. Ancestry.com. *Virginia, Deaths and Burials Index, 1853-1917* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011. The attack occurred at Crawford's home, three or four miles from Richmond on the Deep Run Road. Eliza Woodson lived on the same road and estimated her distance from Richmond at four miles. Page 26 and 33 of file no. mm 1972, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1938.
[77] Murphy, *I Had Rather Die,* 45-46.

Virginia but enlisted at Point Lookout Maryland, suggesting that he was once enslaved before self-emancipating. Jackson was born in Middlesex County, Virginia and enlisted at Newport News, VA. John Shepherd's place of birth is not recorded and his enlistment in Washington, D.C. makes his legal status difficult to ascertain. On the night of the assault, Brooks broke down the door of the house, and encouraged Shepherd to shoot Fanny Crawford. The trial transcripts disagree as to how many shots were fired, who fired shots, and what the intended target of the shots was. Brooks entered the bedroom of Woodson, brutally raped her before another comrade also raped Woodson. At the same time, two men also raped Crawford before the house was ransacked and possessions from the house stolen.[78] Jackson and Shepherd also took part in the rape of Crawford and Woodson.[79]

The questions asked during the examination of Crawford and Woodson demonstrate Civil War era discourses about sexual violence. At this historic moment, the definitions of rape were blurry. Sex was understood as "an act done to women rather than one in which women participated."[80] Diane Miller Sommerville has shown that the prosecution of rapists hinged on proof of coercion, meaning that had an accuser had to prove that the attacker had used force in the assault.[81] The Judge Advocate's examination of Eliza Woodson, though she was only 13, focused on if she adequately resisted Brooks' attempts. A string of questions asked Crawford "what reason have you to think he would kill you," "What did you do to prevent his putting you on the bed," while the Court Followed by repeatedly asking Woodson "In what ways did you try to prevent him," and "did you make any struggle when he was attempting to enter your

[78] Johnson, *All were not heroes*, 368.
[79] Johnson, *All were not heroes*, 369-370, 380-381.
[80] Victoria Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South*. (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 97.
[81] Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the 19th Century South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 91.

person?"[82] Fanny Crawford was subjected to a similar line of questioning as the prosecution attempted to establish if Brooks had raped both women within in the confines of existing legal definitions. In her analysis of this same case, Martha Hodes demonstrations that not all whites would immediately assume guilt when white women leveled accusations of rape against black men, though black men were more likely to be convicted and sentenced to death than white men accused of the same crime.[83] The thorough questioning of Crawford and Woodson demonstrates that the hypersexuality of black men was not yet agreed upon by white society.

The Court Martial transcript of Brooks reveals how military justice included black men at a time when their status in civil courts was uncertain. After direct examination of Private Edward Berry, 38th USCT, Dandridge Brooks cross examined Berry, asking him four questions. Brooks did not ask any questions of the next witness, Private Anthony Branch, 38th USCT, was recorded for reasons of "The prisoner not deserving to ask the witness any questions…"[84] Brooks declined to ask questions of the next two witnesses, who were also comrades in the regiment. The next witness was Colonel – soon to be Brigadier General- Alonzo Draper of the 36th USCT to whom the crime was first reported by "a Mr. Woodson"[85] After Draper was questioned by the Prosecution and the Judge Advocate, Brooks was offered the opportunity to ask Draper questions – a black enlisted man was able to cross examine a white officer. Additionally, Brooks was offered the ability to cross examine Fanny Crawford and the 14 year old Eliza Woodson, but again did not desire to.[86] Brooks seemed to waive his right to have an advisor present to assist him during the trial, though the advisor could not speak to the court or examine witnesses. The

[82] Brooks transcript trial pages, 26-31.
[83] Hodes, *White Women, Black Men*, 142-143.
[84] Page 15 of Court Martial Transcript of Dandridge Brooks
[85]Mr. Woodson would be William S. Woodson, the brother of Fanny Crawford. Woodson was in his home across the road from the Crawford house on the night of the attack. See Johnson, *All Were Not Heroes,* 369.
[86] Page 38 of Court Martial Transcript of Dandridge Brooks

first day of Brooks trial was just 8 days after the crime was committed, demonstrating the Army's public commitment to swiftly dealing with any case of sexual assault.[87] Steven J. Ramold argues that the army acted swiftly to handle sexual violence because "tainted both the reputation of the Union army and sullied the honor of being a soldier," which would have only furthered increased Southern civilian irritation at having Union soldiers, particularly black soldiers, occupying them.[88]

The public execution of Brooks and his three convicted comrades was an important part of the Army's demonstration of authority. Not long after the trial, the 38th USCT would be ordered away from Richmond to Brownsville, Texas. Brooks went in chains and was hung on July 30th, along with William Jackson and John Shepard. The public nature of their punishment was to demonstrate publicly that such behavior would not be tolerated and made an elaborate ritual out of executions to deter other soldiers from committing crimes.[89] The very private nature of the execution of the men is a sharp contrast to the famous photographs taken by Matthew Brady of USCT William Johnson who was hanged in Virginia in 1864 for raping a white woman. Brady's photograph of Johnson's body still hanging from the gallows, indicates an absence of the formal military ritual that traditionally accompanied executions. In Johnson's case, his execution was not a chance to assert the authority of the Union army. Rather, "the Union army offered up the spectacle of William Johnson's death to Confederate troops in a gesture of prospective reconciliation. Remarkably, a white flag was flown at Johnson's execution, and he was hanged in plain view of both Union and nearby Confederate troops.[90] The

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[87] Stephen J. Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army*, (Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 265.
[88] Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 297.
[89] Ramold, *Barring the Iron Hand*, 345 and 369.
[90] Fanny Nudelman, *John Brown's Body*: *Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War.* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), 149.

execution of Brooks and his comrades, failed to make the same very public statement as did the execution of Johnson's. Johnson's informal hanging demonstrated to white Southerners that the Federal government would not permit black soldiers commit sexual crimes against white women. Hanging was the method of execution for common criminals, while soldiers were executed by firing squads.[91] The Court Martial's usage of hanging for Brooks marks the ultimate repudiation the army could use against one of its own soldiers.

Although Brooks was convicted of rape, Southern papers surprisingly did not sensationalize this crime. In fact, it was barely mentioned in the press. Why did this crime go unreported? A historical silence in itself can reveal power relations. Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that silences enter the process of historical narratives at four different stages: the moment of fact creation, the moment of fact assembly, the moment of fact retrieval, and the moment of retrospective significance.[92] Silences are created by Crawford and Woodson only revealing information in response to the questions of military officers. Another challenge was how these women could articulate "unspeakable violence while also adhering to Victorian ideals of womanhood that censored what a respectable women could say publicly about rape."[93] The moment of fact assembly, or the making of archives, created silences in this document by placing the voices of civilian victims of war – Eliza Woodson and Fanny Crawford- in a military document dominated by male actions and male voices, thereby re-asserting patriarchal dominance of the archive.[94] The archiving of this document paradoxically preserves these womens' voices, while also preserving the brutal crimes they suffered and only preserving their

[91] Ramold, *Barring the Iron Hand*, 372.
[92] Michel Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (New York, Beacon, 2015), 22.
[93] Crystal Feimster, "What if I am a Women: Black Women's Campaigns for Sexual Justice and Citizenship" in *The World the Civil War Made* ed. Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 252.
[94] Ze Winter, *Mulatto concubine*, 11, 171.

voices as that of victims. Additionally, as Susan Barber and Charles Ritter note in their study of sexual assault court martial cases, "it is impossible to touch the emotion that was contained in the courtrooms, as the transcripts rarely make mention of women breaking down on the witness stand or exhibiting anger toward the accused."[95] All that is not recorded in the transcript because of the formulaic and detached style of court room reporting becomes a historical silence and challenges historians attempt to recover an event. Whether Woodson or Crawford wept or emotionlessly answered questions, or whether they yelled at the assailant, or mumbled assaults would further illuminate the court room, but such evidence is unavailable.

The creation of a narrative about the night of the rape of Woodson and Crawford also constructs silences. Trouillot notes that silences are inherent in any historical event, reflecting the controlling of historical narratives by those who maintain the power of narration.[96] Race played a significant factor in shaping the document's silences. Had the victims been white, the stakes of the trial may have been very difficult. In one sample, 83% of black soldiers were executed for sexually violent crimes, while only 20% of white soldiers were executed. Additionally, all those executed were found guilty of assaulting white women and girls. Lighter sentences, including imprisonment and forfeiture of pay, were the standard punishments for defendants of either race who assaulted African American women.[97] Race would not only impact the conduct of the trial by military justice officials, but also the way that Woodson and Crawford narrated their assault. Had the assailants been white, Woodson and Crawford may have not reported the crime at all or described it differently in court. Such crimes are often difficult to describe and are often

[95] Susan Barber and Charles Ritter, "Physical Abuse and Rough Handling" in *Occupied Women; Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War* LeeAnn Whites and Alecia Long, ed.. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 60.
[96] Rolph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49.
[97] Barber and Ritter, "Physical Abuse and Rough Handling," in *Occupied Women*, 63.

described by euphemism, as evidenced by Woodson's answer "I think you might know" when asked by the court "what did he enter your person with?"[98] In a diary entry or letter, Woodson and Crawford may have narrated the moment of their violation differently – if at all – then when having their responses shaped by the often terse questions of military officials. Woodson and Crawford may not have ever narrated their rape, if not for the military justice system, for fears that such an event would taint their personal honor and reputation, as well as that of their families.[99]

Southern newspaper editors also created silences through what they reported in their papers. Southern editors, in defending the interests of the slaveholding class, created narratives that portrayed African Americans as docile and obedient. If a slave committed a crime, especially a heinous one, newspaper editors often went mute. These silences are telling and intentional. They were critical to creating a sense of mastery and power as a "visible, outward usage of power… a symbolic gesture of domination that serve[d] to manifest and reinforce a hierarchical order."[100] The dominant transcript presented has its own silences and a complex history of creation.[101] Patrick Breen has cut through the archival silences in the Southern response to Nat Turner's 1831 revolt. White Southerners faced the broader uncertainty over understanding and making meaning of Turner's revolt. Over a long term process, spanning weeks, months, and years, the white residents of Southampton, Virginia would answer questions about if Turner's raid a fundamental challenge to Southampton's social structure or was it a

[98] Transcript, 31 and 32. E. Susan Barber and Charles Ritter, "Dangerous Liaisons:Working Women and Sexual Justice in the Civil War Era," *European Journal of American Studies* 10-1 (March, 2015), 3.
[99] Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 126. Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie*, 49.
[100] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 45.
[101] Scott, *Dominant and the Art of Resistance*, 51.

minor occurrence that posed relatively little long term danger.[102] Additionally, they would need to determine the relationship between the area's free and enslaved blacks to the revolt: to what level, if any, did the black community support Turner's revolt?[103] The same questions of meaning making would be faced by Richmond area whites after the rape of Woodson and Crawford. At the same moment when such meaning would be shaped, was also the historical moment where Richmond was captured and partially destroyed, as well as Lee's surrender at Appomattox. These events were large scale challenges to white Southerner's power – socially, politically, and narratively- with more pressing implications than this crime.

White Southerners Respond to Occupation

Perhaps the sexual violation of white women by black men, a crime relatively unheard of in the antebellum South, was simply too great a shame for white Southerners to process at the time.[104] As events settled, Southerners began to grapple with the fact that they were a conquered people. Military occupation was neither peacetime nor active battlefield as more than 100,000 troops remained in the South through the end of 1865. Greg Downs' study of military occupation after the Civil War shows that the rights and meanings of the war would continue to be at the heart of armed conflict between soldiers, freedpeoples, and ex-Confederates.[105] After Confederate battlefield surrender, white veteran units were mustered out, leaving the duties of occupation mainly to USCTs. USCTs were tasked with the difficult duty of aiding formerly enslaved peoples in the transition to freedom, while attempting to impose Reconstruction reforms on white Southerners.[106] White Southerners reacted strongly against such a plan, with

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[102] Patrick Breen, *The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood: A New History of the Nat Turner Revolt,* (London: Oxford University Press, 2017), 75.
[103] Breen, *The Land Shall be Deluged in Blood*, 75.
[104] Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*: *The World The Slaves Made*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 336.
[105] Gregory P. Downs, *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War.* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015), 5
[106] Glatharr, *Forged in Battle*, 210.

the *Memphis Daily Avalanche* appealing in January 1866 for the "necessity of abolishing the odious negro garrisons in our midst." The paper continued to say that "the negro in Federal Uniform, in the garb of conqueror, moving among white men of the South" was designed to "disturb all natural feelings of the white man" and "corrupts the whole negro population of the South."[107] A month later, the *Daily Avalanche* appealed to President Johnson directly to remove occupying black soldiers because "negro garrisons still occupy our towns and negro soldiers still insult our pure and suffering fair."[108] Implicit in the appeal to President Johnson is the recognition that being occupied by black soldiers was more than just a political humiliation for white Southerners, but also a gendered and racial humiliation as well.

White Southern men felt emasculated by their defeat in the Civil War and the subsequent experience of military occupation. By the spring of 1865, traditional Southern gender roles of men and women had collapsed.[109] Southern men had failed to uphold the gendered ideologies of honor and fortitude that had compelled them to fight in the war, while Southern women had found a new political voice during the war.[110] The disordered nature of gender signified a broader chaotic nature about the immediate postwar South.[111] Widespread crime committed by white Southerners provided clear evidence of this chaos. The *Atlanta New Era* reported a wave of crime that included rape, murder, and suicide among other unsavory acts. In mid-April 1865, the *Montgomery Advertiser* wrote of "a spirit of lawlessness seems to pervade the town."[112]

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[107] *Memphis Daily Avalanche*, January 23 1866
[108] *Memphis Daily Avalanche*, February 16 1866.
[109] Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 28.
[110] Rubin, *Shattered Nation*, 208.
[111] Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 38.
[112] Heather Cox Richardson, *West From Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 17-18.

Carole Emberton argues that white Southerners struggled to imagine a path forward in 185 while "wallowing in grief, self-pity, and despair…"[113]

This is not to suggest that white Southerners passively accepted occupation. Rather, white Southerners responded immediately and violently to this attempt to reform their society.[114] Southern whites were consistently clashed with freedpeoples and the occupying military in a struggle for political and social power. Public displays of freedom from both freedpeoples angered white Southerners who were anxious to undo the progress of emancipation.[115] USCTS saw themselves as the essential tool in the transformation of the South and worked to preserve and expand the new rights of freedpeoples. They had unprecedented levels of authority, creating the ultimate humiliation for white Southerners.[116] Occupying black soldiers shattered stereotypes of docile African Americans.[117] Andrew Lang's study of military occupation has uncovered that "the tension that gripped white communities garrisoned by black troops sometimes erupted into ferocious, clandestine attacks from citizens desperate to reclaim the fading racial promise of the Confederate nation."[118] For example, in July 1865 a black soldier garrisoning coastal North Carolina was killed by a local white man.[119] White attacks prompted violent reprisals from USCTs who demonstrated that they were no longer a subservient group of men.[120]

Land and labor animated the struggle between white Southerners, freedpeoples, and garrisoning forces. White Southern landowners resisted and attempted to find ways to coerce freedpeople back into a labor situation that closely resembled slavery. One Southern newspaper

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[113] Carole Emberton, *Beyond Redemption: Race, Violence, and the American South after the Civil War.* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2013), 25.
[114] Downs, *After Appomattox*, 55.
[115] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*. (New York: Harper, 1988), 79.
[116]Lang, *In The Wake of War*, 159-160. Litwack, *Been In the Storm So Long*, 96.
[117] Bennett, *Bluecoats and Tarheels*, 59.
[118] Lang, *In The Wake of War*, 164.
[119] Bennett, *Bluecoats and Tarheels*, 59.
[120] Lang, *In the Wake of War*, 169.

was less than shy in its declaration in July 1865: "The Southern planters- those especially in the cotton States -believe slave labor to be the only system of labor applicable to Southern lands, inasmuch as Southern products require an unremitting care and attention in their culture that is not consistent with free labor."[121] At the same moment, freedpeople attempted to carve out autonomy from white supervision by establishing their own households and farming their own land.[122] The ability to be the patriarch of their own household allowed black men to make claims to masculine power based in the position of head of household. Black men's newfound ability to control their own household was made possible through the failings of white Southern manhood – a fact not lost on white Southern men.[123] Sexualized violence perpetrated by white landowners against freedpeople was an attempt to assert their masculinity. Freedwoman Rhoda Ann Childs testified that she was thrown on the ground, as one man stood on her breast and "applied the strap to my private parts until fatigues into stopping, and I was more dead than alive. Then, a man, supposed to be an-ex Confederate soldier, as he was on crutches, fell upon me and ravished me…"[124] Childs testified that this violence was perpetrated by her former master because her husband had joined the Union army. The violation of her by a disabled Confederate can be seen as an attempt to reestablish masculinity lost through his wounding in the war, but also as political act against the challenging of "white men's exclusive political control over Southern society", something that was often written of in sexual terms.[125] By demonstrating his sexual power over Childs, this unnamed man demonstrated continued white political power.

[121] *Edgefield Advertiser*, June 14 1865
[122] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 103.
[123] Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*, 9.
[124] *Free At Last*, 537.
[125] Rosen, *Terror in The Heart of Freedom*, 126.

USCTs occupying the South advocated for freedpeople to pursue their new ability to be free from white supervision.[126] Citizens of Beaufort appealed to South Carolina's Provisional Governor Benjamin Franklin Perry to reprimand the occupying USCTs in the area because "the negro garrisons at Pocotaligo, Grahamville, and on Port Royal Island and Hilton Head inflame their hatred and desire to obtain the land of their former." The account continued to connect this struggle over land with a recent crime committed in the area: "The garrison at Pocotaligo recently aroused their determination to drive the whites out of the District, And but for the banding together of the latter and their threats, would doubtless have done so. The recent infamous outrages of the Pocotaligo garrison upon a family of respectable white females, was the first outbreak of this determination."[127] The process of Reconstruction was going to be an interlocked power struggle about land, race, and sexuality. For African Americans, the struggle for land was part of a broader struggle to be free of white control. For white Southerners, landowning gave them power necessary to attempt to control African American expressions of freedom through gender and sexuality.[128]

The Beaufort Outrage

The rape of two Southern white women by occupying USCTs in August 1865 would become one of the most famous crimes of Reconstruction. The above newspaper quote refers simply to the "recent infamous outrages of the Pocotaligo garrison upon a family of respectable white females."[129] What exactly are the infamous outrages? There were 8 regiments on occupation duty in the District of Port Royal. Among them was the 104th USCT, who in June

[126] Downs, *After Appomattox*, 52.
[127] *Daily Phoenix*, September 29 1865.
[128] Tera Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the 19th Century.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019), 254.
[129] *Daily Phoenix*, September 29 1865.

1865 were assigned to Fort Duane.[130] In August, a group of 6 or 7 soldiers from the 104th USCTs went to the home of Florence Mew's father – who had taken the oath of allegiance – and tied the men of the house up. Florence Mew and her mother attempted to escape out of a window but were chased by James Gripen and then brought into the house and then raped by Gripen and potentially two other men. The same night, the men burned the house of Mary Heape, beat her son, and raped her daughter Euselia.[131]

Reports of this crime would be circulated throughout newspapers. A report in the *Charlotte Western Democrat* provides more details on the days preceding the event. The article claims that a squad of soldiers had been arrested by town police and returned to the fort where the officers were "threatened by the colored troops" before being disarmed and allowed to return to the town. The editors allege that "Some of the negro soldiers, we learn, threatened to turn the cannon of the fort on the town of Beaufort." The article continues to give a rather accurate account of the crimes of the group of men from the 104th USCT. Convinced of the guilt of the "four of these devils" that had been captured, they demanded "Let them be shot immediately. They ought to be burnt at the stake for this horrid crime." The newspaper editors used this as evidence that the black soldiers should be removed and replaced with white soldiers.[132] The January 10 1866 *Richmond Examiner* published a condensed account of the Charlotte article, maintaining the plea for the soldiers to be shot or burned at the stake.[133] Burning at the stake was not an idle threat in the Reconstruction South as Klansmen in 1866 burned a black man at the stake for the alleged rape of a 16 year old girl, demonstrating that white Southerners had little

[130] *The New South*, July 22 1865.
[131] Court Martial Transcript of James Grippen, 104th United States Colored Infantry, file no. mm 3184 Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General.
[132] *Charlotte Western Democrat*, January 1866.
[133] *Richmond Examiner*, January 10 1866.

hesitation in responding to rape with other forms of brutal violence.[134] Significantly, this report was circulated in Northern papers. The January 17th *New Hampshire Patriot Gazette* included an extended account of the story published in *The Richmond Examiner*. The plea for execution, burning at the stake, and for white occupiers remained included.[135] This suggests gendered and racial reasoning for declining Northern support for the garrisoning of the South, as most white regular troops were engaged in campaigns against Native Americans out west. The support for cruel and unusual punishment also foreshadows Jim Crow era Northern acquiescence to Southern lynching of black men accused of sexual crimes as a way to preserve white purity, in a move that also allowed white Southern men to brutally assert their manhood.[136]

The crime happened at a tenuous moment in South Carolina's Reconstruction. Like nearly all white Southerners, Carolinians feared the disruptions they believed black troops would cause. Wade Hampton wrote to Andrew Johnson a scathing letter decrying the "pouring into our country [of] a horde of barbarians, your negro troops" which were "a direct and premeditated insult to the whole Southern people."[137] Richard Zuczek argues that persistent violent clashes between white Carolinians and African Americans led to fears of a race war during the 1865 Christmas season.[138] Sensationalized press stories about African Americans, particularly black sexuality, were a common feature of Southern newspapers and no doubt stoked fears about impending uprisings.[139] Carole Emberton's study of violence in Reconstruction shows that the mass-media improvements of the war broke down boundaries across the nation and made

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[134] Martha Hodes, "The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics; White Women and Black Men in the South after the Civil War," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* vol. 3 no.3. (January 1993), 410.
[135] *New Hampshire Patriot Gazette,* January 17 1866.
[136] Silber, *Romance of Reunion,* 154, 179.
[137] Richard Zuczek, *State of Rebellion*: *Reconstruction in South Carolina,* (Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina, 1996) 19.
[138] Zuczek, *State of Rebellion*, 20.
[139] Catherine Clinton, "Bloody Terrain: Freedwoman, Sexuality, and Violence During Reconstruction." *Georgia Historical Quarterly,* vol. 76. No.2 (Summer 1992), 325.

technology and media culture a shared experience.[140] Newspaper accounts across the South emphasized that emancipation had created a society where "rape and riot and bloodshed are rampant" and a civilization where "inferior race are the leaders and exemplars."[141] Throughout 1865, white South Carolinians had been exposed to newspaper articles that made claims about unrestrained African American crimes, including rape. The *Tri-Weekly* news from Winnsboro, N.C. reported in the summer an instance of a soldier attempting to steal a ring from a Southern women by cutting off her finger and in the next paragraph reporting that a black man had raped a white woman in Mississippi."[142] All of the "numerous stories of rapes, murders, and thefts" committed by freedpeople that a newspaper editor alleged to have received showed "conclusively that they are not in a moral condition to rule themselves and hence the necessity of keeping them under control…"[143] This excerpt foreshadows discourses about how African American sexuality would mobilize paramilitary organizations, like the Ku Klux Klan, and lynch mobs in defense of white purity.

The Rise of the Lynch Mob

White Southerners relied on discourses about African American sexuality as a way of imagining Reconstruction. William Link's study of Atlanta in the wake of the Civil War recovers how "white fears of armed black often became sexualized. When a black soldier arrested a white man in Atlanta in September 1865, a city official commented: "I would rather white men take me down on the ground and do with me as they pleased than be arrested by a negro soldier."[144] The sexualization of politics during Reconstruction offered white Southerners a language to warn

[140] Emberton, *Beyond Redemption*, 28.
[141] *Weekly Patriot*, March 1 1866.
[142] *The Tri-Weekly News*, May 2 1865.
[143] *Winnsboro* newspaper, July 13 1865.
[144] William Link, *Atlanta, Cradle of the New South: Race and Remembering in the Civil War's Aftermath*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 62.

against the dangers of racial equality.[145] Hannah Rosen has shown that fears of "negro domination" was portrayed metaphorically by Southerners as rape, while "the loss of political power being represented as sexual subordination and violation, and political action being depicted in sexual terms."[146] Discourses of politics and sex linked to challenge white men's political control over Southern society and threatened the intimate source of their identity as men.[147]

White Southern men would respond violently to challenges of their sexual and political authority. White Southerners believed that freedpeople were unfit to make the transition to freedom because of their propensity to crime. Newspaper accounts sensationalized crimes committed by freedpeoples in 1865 and 1866. In the fall of1866, the *Keowee Courier* reported "A negro was recently executed in Atlanta, GA, who, on the gallows, confessed to having committed six or seven murders."[148] However, murder was less frequently sensationalized than real and imagined sexual crimes of freedpeople. Southerners constructed images of the "black rapist" that was used as grounds to challenge the political progress being made by African Americans. A particular emphasis was placed on portraying black men as "beastly and unable to control their sexual desires" served to justify disenfranchisement, segregation, and lynching.[149]

White Southerners were not content to allow the justice system to punish African American crimes. The Freedmen's Bureau attempts to provide legal protection to freedpeoples raised the ire of Southern whites. In states not yet readmitted to the Union, the Federal government was therefore responsible for prosecuting and defending criminals, as reported by

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[145] Hodes, "The Sexualization of Reconstruction," 404.
[146] Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*, 125.
[147] Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*, 126.
[148] *Keowee Courier*, Nov 24 1866
[149] Crystal Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 5.

the *Alexandria Gazette* "Government is thus placed in the anomalous position of prosecuting criminal, and at the same time of defending them."[150] The same article bemoaned that it was "well-known it is well known that negroes commit three-fourths of the crimes perpetrated in the district" and that the government used the citizen's tax money in the defense of African American criminals, who were denied any innocence by white Southerners.[151] White Southerners worked to explicitly racialize the judicial system to target African Americans. One newspaper reported new laws passed in Tennessee "Colored persons are subject to the same penalties for crimes as whites, with the addition that rape by a colored man of a white woman shall be punished with death." The same bill also outlawed integrated schools and interracial marriage.[152] This is not to suggest unanimity among white Southerners in this legal program. The *Loyal Georgian* railed against such laws arguing that it was contrary to the promise of Reconstruction by creating two kinds of freedom: a superior one for whites and the inferior freedom for blacks.[153] But eventual frustration with the legal system led to an increase in vigilante violence as a response to slow legal proceedings against African Americans for crimes committed. It is in these responses in 1865 and 1866 that saw the rise of paramilitary violence, as well as the lynch mobs more traditionally associated with turn of the century Jim Crow.

White Southerners engaged in retributive violence against African American as a way to protect white Southern women's purity.[154] In the summer of 1865, a South Carolina paper reported "Another negro belonging to Mr. Cooly was heard to say he had him a white wife picked out and intended marrying her as soon as the Yankees got possession of the country.

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[150] *Alexandria Gazette*, Oct 11 1866
[151] *Alexandria Gazette*, Oct 11 1866
[152] TriWeekly News, June 20 1865 (Winnsboro)
[153] *Loyal Georgian*, February 17 1866.
[154] Feimster, "What if I am a woman," 261

Whereupon the citizens took him up, gave him a severe whipping and cut his ears off."[155] Such an example of "yankee possession" allowing interracial marriage confirms Hannah Rosen's argument that the need to validate vigilante violence by equating alleged political corruption of Republicans with the discourse that represented black men as sexually dangerous.[156] Historians cannot underestimate the individual violence that took place outside of vigilante groups. For example, *Charleston Daily News* reported an example from Georgia of a Mr. Graham shooting a black man who was on trial for the rape of Graham's wife: Graham "rushed upon him and, with three well-directed shots, was revenged for his wife's dishonor."[157] Such "outwardly aggressive, unrestrained warrior-like masculinity" targeted an African-American who was on trial, but yet deemed guilty enough to be executed by Graham. [158] This violence restored Graham's authority as a white man over his wife's body, which he believed to have been dishonored by sexual intercourse with a black man while also restoring masculine authority white Southern men had lost in the war. Such violence not only served to redeem Graham and his wife's honor but was part of a larger program of violence where white Southerners attempted to enact brutal and often sexualized violence against African American men and women.

Southern newspapers throughout 1865 and 1866 are replete with examples of white communities using violence against supposed black male rapists. Hannah Rosen argues that white Southerners frequently circulated rumors that gave the impression that black men threatened white women with rape as a way of legitimating paramilitary violence.[159] I argue that it is difficult to ascertain whether examples are true, but the important factor is that white

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[155] *Winnsboro* newspaper, July 13 1865.
[156] Rosen, *Terror In the Heart of Freedom*, 195.
[157] *Charleston Daily News*, June 7 1866
[158] James J. Broomall, *Private Confederacies: The Emotional Worlds of Southern Men as Citizens and Soldiers.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 132.
[159] Rosen, *Terror In The Heart of Freedom*, 196.

Southern men perceived them to be true.[160] Regardless of their truth, these reports were published across community lines as a way to galvanize white Southern men to once again join together to engage in violence – as they had recently done in the Civil War. The *Norfolk Post* reported on "two negro brutes" who had raped a white woman and were imprisoned when a crowd gathered around the prison before breaking into the prison and before they were "dragged forth into the street beaten down with clubs and after they were dead they were taker and hanged to lamp-post on the corner of the street…"[161] The *Alexandria Gazette* reported *"*A negro in Paris, Kentucky, who had outrage white child ten years old and afterward murdered her, was yesterday taken by the citizens from jail and hanged."[162] Such public lynchings were intentional warnings by white Southerners. Mark Smith demonstrates how the utter violence of lynching was used because it was more brutal than anything the legal system allowed. Smith writes that "it seemed that the only fitting punishment for a black man who touched a white woman was for white men to up the ante, to show, as if there was any doubt, who held the ultimate authority in this society."[163]The need for white men to demonstrate their superiority led to the organization of paramilitary groups that perpetrated violence against African American men and women.

Southern paramilitary organizations during Reconstruction frequently used violence to demonstrate the superiority of white masculinity. The violence that had marked the social change of the postemancipation South began to directly impact electoral politics.[164] A white republican leader in Atlanta named George Ashburn was killed by white vigilantes in the brutal culmination of Southern resistance to Reconstruction. Part of the slander alleged against Ashburn was that he

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[160] This is shaped by Arnette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives,* 94- 101.
[161] *Norfolk Post,* August 8 1865.
[162] *Alexandria Gazette*, March 30 1866.
[163] Mark Smith, *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses.* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 60.
[164] Foner, *Reconstruction*, 342.

had been "exceedingly intimate" with a black woman who owned a boardinghouse.[165] The interracial sexual relationship that Ashburn may or may not have been involved in was deemed unacceptable by white Southerners who would violently attack anyone who participated in such a relationship.[166] With sexuality being important contested ground of Reconstruction, sexual violence became an important performance of dominance for white vigilante groups as a way of asserting their masculinity and superiority over African Americans.[167] These performative acts of sexual violence were imbued with symbolism that used gendered imagery to demonstrate blackness as subordination and whiteness as domination. Such violence attempted to erase the emasculation suffered during the Civil War. The rape of black women was a way for white Southern men to resist the changes of emancipation, while also degrading black men for their inability to protect black women.[168]

Conclusion

This paper attempts to break through the challenges of performing archival research studying sexual violence. Silences are abundant in historical narratives as a result of the purposeful obscuration of information by those who hold power. These silences are calculated attempts to maintain power and the public facing appearance of such power. As white Southerners recognized themselves losing power in the Reconstruction era South, they discarded antebellum notions of docile and obedient African American men and created new discourses that depicted black men as animalistic and a threat to the purity of white women. Historians would do well to remember that gender is a social construct that can and will be manipulated to fit society's need. Representations of gender has always been connected to broader political and

[165] Link, *Atlanta* , 86-99
[166] Bynum, "Disordered Households," 237.
[167] Cardyn,"Sexual Terror in The Reconstruction South," 141-144.
[168] Rosen, *Terror In the Heart of Freedom,* 180, 208, 218.

social struggles. Though 19th century norms may have prevented open discussion of sexuality, reading against the grain of archival documents can help historians chart the complex social and political conflicts by understanding how they were viewed in relation to the sexual body.[169] Reading the silences in archival documents can provide insight into not only the evolution of discourses about race and sexuality, but help historians track how these silences reflect white Southerners struggle to maintain power during Reconstruction.

The fear of and usage of sexualized violence was common in the Civil War Era South. Throughout the war, white Southern women feared that invading Union soldiers would commit sexual violence, including rape, against them. Union soldiers understood the gendered implications of violence against women and attempted to use this violence to force Southern women into submission. Widespread occupation of the South by USCTs following Confederate surrender challenged longstanding Southern gender and racial norms. Southern newspapers reporting of real and imagined sexual incidents of sexual violence committed by USCTs demonstrates how white Southerners constructed a discourse of hypersexual black men as a reaction to black men's newfound political and social rights in the Reconstruction South. When James Grippen of the 104th USCT raped two Southern white women while on occupation duty in August 1865, newspapers across the South widely circulated reports of the crime as a way to demonstrate the dangers of black men being allowed to serve as Federal soldiers occupying the South.

White Southern men violently respond to African American challenges of their social and political power. Brutal displays of power through lynching of black men accused of violating sexual boundaries became an important way for white men to demonstrate their continued hold

[169] Cardyn, "Sexual Terror In the Recon South," 141.

on power. Historians have traditionally associated the rise of the lynch mob with the Jim Crow South and the rise of segregation. This paper challenges such assertions by demonstrating that elements of what would resemble lynch mobs appeared throughout the South as early as 1865 and engaged in widespread violence that denied black men accused of sexual violence the due process their newfound constitutional rights promised them. Future inquiries of sexualized violence during Reconstruction should expand past the Ku Klux Klan to investigate the usage of informal and impromptu community-based violence against African Americans. Historians would also be well served by breaking the chasm between the Civil War and Reconstruction to track the changes – or lack of – in Southern power dynamics in the 19th century.[170]

This paper also challenges historians who have made the assertion that the "black rapist myth" originated with the rise of the segregation and black disenfranchisement.[171] A reading of Southern newspapers between 1865 and 1866 demonstrate that white Southerners began to fear black men's sexuality as the institution of slavery collapsed. Creating such a discourse allowed white Southerners to justify attempts to maintain power over African Americans during Reconstruction. Historians have spent the last decade of historiographical advancements to create new understandings of how gender animated Reconstruction era struggles. Hannah Rosen's *Terror in the Heart of Freedom* remains the best example of understanding the linkage between race and gender in the Reconstruction era, though ample ground remains to be covered as new sources and new ways of reading them come to light. Future histories of Reconstruction would benefit from Gail Bederman's observation the ways that black boxer Jack Johnson challenged white masculinity. Bederman notes that white furor over what they perceived to be Johnson's transgressions was part of "a multitude of ways middle-class Americans found to explain male

[170] Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the 19th Century South*, 9.
[171] Sommerville, Rape and Race in the 19th Century South, 9

supremacy in terms of white racial dominance and, conversely, to explain white supremacy in terms of male power."[172] Bederman's study demonstrates the continued importance of scholarly analysis that "interrogates sexual ideologies for their racial specificity and acknowledges whiteness, not just blackness, as a racial categorization."[173]

Historians of Jim Crow have noted the role that sexual violence placed in shaping segregation and disenfranchisement.[174] The most famous example of the linkage of sexuality and race comes from anti-lynching reformer Ida B. Wells. Patricia Schechter has identified how Wells used the "history of violence toward slave women and of women's resistance to physical and sexual assault" to build "her own story toward a powerful statement of identification for women of the next generation."[175] Wells herself understood that white woman used the cry of rape to justify lynching as an excuse for white Southerners to continue to oppress African Americans.[176] Contrastingly, Thomas Dixon Jr's 1905 novel *The Clansman* and its subsequent film adaptation *The Birth of a Nation* "romanticized the brutal violence of the Ku Klux Klan by imaging :the alleged rape of Marion Lenoir by former slave, Gus, and the attempted rape of Elsie Stoneman by "mulatto" activist, Silas Lynch. The story finds its redemption when these attempts are thwarted by the Ku Klux Klan." The story concludes with the lynching of Gus and seemingly the preservation of Southern white womanhood.[177]

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[172] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.
[173] Hazel V. Carby *Reconstruction Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) as quoted in Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization,* 5.
[174] Smith, *How Race is Made*, 58-60.
[175] Patricia Schechter, "The Politics of Possible: Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Crusade for Justice*" in *Racially Writing the Republic: Racists, Race Rebels, and Transformations of American Identity* ed. Bruce Baum and Duchess Harris (Durham, Duke University Press, 2009), 130.
[176] Schechter, "The Politics of Possible," 131.
[177] Tara Bynum, "One Important Witness': Remembering Lydia Brown in Thomas Dixon's *The Clansmen.*" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* vol. 52 no.3 (Fall 2010), 247.

Discourses of African American hypersexuality persisted well into the 1960s and created significant obstacles for Civil Rights activists. Sexualized violence continued to be used by white supremacists against African Americans.[178] Danielle McGuire credits black women's usage of their public voices in rejecting white supremacists sexual stereotypes about black women while also allowing black men to assert their masculinity by protecting black womanhood.[179] Most recently, Adriane Lentz-Smith has demonstrated how police forces used sexualized violence against black women attempting to register to vote in the "Black Belt" in the mid-1960s.[180] In one instance, a Mississippi police officer used discourses that represented black women as overly sexual "jezebels" to justify his brutal physical violation of a black woman.[181] Lentz-Smith importantly notes that "When discussing lynching, assaults, and rape, white authorities made a discursive feint, redirecting the public conversation toward Black-on-white sexual violence. Both word and deed, then, served as performances of white men's mastery and the powerlessness of African Americans."[182]

Historians of the 19th and the 20th century have clearly demonstrated that long struggle for black freedom in the United States has had to overcome white constructed discourses that represent African Americans as hypersexual and prone to sexual indiscretions. Such narratives obscure the reality of brutal sexual violence that black men and women have consistently been subjected to as they sought to claim political and social rights.

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[178] Danielle McGuire, "It Was Like All Of Us Had Been Raped': Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle." *The Journal of American History* vol.91 no.3 (Dec. 2004), 907.
[179] McGuire, "It was like all of us had been raped," 910.
[180] Adriane Lentz- Smith, "The Laws Have Hurt Me' Violence, Violation, and Black Women's Struggles for Civil Rights." *Southern Cultures* vol.26 no.3 (Fall 2020), 43.
[181] Lentz-Smith, "The Laws Have Hurt Me," 44.
[182] Lentz-Smith, "The Laws Have Hurt me," 47.

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