SONS OF THE CONFEDERACY, SONS OF FREEDMEN: RACE, MANHOOD, AND MOTIVATION IN NORTH CAROLINA'S VOLUNTEER REGIMENTS IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

A Thesis
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Abstract

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This thesis examines the experience of soldiers in North Carolina's three volunteer regiments during the Spanish-American War. It situates their military service within the context of race and manhood at the end of the nineteenth century. The Spanish-American War took place a generation after the conclusion of the American Civil War, a legacy that loomed prominently for the men who volunteered. It also took place during one of the most important and transformative years in North Carolina politics. The 1898 election, a virulent white supremacy campaign, and the subsequent Wilmington massacre provide important context for North Carolina's Spanish-American War soldiers. Indeed, they understood their military service primarily considering local political conditions.

North Carolina's three volunteer regiments reflected important political and racial divisions within the state. White soldiers filled the ranks of two regiments, while the remaining regiment was composed of and led by African Americans. While none of these three regiments faced combat, and only one regiment left the United States for occupation

duty in Cuba, the soldiers saw their military service as significant. This thesis explores the creation of these three regiments, the recruitment of soldiers, their training, deployment, and demobilization. It draws on soldiers' letters, newspaper accounts, and official records to explore their experience.

Acknowledgments

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My thesis committee has been very supportive throughout this process. Prof. Judkin Browning has been unfailingly helpful in thinking through the experience of North Carolina's soldiers and what their military service meant. Prof. Karl Campbell and Prof. René Harder Horst provided some very helpful reading suggestions and helped me think through some challenging parts of this thesis.

This project would not have been possible without the help of archivists at University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, North Carolina State Archives, and East Carolina University. Particular thanks goes out to Taylor De Klerk and Timothy Hodgdon at UNC's Southern Historical Collection, who kindly digitized material when the archive was closed due to the pandemic.

My parents have been very supportive of me throughout my graduate studies. My interest in North Carolina history began in part when I borrowed books from my father's shelves when he was in graduate school, and he has been encouraging throughout my academic career. I could not have written this thesis without the love and support of my grandparents. I was fortunate to be able to stay with them during some of my research trips, and their cats comforted me when reading, researching, and writing.

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Introduction

On April 23, 1899, Sgt. Claude Broughton gathered with the rest of Company K of the First North Carolina Volunteers to hear Gov. Daniel L. Russell welcome them home from Cuba and praise their military service. Broughton had enlisted a year prior at the age of 21, two years younger than his father had been when he enlisted in the Confederate 26th North Carolina in 1861. “We are here,” Russell told them, to honor their “excellent record … and patriotic service.” More than five thousand people came to welcome the soldiers home, including members of both Confederate and Union veteran organizations, wearing their “Confederate grey coats” and “badges of the Meade G.A.R. Post.” Like Civil War soldiers a generation earlier, Russell claimed that they had brought the “Highest credit upon yourselves and honor upon your State.” The First North Carolina had been the first raised, first to leave, and last to return, of North Carolina’s three volunteer regiments, away for one of the most tumultuous years in North Carolina’s history. For many North Carolinians, 1898 had been defined more by a contentious and violent election than by the war against Spain. “This regiment was raised and went into the war for purely patriotic reasons,” Russell said, and served honorably. “Although you did not ...do any actual fighting,” Russell claimed that they could stand alongside the veterans who had come before them. “Now that the fighting is over,” Russell told them, the men of the First Regiment could return to their homes. The following day, the men of Company K assembled at the recently erected Confederate monument on the Capitol Square and proceeded to the state fairgrounds, where the First

Regiment was organized and trained a year earlier and feasted on barbeque and Brunswick stew. Despite their lack of combat experience, the city of Raleigh treated Claude Broughton and the other members of Company K as returning heroes.[1]

* * *

This thesis examines the motivation and experience of the three thousand North Carolinians who volunteered to fight in the Spanish-American War. It argues that white and black North Carolinians understood their service within the context of racial politics in their home state as much as they did with events in Cuba and the Philippines. White soldiers from North Carolina saw their military service as part of a wider campaign for white supremacy. Black North Carolinians, on the other hand, saw explicit connections between their military service and their struggle for racial justice at home. Three decades after the conclusion of the Civil War, North Carolina filled the ranks of three volunteer regiments: two for white soldiers and one for African Americans. White North Carolinians volunteered to demonstrate their manliness, courage, and fighting spirit. While Confederate veterans filled the officer's ranks of these regiments, many of the enlisted men were children of Confederate veterans and sought to live up to their fathers' and uncles' standard. Enlisting near the height of Jim Crow violence in North Carolina (the Wilmington massacre would take place later that year), white volunteers saw their service both as a means of asserting their manhood and situating their Southern identity within an American context. Despite their initial enthusiasm, soldiers

[1] Raleigh *Morning Post*, 25 April 1899; *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton and E. M. Uzzell, 1900).

in the First and Second North Carolina Regiments did not maintain their commitment to the cause for very long, as desertions became a major problem a few weeks into their service. Black North Carolinians understood their service as part of a campaign to maintain their claims to citizenship. Much like the United States Colored Troops before them, they saw military service as a hallmark of citizenship and equal justice. While they would often be blamed by white newspapers and politicians for everything from rowdiness to laziness and cowardice, the men of the Third Regiment experienced few of the discipline issues that plagued the white First and Second Regiments. Moreover, they were targeted by white Southerners, including fellow soldiers, with abuse and violence throughout their military career.

None of North Carolina's three regiments saw combat in the Spanish American War. The First North Carolina Volunteers spent much of the war in Jacksonville, Florida, preparing for an invasion of Puerto Rico that never happened. In December 1898, with the fighting long over, they were sent to Cuba for garrison duty, where they remained until March 1899 and mustered out at the end of April 1899. The Second spent the duration of the war in garrison duty in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida before returning to North Carolina in September 1898 and were formally discharged in mid-November, although not before Company K had participated in the Wilmington Massacre. The Third North Carolina Volunteers, the state's lone African American regiment, formed on May 30, 1898, like the Second, never left the country. In September 1898, they were sent to Camp Poland, near

Knoxville, Tennessee, and later to Camp Haskell, near Macon, Georgia, where they spent the winter. They returned to North Carolina and were disbanded in February 1899.

* * *

In the common narrative of the Spanish American War, mobilization proved massively popular across the entire country. However, that narrative does not entirely work in the context of Southern political and military mobilization, where racial politics and the legacy of slavery, the Confederacy, and Reconstruction loomed large. Examining the motivations and experiences of white and black North Carolinians in the Spanish American War will highlight the long term healing process from the American Civil War, and evolving conceptions of manhood, citizenship, and community at the nadir of American race relations.

This thesis draws on several historiographic traditions that have largely not been in conversation with each other. First, scholars of American foreign policy have frequently pointed to the Spanish-American War as a major milestone in the development of American imperialism. Once celebrated as the "Splendid Little War" (Theodore Roosevelt's phrase), recent scholarship on the conflict has emphasized the role of domestic racism in the United States in shaping its foreign policy. The United States actively pursued imperial goals during the Gilded Age, driven by territorial ambition, ideas of white supremacy and domination, and economic advantage. No longer the "Splendid Little War," the Spanish-American War was a much more protracted and involved conflict than earlier historians had cared to fully consider. It demonstrated that the United States was not a reluctant player in the imperial game, but fully embraced territorial acquisition. While the broader conflict, especially the

protracted counterinsurgency operations that characterized the Spanish and American occupations of the Philippines, is beyond the scope of this project, it does inform interpretation of how North Carolinians viewed the war. These imperial experiments proved divisive at home, as imperialists and anti-imperialists debated the merits and underlying ideology. As with most questions in Gilded Age America, the debate over imperialism interconnected with debates over race and gender. Here I am drawing upon the work of Amy Kaplan, Donald Pease, Kristin L. Hoganson, Gail Bederman, Matt Jacobson, and Eric Love, each of whom emphasize how American imperialism reflected and informed internal social and political tensions and divisions.[2] White supremacy contributed significantly to the decision to annex the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. Historians have increasingly recognized that the conflict involved not only the United States and Spain, but also Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and others, prompting some historians to rebrand the conflict as the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War.[3] They have also noted that what Americans call the Spanish-American War represented only a brief moment in the longer story of Cuban and Filipino independence struggles. In *How To Hide An Empire* (2019) by, Daniel Immerwahr characterized these struggles as an "empire wide revolt by Spain's

[2]Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States: 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Eric Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism: 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
[3] Louis Perez, *The War of 1898* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), 158.

colonial subjects."[4] Finally, historians have increasingly tried to put the Spanish-American War into the broader history of American imperialism. These historians, like Immerwahr, have argued that the impulse to invade and occupy Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines were the logical extensions of Manifest Destiny, drawing a through-line from Indian Removal and the Mexican War to events in 1898. United States' foreign policy in the twentieth century, Immerwahr argues, amplified ideas and themes already embedded in the American worldview. Contrary to Frederick Jackson Turner's famous thesis, the frontier did not close in 1890, but looked beyond the continental United States to what Immerwahr calls the "Greater United States," a vast overseas empire that stretched from the Caribbean to the western edge of the Pacific.[5]

Second, this thesis draws on the scholarship of Civil War memory and commemoration which has highlighted how the Spanish-American War marked a point of sectional reconciliation. With the staging grounds for the invasion of Cuba located in former Confederate states and with former Confederate officers serving alongside their Union counterparts, some historians have interpreted the war as a moment in which former adversaries buried the hatchet. White Southerners fighting under the United States flag could proclaim their martial pride and their place within the nation. However, many historians have

[4] Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), 72.
[5] Immerwahr, *Empire*; Matthew McCullogh, *The Cross of War: Christian Nationalism and U.S. Expansion in the Spanish-American War* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014); Hugh Rockoff, *America's Economic Way of War*: *War and the US Economy from the Spanish-American War to the Persian Gulf War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York 1893)

also linked the war to a change in the narrative of the Civil War, where the "Lost Cause" won out over the "Bloody Shirt." Under the "Lost Cause" narrative, as coined by Edward Pollard, the southern states had just cause to secede, and had lost the war due to overwhelming material (especially naval) superiority of the Union. Comparatively, the "Bloody Shirt" was much less well defined. Rather than being the title of a book, the "Bloody Shirt" referred to a position that blamed southerners and the south for the war, and its costs. In the interests of sectional reconciliation, the Northern narrative of the conflict conceded on many of the causes of the war.[6]

Third, this thesis draws upon the scholarship on race and politics in North Carolina at what historian Rayford Logan described as "the nadir of American race relations."[7] Led by Josephus Daniels, Charles Aycock, Furnifold Simmons and Alfred Waddell, the Democratic Party in North Carolina engaged in a militant white supremacy campaign that disenfranchised black voters through violence and intimidation, culminating in the Wilmington Massacre of 1898, the same year as the Spanish-American War. Compared to its neighbors, black politics in North Carolina had remained particularly robust during the

[6] Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013); Adam Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020); Ned Crankshaw, Joseph E. Brent, and Maria Campbell Brent, "The Lost Cause and Reunion in the Confederate Cemeteries of the North," *Landscape Journal* 35, no. 1 (January 2016): 1–21; David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2001); Charles Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980); Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); Edward Blum, *Reforging The White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2007); Edward Alfred Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, (United States: E.B. Treat & Company, 1867).

[7] Rayford Whittingham Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir: 1877-1901* (New York: The Dial Press, 1954) xxi.

Gilded Age, especially in African American majority counties in the eastern part of the state. This included what historian Eric Anderson has called the Black Second, a gerrymandered congressional district that stretched over ten counties. African Americans also held significant political power in Wilmington, the state's largest city. During the 1890s, black North Carolinians played a major role in the Fusion movement, a biracial alliance of Republicans and Populists, which in 1894 won control of the state legislature, the State's Supreme Court, and the majority of its congressional delegation. The Democrats' militant white supremacy campaign in 1898 sought to break apart the Fusion coalition through violence and voter intimidation where it could not win at the ballot box. This historiography has documented how black North Carolinians struggled to maintain the political and economic power they had worked for since emancipation. It has not, however, done much to address the fact that the white supremacy campaign in North Carolina coincided with the Spanish American War.[8]

[8] Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872–1901* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press 1981)*;* Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore*, Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996); Helen Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894–1901* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1951); Frenise Logan, *The Negro in North Carolina, 1876-1894* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1964); Gregory Downs, *Declaration of Dependence: The Long Reconstruction of Popular Politics in the South, 1861-1908* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2011); Kent Redding, *Making Race, Making Power: North Carolina's Road to Disenfranchisement* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Deborah Beckel, *Radical Reform: Interracial Politics in Post-Emancipation North Carolina* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010). On the Wilmington Massacre, see John Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1987); David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020); H. Leon Prather, *We Have Taken A City: Wilmington Racial Massacre and Coup of 1898* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984); David Celseki and Timothy Tyson eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998).

Putting these historiographies in conversation reveals that the soldiers who enlisted in the Spanish American War understood their service through multiple lenses. This thesis highlights how racial politics in North Carolina contributed to the experience of white and black soldiers from North Carolina and how they understood their time in uniform. This thesis also demonstrates the linkages between the local social and political problems of late 19th century North Carolina, and the overseas ambitions of the United States. While both local and national interests had their own reasons and goals for the conduct and consequences of the Spanish American War, each played into and reacted to the other.

* * *

Relatively few historians have addressed the soldier experience in the Spanish-American War. A scattering of state level studies, many of them decades old, have focused more on structural issues of mobilization rather than soldiers' experiences. For the most part, they have examined the role of the state and federal government in raising Spanish-American War regiments, without sustained examination of soldiers' motivations for enlisting and their experiences while in uniform. These studies have not done much to place the experiences of soldiers within the context of local politics, instead emphasizing more national narratives of the conflict. As we shall see, the local political context in North Carolina profoundly shaped the wartime experience of its soldiers.[9]

[9] Peter Mickelson, "Nationalism in Minnesota During the Spanish-American War," *Minnesota History* 41 (Spring 1968): 1-12; Jerry Cooper and Glenn Smith, *Citizens as Soldiers: A History of the North Dakota National Guard* (Fargo, N.Dak.:NDSU Press, 1986): 35-70; Richard K. Hines, "'First to Respond to Their Country's Call': The First Montana Infantry and the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, 1898-1899," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 52 (Autumn 2002): 44-57; Bertha Davidson, "Arkansas in the Spanish-American War," *Arkansas*

Historian Willard B. Gatewood produced some of the most valuable and thoughtful scholarship on the African American experience of the Spanish American War. In a series of articles and one edited volume of primary sources, Gatewood explored the experience of African American soldiers from North Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, and Indiana. Gatewood claimed that the military experience of African American soldiers "inspired black citizens with a sense of pride at a time when the oppressive racial climate in the United States seemed to warrant only despair." He argues that they understood "the Spanish-American War and the acquisition of an overseas empire within the context of their own deteriorating status."[10] Writing in the early 1970s, Gatewood's scholarship was informed by the Civil Right Movement and by the Black experience in the Vietnam War. Gatewood's scholarship provides deep insight into the African American experience, but does not do much to compare the experiences of white and black soldiers. Moreover, his scholarship tends to hint at rather than engage with the local political and racial contexts in which African American soldiers volunteered.[11] A large part of his work is a series of articles that analyze particular regiments, seemingly tied together by "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire," an

Historical Quarterly 5 (Fall 1946): 208-19; William J. Schellings, "The Advent of the Spanish-American War in Florida, 1898," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 39 (April 1961): 311-329.

[10] Willard B. Gatewood, *"Smoked Yankees" and The Struggle For Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers 1898-1902* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1987), ix, 3.

[11] Willard B. Gatewood, "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire, 1898-1903," *The Journal of Southern History* 38, no. 4 (1972): 545-66; Willard B. Gatewood, "Negro troops in Florida, 1898," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1970): 1-15; Willard B. Gatewood, "Alabama's Negro Soldier Experiment," 1898-1899," *The Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 4 (1972): 333-351; Willard B. Gatewood, *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden, 1898-1903* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Willard B. Gatewood, "Virginia's Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War. The Sixth Virginia Volunteers," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80, no. 2 (1972): 193-209; Willard B. Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 48, no. 4 (1971): 370-387.

attempt to write an overall history of the African American experience of the Spanish American and Philippine wars. Gatewood characterized African Americans as prime actors in their own mobilization, with the most important conversation being an internal one, between those who favored an interventionist stance in keeping with their long alignment with the Republican Party, and others who were less interventionist, and more concerned with growing white violence on the continent.[12]

More recently, historian David Turpie has examined the motivations for white Southern soldiers to enlist in the Spanish-American War. Looking at former Confederate states (plus Kentucky), Turpie argued that white Southerners did not manifest the same enthusiasm for war against Spain that appeared in other parts of the country. He argues that "many white southerners wrestled with the idea of going to war again in 1898, and an uneasy balance existed in their minds between the idea of national regeneration and regional or familial suffering." They expressed reservations about fighting under an American flag and under a Republican president. Focusing on the pre-war mobilization rather than the war itself, Turpie examines mobilization from the top down, providing little insight into the soldiers' experience on the ground. Moreover, his focus on white soldiers neglects how African Americans actively attempted to find their own place in the war effort. Instead, he treats the recruitment of African American regiments as a result of the problems that the South faced in recruiting white soldiers.[13]

[12] Gatewood, "Black Americans and the Quest for Empire, 1898-1903," 545-66.
[13] David C. Turpie, "A Voluntary War: The Spanish-American War, White Southern Manhood, and the Struggle to Recruit Volunteers in the South," *The Journal of Southern History* 80, no. 4 (2014): 859-892

Gatewood and Turpie provide complementary interpretations of the forces that drove white and black Southerners to enlist and fight in the Spanish American War. While Turpie cites Gatewood's work extensively, they are not quite in conversation with each other. Each prioritizes the agency of their own area of focus, missing out on the interplay between white and black political and social ambitions. This thesis argues that looking at white and black soldiers alongside each other reveals more than an examination of each individually; it also exposes how ideas about race, manhood, and citizenship took on particular meanings for North Carolina's volunteers.

* * *

Methodologically, this thesis draws on Civil War studies of soldier motivations. Starting with Bell Irvin Wiley's *Johnny Reb* (1943) and *Billy Yank* (1952), Civil War historians have sought to make sense of why common soldiers fought. Since Wiley, many prominent Civil War historians have addressed this topic, including James McPherson, Josephe Glatthaar, Gary Gallagher, and Peter Carmichael.[14] Describing the field broadly, there are two forms of soldier studies: those querying why they fought, and those querying motivation in battle. The former often begins with a deceptively simple question: why did

[14] Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Common Soldier in the Civil War ; Includes "The Life of Billy Yank" and "The Life of Johnny Reb" in One Volume* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1951); James M. McPherson, *Marching towards Freedom: the Negro in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); Joseph T. Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008); Peter Carmichael, *The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought, and Survived in Civil War Armies* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2018); Gerard Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War,* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012)

soldiers, Northern and Southern, Black, and White, volunteer to march off to war? The latter is in some ways more concrete. While there was a broad range of motivations, once on the battlefield the experiences tended to be relatively similar. While there were certainly variations -- for example white soldiers at the beginning of the war could expect far more consideration from their enemies than African Americans ever could -- these differences were relatively minor compared to the ranges in motivation. This thesis primarily draws on the former rather than the latter, as none of the regiments faced battle. In using the methodological basis of the Civil War, one key is to look more towards studies of the North and both armies rather than the South, due to the overwhelming role of slavery in southern motivation. Without the all-encompassing defense of slavery that defined the debate over the experience of the southern soldier, Northerners have had a wide range of portrayals, ranging from a question of Republican Motherhood, where the greatest demonstration of a properly raised son was for him to volunteer to fight, to arguments that the Northern soldier was a crusader, marching south to end slavery, to a simple matter of a form of nationalistic ardor driven by a conceptual loyalty to the union above all else. In Reid Mitchell's *The Vacant Chair* (1995), the northern soldier fought as part of a broader creation of masculinity, where the war transformed boys into men. By volunteering, and cultivating a sense of self discipline, in addition to and separate from the strictures of the armed services, the middle class northern boy, could be transformed into a grown man.[15] In *Soldiers Blue and Gray*

[15] Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

(1998), James I. Robertson chose to emphasize the role that State pride, and pride in the Union played in soldier motivation, quoting an Illinois soldier Henry Schafer as writing home that "the Union cause ought to be defended even if it costs thousands of lives and millions of treasure."[16] While the cause of revenge for the *Maine*, or liberty for Cuba, was not nearly as all-encompassing as the causes of the Civil War, many of the other causes remained the same in both wars.

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The thesis is structured into four sections. The first examines the response of North Carolinians to the growing tension with Spain prior to the sinking of the *USS Maine* and the declaration of war, mobilization, and the training of the three North Carolina regiments. Drawing primarily on newspaper accounts, it contrasts the coverage of this looming crisis in white and black papers, alongside correspondence to show how soldiers were recruited and why they chose to enlist. The second section contrasts the military experience of white and black soldiers, drawing on newspaper accounts and private correspondence, to understand morale and enduring motivation. I also examined desertion for insight into the soldier experience. The third section examines how white soldiers from the Second Regiment played an important role in the Wilmington Massacre, and how African American soldiers in the Third Regiment, many of whom were from Wilmington, responded to the violence. Fourth and finally, this thesis examines the postwar garrison service of the First regiment, the

[16] James Robertson, *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 7.

demobilization, and the legacy of North Carolina's volunteer regiments. Here I examine the political impact of their service and how they sought to have it remembered.

Chapter 1: Drumbeat to War

In 1897, Josephus Daniels expressed dismay at the political and economic situation in North Carolina. The state had been hard hit by the Panic of 1893, and its manufacturing sector had not grown on pace with other Southern states. More troubling from Daniels' perspective was the rise of the Fusion movement, a biracial alliance of Republicans and Populists, which had taken control of the Supreme Court and the General Assembly in 1894 and culminated in the election of Governor Daniel Russell in 1896. Once in power, the Fusionists sought to expand ballot access, especially for African Americans, promote public education, and provide relief for indebted farmers. As the editor of the Raleigh *News & Observer,* the most influential newspaper in North Carolina, Daniels had a platform for transforming state politics. Published six days a week, the newspaper had a circulation of about 10,000, or roughly Raleigh's entire population.[17] Daniels saw the upcoming 1898 elections as a referendum on white supremacy and the Fusion movement and sought to use his newspaper to promote a Democratic revolution.[18] He even went so far as to claim that "The Paramount Issue of 1898" would be the fight for "white supremacy."[19] The sinking of

[17] Lee A. Craig, *Josephus Daniels: His Life and Times* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013), 165.
[18] Josephus Daniels, *Editor in Politics* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1941); Peter Cochlanis, "Failing to Excite: The Dixie Dynamo in the Global Economy" in Jeffery Crow and Larry Tise, *New Voyages to Carolina: Reinterpreting North Carolina History* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017), 334-336; Jefferey Crow and Robert Durden, *Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel L. Russell* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press), 117-118; Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1985), 241-261; Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1951).
[19] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 18 September 1897; Joseph L. Morrison, *Josephus Daniels Says … : An Editor's Political Odyssey from Bryan to Wilson and F.D.R*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1962), 103.

the *USS Maine* in Havana harbor on February 14 surprised Daniels, but did not derail his plans for 1898. Instead, he would try to use the war against Spain as a vehicle for his political and racial agenda.

Editor of the Raleigh *Gazette*, James H. Young, also anticipated 1898 would be a referendum on race and power in North Carolina. Priding itself as the voice of African Americans in the North Carolina Piedmont, the *Gazette* regularly criticized Democrats for their overt white supremacy and elitism. "If the Democrats ever get control of the Legislature again," Young noted in a February 1898 editorial, "it is there [sic] settled purpose to perpetuate their lease of power by disenfranchising negroes and illiterate whites."[20] Young was also critical of the Democratic influence over the justice system. In a December 1897 editorial, he praised Governor Russell for pardoning a "poor, helpless, friendless, and innocent negro." Young wrote that "it hurts them [the Democrats] to have their outrageous and unequal executions of the law exposed."[21] He also frequently criticized Josephus Daniels' *News & Observer* as "a venomous Democratic sheet which hates the negro."[22] In a New Year's Day article in 1898, Young claimed that "the election this year in North Carolina is to determine whether the Democratic party is to be allowed to disenfranchise negro voters … or whether the voters belonging to that race are to continue to exercise the God given right of casting their ballots."[23]

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[20] Raleigh *Gazette*, 12 February 1898.
[21] Raleigh *Gazette*, 11 December 1897.
[22] Raleigh *Gazette*, 6 November 1897. Also see Raleigh *Gazette*, 4 September 1897, 11 September 1897, 3 July 1897.
[23] Raleigh *Gazette*, 1 January 1898.

Both Josephus Daniels' *News & Observer* and James Young's *Gazette* covered the ongoing conflict in Cuba, though neither placed significant emphasis on it before the sinking of the *Maine*. White and black North Carolinians interpreted the developing crisis in Cuba through the lens of local politics. While events in Cuba featured prominently in New York's yellow press, North Carolinians received only scant coverage in their local papers. Although they expressed horror at some of Spanish general Valeriano Weyler's repressive policies in Cuba, most white North Carolina papers remained skeptical about Cuban independence or American intervention. Instead, their pages were dominated by the developing political crisis in North Carolina. The Fusion movement had upended state politics, offering African Americans and poor whites a vehicle for change. Democrats saw this political insurgency as an existential threat and sought to use any means at their disposal to combat the biracial coalition. This context defined the more local aims of the politicians, newspapermen, and volunteers throughout the war.

In their political platforms for 1898, both the Democrats and the Populists contextualized the war in Cuba as part and parcel of their goals for North Carolina politics. Democrats chose to blame the war on bad government in Cuba, and tried to tie that back to their goals for white supremacy, as they castigated the Republican party for its reliance on African American voters, and claimed that African American interests were inimical to good government.[24] The Populists on the other hand, contextualized the rise of racial problems in

[24] *Democratic Hand Book, 1898* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1898). https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/dem1898/dem1898.html

North Carolina as a product of the interests of the "money power," using racism to seize all of the land. To the Populists, the African American question also played into the questions of empire. "If the colored race in the Southern States is such a menace to good government, what will the United States do with Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rica [sic], the Ladrones and the Philippines?" their Handbook of Facts asked.[25] While it is almost certain that the Republicans similarly contextualized the war in terms of its relationship with North Carolina politics, their materials have not survived nearly so well.

Both Josephus Daniels and James Young understood the 1898 campaign as a referendum on Fusionism and African American political power more broadly. Increasing cycles of debt and poverty drove many North Carolinians, white and black, to embrace Populism, which promised economic relief programs, and support for farmers against big business.[26] In 1894, the Populist Party in North Carolina formed a coalition with the Republican Party, an alliance known as the Fusion Movement. African Americans stood at the heart of this coalition, bringing with them a substantial political base in the so-called "Black Second" congressional district, which had elected African American Republicans to Congress long after the end of Reconstruction, including John Hyman (1875-1877), James O'Hara (1883-1887), Henry Cheatham (1889-1893), and George White (1897-1901). In their debut election, the Fusion coalition gained control of the North Carolina General Assembly, the Supreme Court, and several Congressional seats. They quickly passed legislation

[25] *People's Party Handbook of Facts, 1898* (Raleigh: Capital Printing Company, 1898). https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/peoples/peoples.html
[26] Cochlanis, "Failing to Excite" in Crow and Tise, *New Voyages to Carolina,* 334-336.

increasing taxes for education, strengthening voting rights, capping interest rates, and providing relief for indebted farmers. In 1896, a Republican, Daniel Russell, captured the governor's mansion for the first time since the end of Reconstruction.[27]

Democrats saw the rise of the Fusion movement as a threat not only to their political dominance, but as a threat to white rule. Prominent Democrats, including Josephus Daniels, future Governor Charles Aycock, State Party chairman Furnifold Simmons, and former congressman Alfred Waddell argued that "black rule" imperiled the safety and virtue of white women. Using fabricated and embellished accounts of sexual assault of white women by black men, they claimed that the Fusion government gave license for brutality and barbarity.[28] In their quest to reclaim political power, Democrats drew upon a long history of electoral manipulation in North Carolina. At the end of Reconstruction, North Carolina Democrats had passed a series of laws and constitutional amendments that concentrated power in the hands of state-appointed positions. They also recognized that paramilitary violence could effectively suppress the African American vote. Combined with election fraud, these Redemption-era techniques, they believed, could return them to power.[29]

While the Civil War had ended more than thirty years earlier, it was rarely far from the political conversation. Many in the so-called "New South" remembered the Civil War quite vividly. For many whites, especially the veterans of the war, it had been a just war, one

[27] John H. Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1987), 82-83; Redding, *Making Race*, 20.
[28] Craig, *Josephus Daniels,* 178-182; Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow,* 64.
[29] William Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Hoboken NJ: Wiley, 2009), 260-268.

that had been fought in defense of home and institutions. Throughout the last two decades of the 19th century Blue-Grey reunions had acted as physical symbols of a reconciled union. Built on a mythology of battlefield valor and the honor of the white soldier, these reunions ignored many of the political questions that had not been answered by the war.[30] However, both sides of the conflict, especially the South, continued to litigate the causes and conduct of the war, celebrating their own victories and denigrating their opposition's.[31] These cultural memories were also touchstones referenced in comments on the conduct of the volunteers for the Spanish American War, white and black alike.

Prior to the sinking of the *USS Maine,* North Carolinians were aware of the developing situation in Cuba, but it loomed far from the front page headlines. Both Daniels' *News & Observer* and Young's *Gazette* regularly included coverage of developments in Cuba throughout 1897, albeit briefly and without sustained comment. Neither journalist advocated for American intervention or framed the conflict in Cuba as particularly relevant to North Carolina. Instead, local issues dominated the front pages of both papers, as the deeply polarized political landscape subsumed national and international questions. The sinking of the *USS Maine* pushed local issues off the front page.

In the dawning months of 1898, James Young's *Raleigh Gazette,* and his fellow African Americans, had Cuba in mind. For much of the first two months of the year, Cuba was mentioned in every publication. In the first issue, President McKinley's appeal for aid

[30] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War,* 161.
[31] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War,* 164-165.

for starving Cubans, shared space with an exploding cannon in Asheville, and the work of the American Missionary Association. However, Cuba warranted, for the most part, short mentions, rather than extensive articles. On January 8, for example, the sum total of the Cuba reporting on the first page was "Montana has subscribed $800 for the relief of the suffering Cubans."[32] Instead, the newspaper scattered short articles on a wide variety of subjects, mostly events in North Carolina, but also regional and national news. To the African American community, the affairs in Cuba, mere weeks before the sinking of the Maine, were less a pressing concern and more a passing interest, compared to the vital affairs of local politics, and the interesting times occurring across the state.

African American communities were under siege by white interests both on the national and local level, but this siege, even decades after the end of Reconstruction, was not lost yet. One key example of this national siege was the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case in the Supreme Court, which enshrined segregation of the transport systems, and opened up the potential for far more extensive legal discrimination.[33] On a more personal scale, the last years of the 19th century saw a rise in lynchings, and other forms of racially charged violence. However, African Americans had been winning local political victories in the decade before the Spanish-American War. These victories were based on the mobilization not just of black votes, but also Republican politicians building connections along class

[32] Raleigh *Gazette,* 8 January 1898.
[33] Marvin Fletcher, "Black Volunteers in the Spanish American War," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1974): 48-53, 48.

lines.[34] The Democratic move towards racial separation and the suppression of African American votes not only targeted towards black voters, but also to marginalize and suppress their white allies.[35] Similarly, African Americans in North Carolina had previously formed two battalions of militia. However, those units had disbanded, as an attempt at concessionist politics, in the hopes of heading off the worst of the increasingly powerful white supremacist movement, leaving only a single company by 1898.[36] When the war began, the black community began to call in their markers. During the calls for volunteers, Governor Russell called for first a black battalion, which was later expanded into a full regiment, as a reward for the black voters that had put him into office. Another effective reward was the appointment of black officers to command the 3rd North Carolina.[37] While in other states, such as Alabama's Third Regiment, white officers commanded the black men. In North Carolina, African Americans wielded the political clout to defend their own interests.

For North Carolinians Cuba was both familiar and exotic. During the antebellum period, Cuba was one of the favored sites for expansion, a slave state in the making. However, by thirty years after the war, those dreams were long buried. Instead, despite being less than a hundred miles off the coast of the United States Cuba had become an exotic place, one whose culture and practices made it a site of often voyeuristic interest. On May 23, 1895, the, white and Democratic, *Goldsboro Headlight* published nearly two full pages on events in

[34] Redding, *Making Race*, 58,
[35] Redding, *Making Race*, 28.
[36] Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment" 371-372.
[37] Fletcher, "Black Volunteers," 48.

Cuba. While the writer mentioned an ongoing revolution, the vast majority of the article depicted two aspects of Cuban culture: executions, and bullfights. While the rebellion was praised for standing up against an overbearing and distant ruler, it was also mocked for being more interested in making grand pronouncements than fighting Spain. While "Cruel as the Cubans proverbially are" the correspondent described the executions as surprisingly civilized, although at the same time she denigrated the Cuban justice system. When describing bullfights, the female writer was very careful to describe how improper and salacious the entire affair was.[38] However, there was quite little in the way of full coverage, and instead, most of the newspaper articles were shorter, more factually driven pieces that covered some aspect of the ongoing revolution. This pattern would hold until the sinking of the *USS Maine*. In the immediate aftermath of the sinking, a stark contrast appears. While many newspapers immediately took out full page spreads, including some of the only large pieces of newspaper art in the region, others such as the *Goldsboro Headlight,* sounded notes of caution.

When news of the sinking of the *Maine* reached North Carolina, the white media began a drumbeat to war. Newspapers such as the *Gastonia Gazette* immediately proposed Spanish treachery, quoting Adjutant General J. McIntosh Kell, as saying "I think there was treachery and that some Spaniard was at the bottom of it."[39] Similarly, the Wilmington *Weekly Star* noted that Rear Admiral Belknap found it "remarkable that the Maine should

[38] *Goldsboro Headlight,* 23 May 1895
[39] Gastonia *The Gastonia Gazette,* 24 February, 1898.

have blown up in that particular harbor at that particular time."[40] A week later, the *Star* was already claiming "Absolute Proof" that the sinking of the *Maine* was caused by outside forces.[41] Across the state, white newspapers maintained their coverage of the *USS Maine* and called for war over the next few weeks.

While the destruction of the *Maine* would not remain front page news for long, it stayed in the paper. Even when no news was in the offing, there were still stories. For example in the *Daily Concord Standard,* on February 21, despite the newspaper not having any more information it still claimed that "The diving probably began today to recover bodies from the Maine" on the first page.[42] After the declaration of war, while other stories often took priority, *USS Maine* remained on the page On March 25 the Marion *Messenger* printed a story, about a Captain Teasdale of the British Navy testifying that the people of Havana hated the *Maine.* The captain declared that a crowd at a bullfight a few days before the sinking were shouting "That's the *Maine!"* at the bull, and that there was a "deep seated and scarcely repressed hatred for Americans."[43]

Compared to his peers, Josephus Daniels of the *News & Observer* proved slow to embrace the idea of a war against Spain, but by the eve of war itself, he had become one of the most influential voices in the state for military action. His coverage of the sinking of the *Maine* began with noticeable skepticism, claiming in the headlines that the sinking was

[40] Wilmington *Weekly Star*, 25 February 1898.
[41] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 4 March 1898.
[42] Concord, *Daily Concord Standard*, 21 February 1898.
[43] Marion *Messenger,* 25 March 1898.

"Hardly a Torpedo" on February 18, and instead claiming that "The Bunkers Theory Now Popular." In the article itself, Secretary Long claimed "There is no such thing as a percussion hole; there is notorpedo, and there is no other way in which such a hole could be accounted for."[44] By February 24, however, Daniels had begun reversing course, claiming that "Conviction Grows That the Magazine Did Not Blow Up the *Maine.*" In that article, the correspondents argued that as divers had found much of the ordinance for the Maine unexploded, it was unlikely for an internal explosion to have caused the detonation. However, the newspaper reporters also claimed "General Blanco and the other high Spanish officials had no knowledge, direct or indirect" of any plan to destroy the ship.[45] While Daniels ran a careful tack in the first weeks of the crisis, after the declaration of war, his newspaper fell in line. By March 24, Cuba took up nearly the entirety of the *News and Observer's* front page, with the newspaper reporting not only that the receipt of the report was near at hand, but also that the war in Cuba was "A War of Starvation" and that "scenes put Dante's Inferno to shame."[46]

Only a few white North Carolina newspapers expressed hesitation about attributing the sinking of the Maine to the Spanish. The *Goldsboro Headlight* published an article headlined "Be sure you are right." The *Headlight* warned "If the commission . . . finds that the cause of the disaster springs from Spanish treachery, it will then be time enough to inflame the passions of our people into the fires of belligerent enthusiasm; but not until

[44] Raleigh *The News & Observer*, 18 February 1898.
[45] Raleigh *The News & Observer,* 24 February 1898.
[46] Raleigh *The News & Observer,* 24 March 1898.

then."[47] No white North Carolina newspaper, according to surviving records, outrightly rejected war against Spain.

Most North Carolinians believed that the war with Spain would be short and victorious, though few expected that it would be as brief and decisive as it became. The Wilmington *Weekly Star* claimed that it would be a conflict that would call for hundreds of thousands of men and cost half a billion dollars.[48] Most newspapers saw Spain as a weak adversary; many claimed that the war's outcome was a foregone conclusion. "Cuba was lost to Spain," claimed the *Weekly Star* in April 1898, well before the invasion, "the Spanish fleets would prove no match for the American fleets."[49] While Americans clearly had naval superiority, many newspapers suggested that the subsequent land war in Cuba would prove lengthy and difficult. In June 1898, the Wilson *Advance* noted that almost no army officer "holds the opinion that the United States forces will land, march triumphantly and uninterruptedly to Havana, carry that city by storm in a day and all Cuba within two or three weeks." Instead, they argued that it would be a long and hard campaign against some sixty five thousand highly motivated and experienced Spanish troops, with minimal support from the Cuban rebels.[50] The Goldsboro *Headlight* had actually raised the same point a month prior, saying that "in the whole of Cuba there are not 40,000 insurgents under arms." Instead

[47] Goldsboro *Headlight*, 3 March 1898.
[48] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 29 April 1898.
[49] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 29 April 1898.
[50] *The Wilson Advance,* 2 June 1898.

the newspaper suggested that the total was maybe half that number, reduced by "Slaughter, famine and disease."[51]

War in Cuba represented many North Carolinians hopes and fears. Former Confederates saw the potential for reunification and glory in a war against Spain. Under the banner of "Patriotism of the Confederates," the *Confederate Veteran* magazine argued that the coming conflict offered an opportunity for former Confederates to reassert their identities as loyal Americans. "While we once bore the emblem of suspicion," it noted, "subsequent events" had demonstrated that former Confederates could "give life and bright manhood in defense of our government. … All rally to the cause of our common flag."[52] As this article indicates, the memory of the Civil War colored the mobilization effort for the war against Spain. While many Confederate veterans remembered the horrors of war, despite the ways that it had been mythologized in their reunions, others saw it as a means to speak to a fully reconciled union.[53] The federal government went out of its way to appoint former Confederates to leadership roles.[54]

Between the sinking of the *Maine* and the declaration of war, Governor Russell was bombarded by letters requesting a military commission. Many of these letters cited both Confederate service and loyalty to the United States, a clear invocation of the reconciliationist trope. Virgil Stuart Lusk pointed to "four years military experience as a

[51] Goldsboro *Headlight,* 19 May 1898.
[52] "Patriotism of Confederates," *Confederate Veteran* 6 (1898): 111
[53] Janney, *Remembering,* 223.
[54] Janney, *Remembering,* 224.

Confederate soldier, patriotism enough to cover the entire United States, in the name of liberty and suffering humanity, with elasticity enough to cover the whole of Cuba." Lusk's experience in the Civil War was not the most glamorous: he participated in the disastrous defense of Roanoke Island and spent his final two years in Union prison camps. A post-war Republican, Lusk was mayor of Asheville and served two terms in the state legislature. Samuel Spruill, a lawyer, and politician from Plymouth, noted his "service in the Civil War" and desire to exemplify "patriotic motives and love for my country." Like Lusk, Spruill's Confederate service was lackluster. At least one former Union officer also offered his service. Major Allen G. Brady, who led the 17th Connecticut Regiment, tendered his services as "an old ex-officer in the late Civil War." Wounded at Gettysburg, Brady had been discharged for disability in 1863 and moved to North Carolina after Reconstruction to set up a mercantile business. Russell also received letters from African Americans offering to lead soldiers in the impending war, including one from Asheville's Hayman T. Scott. "I am ready at the moment with one hundred colored men to take arms in defense of our National honor," Scott wrote, "we are eager for the fray." In his letter, Scott boasts that he has been a militia captain since 1892 and the men have been "drilling to meet any and all emergency." Of those who petitioned Russell for a commission, Scott was one of the few successful applicants, serving as a first Lieutenant of Company G in the Third Regiment. [55]

[55] V. S Lusk to D. L. Russell, 26 March 1898; S. B. Spruill to D. L. Russell 26 March 1898; Governor's Papers -- Daniel Lindsay Russell, NC State Archives SR352.1; Asheville *Daily Citizen,* 21 April 1898.

Many white North Carolinians also worried about the specter of yellow fever in Cuba. By 1898, cases of the disease in North Carolina were rare, but they remembered the yellow fever outbreaks earlier in the century that had devastated coastal communities in North Carolina, most notably the 1862 yellow fever epidemic in Wilmington, which killed thousands. In 1897, yellow fever from Cuba had swept through the southern United States. Beginning in September, in New Orleans, the fever spread rapidly, bringing the city, and all railroad traffic in a three hundred mile radius, to a standstill. Quarantine efforts proved ineffective, and the disease spread into Texas, and Georgia. Across the South, refugees and first responders alike were met with armed mobs.[56]

Frequent outbreaks of yellow fever in Havana and Santiago in the 1890s made many North Carolinians wary of the consequences of military intervention. The *Weekly Star* predicted that of an army of a hundred thousand, "ten percent of the number will die of disease in sixty days" if landed in Cuba.[57] Two issues later, on May 13, the *Weekly Star* returned to the question of disease, claiming that the Spanish soldiers in Cuba had approximately 10,000 cases of yellow fever, a quarter of them lethal. Yellow Fever was not some flight of fancy, but a serious problem within Cuba, and the southern United States more generally. Cubans went so far as to call it a patriotic disease, attacking the foreigners that

[56] Mariola Espinosa, *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 11-14. Yellow fever is spread by mosquitoes, but that fact was not discovered until documented by Dr. Walter Reed in 1900 based on his military service in Cuba.
[57] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 29 April 1898.

attempted to claim Cuba's bounty.[58] In 1896, official reports recorded that Spanish soldiers suffered approximately a 51.9 per thousand mortality rate from yellow fever.[59]

For many North Carolinians, the sinking of the *Maine* and the war against Spain did not change their goals for 1898. Democrats such as Josephus Daniels, Alfred Wadell, and Furnifold Simmons remained committed to their white supremacy campaign. They saw the war as a vehicle for furthering their political objectives and attacking their opponents. For Republicans, Populists, and African Americans (groups that frequently overlapped), the war was an opportunity to demonstrate citizenship and protect their domestic political interests. While national and international issues informed their attitudes and choices, they were fundamentally driven by local concerns.

* * *

On April 25, 1898, Governor Daniel Russell called for 2,584 North Carolinians to volunteer in the fight against Spain. Russell's proclamation followed the declaration of war and President McKinley's call for troops to supplement the Regular Army. Most of the white soldiers came from North Carolina's State Guard. Reorganized in 1877 in the aftermath of Reconstruction, the State Guard was tasked with the protection of the state "in war, rebellion, insurrection, or riot." Limited to a peacetime maximum of 5,400 men, the first line of the legislation creating the State Guard provided that "The white and colored militia shall be separately enrolled, and shall never be compelled to serve in the same companies, battalions,

[58] S. L. Kotar and J. E. Gessler, *Yellow Fever : A Worldwide History* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2017), 340.
[59] Kotar and Gessler, *Yellow Fever,* 345.

or regiments."[60] In practice, by 1898 only one black militia company existed, numbering only 40 men.[61] Similarly, the regulations also provided that when in camp, the men of the militia should be drilled for at least two hours a day.[62] However, the regulations do not mention how often the camps should be held.

Adjutant General Andrew D. Cowles, the top military official in the State Guard, disseminated Governor Russell's call for troops in a memo, instructing "The Captains of such companies of the State Guard as will volunteer for service in the volunteer army of the United States will at once recruit their companies to not less than eighty-four men. Any company volunteering as a body will be accepted and mustered into United States Service with its own officers."[63] Two days later, Cowles instructed the officers to assemble their men in Raleigh as soon as possible.[64]

Even before Russell's proclamation and Cowles's memo, individual units within the state militia had volunteered their service. Company C, known as "Governor's Guard,"indicated their willingness to fight as soon as war was declared, hoping to become "the first company in the State to volunteer for the war with Spain." According to the *News & Observer*, "not a man stopped to reason why," but they proclaimed that they would "go where we are ordered". The newspaper reported that militia companies across the state had

[60] *Laws and resolutions of the State of North Carolina, passed by the General Assembly at its session 1876-1877* (Raleigh: Ramsey, 1877), 499-500; *Regulations for the North Carolina State Guard* (Raleigh: Adjutant General's Department, 1884), 19- 21.
[61] Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment," 372; *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Adjutant General's Office, 1898), 10
[62] *Regulations for the North Carolina State Guard* (1884), 118.
[63] Wilmington *Morning Star*, 26 April 1898.
[64] Wilmington *Morning Star*, 28 April 1898.

pledged to serve. “Today all is expectant preparation …. Everywhere the sound of arms and of martial preparations, as the nation makes ready for battle -- battle under the one flag of Uncle Sam.” Throughout its coverage of early mobilization, the *News & Observer* highlighted the contributions of former Confederates, especially Fitzhugh Lee, but also how this new war brought together old adversaries. It noted, for instance, that the impending arrival of soldier recruits in Raleigh had “not been witnessed here since the Sixties."[65] When the Governor’s Guard marched through Raleigh the following day, crowds appeared to cheer them on. “With a patriotism as broad as their country,” the *News & Observer* reported, “they show that they are every inch soldiers by volunteering to go wherever Old Glory waves.” Drawing upon the Lost Cause and reconciliationist narratives that had become common by the end of the century, the newspaper declared them “true soldiers -- the stuff out of which Stonewall’s brigade was made.”[66]

In appointing officers to lead North Carolina’s white regiments, Governor Russell sought not only to find the most qualified men available, but also to create a symbolic reconciliation between former Confederates and Unionists in the state. In both regiments, the colonels held significant Confederate connections. To lead the First North Carolina Volunteers, Russell appointed Col. Joseph Franklin Armfield. Born in 1862, Armfield’s father Robert Franklin Armfield had represented Yadkin County in North Carolina’s Secession Convention and enlisted a month after his son’s birth and fought in Robert E.

[65] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 24 April 1898.
[66] Raleigh *News & Observe*r, 25 April 1898.

Lee's Army of Northern Virginia during the Seven Days. Wounded in October 1862 at Shepardstown, the elder Armfield returned home and would go on to serve several terms in the State legislature during Reconstruction. The younger Armfield followed in his father's footsteps, joining the Iredell Blues, a unit in the State Guard, as a young man, eventually working his way up the ranks of the State Guard.

To command the Second North Carolina Volunteers, Russell appointed William H. S. Burgwyn. The fifty-two year old Burgwyn was the son of a wealthy planter and enslaver, and had joined the Confederate army in 1861, rising in the ranks to become Assistant Adjutant General of Clingman's Brigade. Twice wounded in battle, Burgwyn spent the final months of the war as a prisoner at Fort Delaware. His brother, Henry King Burgwyn Jr., was famous as the youngest colonel in the Confederacy and was killed at Gettysburg. After the Civil War, William Burgwyn became a lawyer and a banker, though he retained some military expertise. While working as an attorney, he took part in helping to suppress the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad strike as a member of the Maryland State Guard in 1877. He also actively participated in Confederate veteran events and Lost Cause commemorations until the end of his life. Burgwyn's appointment to command the Second Regiment immediately prompted praise from the United Confederate Veterans.[67]

To counterbalance Armfield and Burgwyn, Russell appointed Calvin D. Cowles and

[67] Asheville *Weekly Citizen*, 10 May 1898; Juanita Ann Sheppard, Burgwyn, "William Hyslop Sumner," *NCPedia https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/burgwyn-william-hyslop*; Archie K. Davis, *Boy Colonel of the Confederacy: The Life and Times of Henry King Burgwyn Jr.* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1985).

Andrew D. Cowles as the lieutenant colonels of the regiments. The Cowles brothers were the sons of Calvin J. Cowles, one of the most prominent Unionists in North Carolina during the Civil War. The elder Cowles had opposed secession and had become a Republican during Reconstruction, working closely with Governor William Woods Holden, whose daughter would become his second wife. He played a significant role in the 1868 state Constitutional Convention that guaranteed equal rights and suffrage for African Americans, personally delivering a printed copy to President Andrew Johnson. His sons inherited his Republican politics, but unlike their father (who was too ill to fight in the Civil War) had active military careers. Calvin D. Cowles was an 1873 graduate of West Point, who had served for two decades in a variety of frontier posts before spending six years working on the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*. Andrew Cowles was the longtime officer in the North Carolina State Guard, rising to the rank of
Adjutant General in 1897, a post he resigned to become lieutenant colonel of the Second Regiment. He also worked as a merchant, lawyer, and insurance salesman, while dabbling in Republican politics.[68]

Governor Russell's decision to appoint men with prominent Confederate and Unionist ties to these posts reflected the broader national sentiment that the war against Spain would serve to heal the lasting injuries of the Civil War. Russell understood that North Carolina's

[68] Statesville *Record and Landmark*, 21 November 1899; *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War*, 49; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.* (Cambridge, Mass: Riverside Press, 1901), vol 3: 216, vol. 4: 236.

divisive political atmosphere could damage recruitment efforts unless he could reasonably appeal to different constituencies within the state. This decision mirrored some of the reconciliationist politics happening at the national level, as former Confederate officers Fitzhugh Lee, Matthew Butler, Joseph Wheeler, and Thomas Rosser all received commissions as generals for the Spanish American War, and other well-known ex-Confederates including William C. Oates and John S. Mosby also volunteered. For many white Southerners, especially those with family ties to the Confederacy, the involvement of former rebels in the war effort legitimized their fighting under the flag of their old enemy. It allowed them to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States without forsaking their devotion to the Lost Cause. "The loyalty of ex-Confederates to our government has for years been made the subject of criticism," wrote one former Texas rebel, who sought to raise a regiment to fight in Cuba. "All we ask is an opportunity to let our actions speak for our loyalty."[69]

While newspapers beat the drum for war, it did not directly translate to an unlimited flood of volunteers. While the first regiment took a mere three days to raise, it took over ten days to raise half of the second regiment. While the State Guard had (in theory) enough men to fill at least four regiments, many militiamen proved physically incapable of camp life and the demands of active duty, failing their induction physical examination. Moreover, in the

[69] Janney, *Remembering the Civil War,* 222-225; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 346; Nina Silber, *Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993), 178-185; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 145-149.

midst of the rage militaire, some white North Carolinians expressed apprehension about so many state militia soldiers bound for Cuba. "There is a widespread feeling in this State, particularly in Eastern North Carolina," reported the *News & Observer*, "that all the State troops ought not to be sent out of the State." Especially "in several large Eastern counties, where the negroes are in a large majority," some white North Carolinians believed that half of the soldiers should remain in the state for "domestic defense" and had "a sense of duty to the preservation of the home."[70] Josephus Daniels understood that his planned white supremacy campaign would require that the state's militia be in place if needed. Because of the hesitancy of militia companies from eastern counties to volunteer, the First Regiment was made up almost entirely of men from the Piedmont and mountain counties. Three state militia companies from eastern North Carolina (Plymouth, Hertford, and Maxton) notified Adjutant General Andrew Cowles that they had no interest in participating in the war against Spain. Cowles rejected one Greenville company which "only offered to volunteer to go anywhere in the United States," but refused to serve overseas, claiming "we need no conditional volunteers." The First Regiment ended up with only one company based east of Raleigh, the Goldsboro Rifles, which replaced the Greenville militia.[71]

Much like they did nearly forty years earlier, local communities played an important role in encouraging young men to volunteer. On April 30, the "ladies of Concord" presented a flag to the men of the Cabarrus Light Infantry before they began their journey to Raleigh.

[70] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 26 April 1898.
[71] Joseph Steelman, *North Carolina's Role in the Spanish American War* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1975), 4-5.

Captain Edward Hill "took special pride that [sic] in the fact that it was made by the daughters of women who had with similar feminine heroism made and presented flags to our soldier fathers." Met with "a profusion of flowers," the recruits heard a benediction from Rev. J.D. Arnold, who told them "the peculiar incident that the stars and stripes are to all the symbol of national glory and also the blue coats the pride of our soldiery, while in the late war they were looked upon as the embodiment of the enemy." He told them that "in responding to this first call they were but true to Southern heroism."[72]

When they arrived in Raleigh, the Cabarrus Light Infantry was mustered in as Company L of the First North Carolina Volunteers, though 8 of the 91 recruits were sent home after failing their physical.[73] Among the enlistees was soldier-journalist Harry P. Deaton, who provided some of the most robust and insightful commentary on the soldiers' experience. In a series of articles published in *Daily Concord Standard*, Deaton detailed life in training camps in North Carolina and Florida and garrison duty in Cuba. Training for the First Regiment took place in Camp Grimes, located just east of the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, near the Southern and Seaboard Railways. Named for Confederate General Bryan Grimes, the camp spread over 95 acres, with the recruits inhabiting 294 tents. Deaton reported that Company L camped between Company K from Raleigh and Company M from Charlotte. "Many of the younger boys," Deaton observed, "are eager for orders to Cuba."[74] No sooner had the regiment reached its full complement than rumors began to spread about

[72] *Daily Concord Standard*, 2 May 1898.
[73] *Daily Concord Standard,* 4 May 1898.
[74] *Daily Concord Standard*, 7 May 1898.

them relocating to Florida in preparation for an assault in Cuba. Deaton reported on May 12 that "old soldiers" in the Confederate veterans home in Raleigh "would like to go into battle again, if their country could use them." Alongside Deaton's column ran a poem dedicated to Company L, praising them as the "Sons of Blue and Gray … North and South comingled" who would "teach the Spaniards the notes of freedom's song."[75] On May 22, the First Regiment received orders to board trains for Florida. For the young men in Company L, they got an opportunity to see their friends and family that congregated at the depot as their train stopped briefly in Concord en route to Jacksonville.[76]

Not long after congregating in Camp Bryan Grimes, the First North Carolina had its first desertions. The *Record and Landmark* reported that Robert L. Mitchell and Paulus Williams of the Goldsboro Company, took "French Leave" after being"restless and uneasy," in camp. While others had left camp before being sworn in, these were the first two to break their oaths.[77]

Writing to the Statesville *Record and Landmark*, James Forney Mills marked his first days in camp with complaining. Across the month of May, he and the other Statesville men complained of a lack of care from home, and of too many accusatory letters owing to misspelled names in newspaper rosters, including a note that "W.E. Boles is reliably here and is helping us tramp down grass"[78] Mills, like many in the regiment, struggled with the

[75] *Daily Concord Standard,* 12 May 1898.
[76] *Daily Concord Standard*, 23 May 1898.
[77] Statesville *Record and Landmark,* 13 May 1898.
[78] *Statesville Record and Landmark,* 20 May 1898.

constraints of military life, and found it did not match the stories that he had been told of fathers tramping off to war.

Recruitment for the Second Regiment began on May 6, when it became clear that the First Regiment would be filled from existing State Guard companies. With Camp Grimes becoming overcrowded and hoping to instill a distinct identity for his new regiment, Col. Burgwyn established a new training camp at the State Fairgrounds, which eventually became known as Camp Dan Russell, after the governor. However, it proved more challenging to fill the Second than it had been for the First. While the First regiment incorporated large militia companies which retained their leadership structure and community coherence, the Second Regiment tried to amalgamate smaller militia companies, merging them into full sized units. This process proved divisive at times. Thirteen soldiers from Burlington refused to serve in a hybrid unit, as they "objected to being with the members of the Washington [North Carolina] company." Despite Burgwyn's intervention and pleading to "set aside their differences," they "refused to be mustered" and elected to return home. The newspaper coverage does not make it clear why they objected to serving alongside soldiers from another part of the state, but this incident reveals the intensely local nature of the State Guard units and broader difficulties faced by the Second Regiment. Other companies seemed to face similar issues. An undersized company from Oxford arrived in camp with 50 soldiers, intending to recruit the rest of the company from unattached men, hundreds of whom had arrived at the Fairgrounds hoping to enlist. They recruited another 34 soldiers, but several of them failed the physical. Unable to present a full company, Captain Skinner was told "if I don't recruit by tonight, I

must leave camp." Skinner and his original company departed for home. The recently recruited men scrambled to find other companies to join.[79]

The recruiting problems faced by the Second North Carolina regiment mirrored those seen across the former Confederacy. As historian David Turpie has argued, Southern state governments encountered reluctance from state militia leaders and soldiers when called upon to fight against Spain. Militia companies gave local elites the opportunity to adopt military airs and inherit the mantle passed down from the Civil War generation. For them, federal mobilization threatened their autonomy and local authority. Moreover, many white Southerners saw the purpose of local militia companies as primarily to police African Americans and protect white women, far more than as a force to engage in foreign military intervention. Most of the men enrolled in local militia companies never expected their commitment to extend beyond periodic encampments and rejected the idea that they could be taken away from their communities for an extended period of time. Under this framework, the recruitment problems faced in North Carolina bore a striking resemblance to those in Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Virginia.[80]

These early examples of organizational difficulties within the Second Regiment foreshadowed more significant problems over the late spring and summer. After the First Regiment departed for Florida on May 22, the Second Regiment remained in camp. They had only achieved full operational strength and a full complement of officers a week prior. Many

[79] "White Feather Crowd," Wilmington *Register*, 16 May 1898
[80] David Turpie, "A Voluntary War: The Spanish-American War, White Southern Manhood, and the Struggle to Recruit Volunteers in the South" *Journal of Southern History* (2014): 859-892.

of the men had only begun a serious training regime and many had not yet been issued weapons or uniforms. In early June 1898, a newspaper published an account of the regiment's gruelling training schedule, which began at 5:30 in the morning and lasted well into the evening. A soldier in the regiment noted morale was high and that "the health of the camp is excellent and there is very little sickness." Both of these aspects declined significantly in the weeks to come.[81]

In June 1898, Camp Dan Russell experienced both measles and typhoid fever outbreaks that crippled the Second Regiment and delayed its deployment. Seven recruits died from their illnesses and many more lingered in the camp hospital. Spread by contaminated water and exacerbated by the rudimentary sanitation facilities at Camp Dan Russell, typhoid fever had incapacitated many of the new recruits with abdominal pain. Newspapers reported that "two of the wells at Camp Dan Russell had been condemned" and that "all possible efforts were being made to cleanse" the camp.[82] Overcrowding also allowed viruses like measles to spread, plaguing many soldiers with fever, rash, and diarrhea.[83] When the Second Regiment departed, at least 29 soldiers remained in the camp hospital.[84] Not all of them recovered. "Death visited the hospital of the Second Regiment at Camp Dan Russell," the *Raleigh Times* reported on July 27, noting that the soldier's company had departed for Port Royal, South Carolina two weeks prior.[85]

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[81] *Daily Concord Standard,* 3 June 1898.
[82] *Wilmington Star*, 29 July 1898.
[83] Raleigh *Times*, 27 July 1898.
[84] Raleigh *The Morning Post,* 2 August 1898.
[85] Raleigh *Times*, 27 July 1898.

Discipline issues plagued the Second Regiment throughout its encampment in Raleigh. Companies H and M, both from the mountain counties, had a rash of desertions in June, losing 10 and 6 men respectively. [86] According to newspaper reports, Lt. Col. Cowles said "leniency towards deserters had emboldened them and an example must be made." Cowles and Burgwyn threatened one captured deserter with the death penalty, his "face like that of a dead man, and great drops of persperation [sic] rolled down his face."[87] One captured deserter, apprehended at his home in Wilmington, claimed that "he would rather go to the penitentiary than stay in camp. It was from dissatisfaction with the life of a soldier that he resorted to desertion."[88]

Despite Col. Burgwyn's best efforts, the Second Regiment also developed a reputation for lawlessness. On several occasions, soldiers were disciplined for public intoxication.[89] The confusion of recruiting for the second regiment also created opportunities for criminals to slip into the regiment. An escaped Tennessee prisoner had enlisted in a Wilmington company under an assumed name, but "he became tired of military life, and wrote the sheriff of the county in which he was convicted to send for him and he would return to the penitentiary." Arrested on July 4, he was returned to prison. [90] Less than a month later, authorities arrested another soldier, Romulus Bazemore, for poisoning his wife. Bazemore had enlisted under the name of John Moore, but was identified by soldiers from

[86] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers.*
[87] Wilimgton *Messenger,* 16 June 1898.
[88] Wilmington *Morning Star*, 19 August 1898.
[89] Asheville *Weekly Citizen,* 21 June 1898.
[90] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 5 July 1898.

his community who recognized him.[91] The problems with discipline, drunkenness, and desertion proved endemic for the Second Regiment, not only in Raleigh, but throughout their service.

The Second Regiment did not receive its orders to deploy until early July. By that point, fighting in the Philippines had already concluded, as had much of the fighting in Cuba. Rather than send them overseas, military officials elected to dispatch them to garrison duty along the Atlantic coast in South Carolina and Georgia. Four companies were sent to St. Simon's Island, and two companies each were assigned to Tybee Island, Port Royal, St. Augustine, and Atlanta.[92]

North Carolina's African American Third Regiment faced greater challenges in recruiting than the state's two white regiments. While the First and Second regiment largely drew upon established militia companies, systematic discrimination within the State Guard had reduced the number of Black militiamen from five hundred at the end of Reconstruction to only 40 men in the Charlotte Light Infantry, a group than drilled only occasionally and whose public appearances were usually limited to Emancipation Day parades.[93] However, when Governor Russell made his call for troops, African Americans responded quickly. On April 29, 1898, the *News & Observer* reported that "at least a dozen" African American companies had been formed to fight against Spain, including units in Charlotte, Raleigh,

[91] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 8 July 1898. Bazemore was put on trial for her death, but was acquitted.
[92] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers,* 46.
[93] Gatewood, *North Carolina's Negro Regiment,* 372. *Annual report of the Adjutant-General of the state of North Carolina for the year 1898*, 10.

Asheville, Wilson, New Bern, and Wilmington.[94] While these African American volunteers brought little formal training or equipment and the companies were not officially recognized by the state government, they represented a sweeping and enthusiastic response from North Carolina's black population.

African Americans understood there to be a relationship between military service and citizenship. "We are citizens of the United States," E.G. Slade, an African American barber in Concord, told potential recruits on May 2, "should we not show to the white people that we, as well as they, are willing to grasp the staff of the U.S. flag and bear her forward in all her glory." Slade linked African Americans' struggle for full citizenship with Cuban rebels: "like Maceo, the greatest of the colored generals, let us take responsibility upon our shoulders and gain a reputation for ourselves. There can be no doubt but that the colored man as well as the white man can place his name in the leaves of history."[95] While Slade would not manage to join the 3rd North Carolina, the recruits from Concord would form half of Company D.[96]

When these African American militia companies formed in late April, it was unclear whether they would be allowed to serve in the war effort. The decision to create a black regiment grew out of both African Americans' desire to demonstrate their claims to citizenship and manhood through military service, but also out of Governor Russell's need to repay African Americans who had been loyal Republican voters for decades and had been

[94] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 29 April 1898.
[95] *Daily Concord Standard,*2 May 1898; *Daily Concord Standard,* 28 June 1898.
[96] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers*, 103-104.

critical to his election in 1896. As the war began Russell dispatched his close advisor J.C.L. Harris to Washington, D.C. to lobby the War Department to allow North Carolina to substitute an African American battalion for an artillery battery as part of the state's quota. Harris worked alongside Senators Marion Butler and Jeter Pritchard and Congressman George White, the only African American remaining in Congress, in pushing for an African American military unit. Other prominent black politicians including former Congressman Henry Cheatham, who had preceded White as the representative from North Carolina's Black Second and now served as Washington's Recorder of Deeds (a post long held by prominent African Americans, including Frederick Douglass), and John C. Dancy, the customs collector in Wilmington also pushed for the creation of a black battalion. Because of their efforts, Governor Russell was able to announce the formation of a black battalion on April 27. The following month, President McKinley issued his second call for troops, which prompted Russell to upgrade the battalion to a full regiment.[97]

Governor Russell appointed James Young to command the Third North Carolina Regiment. The editor of the *Raleigh Gazette* had no military experience, but had developed a close relationship with Russell over the previous few years. Born enslaved near Henderson in 1858, Young attended Shaw University in Raleigh and immediately entered a political career, serving in a number of local posts. In 1893, Young purchased the *Raleigh Gazette*, and turned it into a mouthpiece for Black Republicanism in the state. As one of the architects of the Fusion strategy that brought Russell to power, he was elected to the state legislature in

[97] Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment," 373-377.

1894 and 1896. Due to financial issues, Young had to shutter the *Gazette* in March 1898, making him available to lead the Black regiment.[98]

While most African American units from other states were led by white officers, Governor Russell appointed a full slate of African American officers to command the Third Regiment. Assisting Young was Lt. Col. Charlie Taylor, of the Charlotte Light Infantry. Born enslaved in South Carolina, Taylor was educated at Quaker schools during Reconstruction and became a barber in Charlotte, where he also served as the captain of the black fire company and held prominent positions in several fraternal organizations.[99] The *Greensboro Patriot* reported that "Young and Taylor are the first negroes in the United States to hold commissions so high."[100]

Several members of the regiment's officer corps, like Young, had connections to Shaw University and indeed many had been classmates together, including Ezikial Smith, Marcus Alston, and Manassa Pope.[101] Born in 1858 to free landholding parents, Pope attended Shaw University from 1874 to 1879 and became part of the inaugural class of the Leonard Medical School. In 1887 he sat for the state medical board exam in New Bern, and became the first

[98] Willard B. Gatewood, "Young, James Hunter," *NCPedia*, https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/young-james-hunter; Winston Salem, *Union Republican,* 10 March 1898.
[99] Taylor and Richardson Family album, UNC-Charlotte Special Collections
[100] Greensboro *Patriot*, 20 July 1898.
[101] Martin Redinger, "Smith, Ezekiel Ezra,"*NCPedia*, https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/smith-ezekiel-ezra; Kenneth Joel Zogry, "The House That Dr. Pope Built: Race, Politics, Memory, and the Early Struggle for Civil Rights In North Carolina*"* (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, 2008), 32-35, 102; *General Catalogue of Shaw University, 1873-1882* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1882), 5-7.

African American physician licensed to practice in the state. Just shy of his fortieth birthday, Dr. Pope enlisted as a First Lieutenant on July 4, 1898.[102]

The size of the force was a matter of some debate. While the Wilmington *Morning Star* claimed that the initial force was to have seven companies, "two from Wilmington, two from Raleigh, one from Newton, Winston, and Reidsville each."[103] This was a drastic overestimation. The actual final number was three companies. Two newly raised, and the Charlotte Light Infantry. Mustered into service on May 12, 1898, the unit would not assemble until May 30.[104]

Rather than mobilization beginning at the top, five companies of African Americans self-mobilized, and offered their services to Governor Daniel Russell. However, it was not until April 27, that Russell was able to secure permission from the War Department for North Carolina to supplement its two white regiments with a black battalion, as a substitute for an artillery battery. Most organization for the battalion/regiment seems to have come from below rather than above. These men traveled to Fort Macon, an antebellum brick and stone fort in Carteret County to be mustered in. Built in 1834, Fort Macon had been the site of a minor Civil War battle in 1862 and had been used by the US Army through Reconstruction, but largely abandoned after 1877. Garrisoned by only a single officer and his family for decades, the fort was only held to prevent it from returning to the hands of the North Carolina government. By 1898, the fort was in ruins, but was quickly refurbished after the sinking of

[102] Zogry, "The House," 102.
[103] *Wilmington Morning Star,* 28 April 1898.
[104] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War*, 89.

the *Maine* in preparation for a possible Spanish invasion. The Third Regiment occupied the site at the end of May and remained there until September 14. [105]

Some white North Carolinians interpreted minor recruitment problems in the Third Regiment as evidence that African Americans did not have the stomach for combat. In early July, newspapers reported that some of the recruited African American companies had not made it to Fort Macon. Adjutant General, Andrew Cowles complained on July 6 about "down right cowardice" in the Third Regiment, which he attributed to recent reports about carnage at the Battle of Santiago. "The ordinary colored citizen is a fine soldier when it means a few weeks of camp life with plenty of rations and regimentals," Cowles claimed, "but he is not 'a-gwine' if he thinks there is going to be any bullets."[106] African Americans responded to Cowles' criticism by arguing that the delays were not a product of cowardice, but of internal disputes over leadership within the regiment. "If General Cowles must have a reason for the failure of colored troops to respond," wrote Rev. W.H.R. Leak, he should examine "the incompetent appointments of officers in the negro regiment made by Governor Russell."[107] This demonstrates how Democratic papers, like the *News & Observer,* used any opportunity to denigrate the black volunteer's attempts to serve. On June 30, the Raleigh *Times* had reported a very different story, with some five hundred African Americans passing

[105] Paul Branch, *Fort Macon: A History* (Mount Pleasant, NC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013); Richard Schriver Barry, "Fort Macon: Its History," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 27, no. 2 (1950): 163-77; "Fort Macon," National Register of Historic Places, Inventory -- Nomination Form, 1969: https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/CR0003.pdf.
[106] *News & Observer*, 7 July 1898; Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment," 377.
[107] *News & Observer*, 9 July 1898.

through the city on their way to Fort Macon.[108] While each company was reported as being slightly understrength, likely indicating some level of desertion, it was far from the wholesale desertions posited by Cowles. This is borne out by comparing their records in the *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers.* While nine men of the Third deserted, that is less than the number of deserters found in one company of the Second.[109]

Nevertheless, throughout the summer of 1898, Josephus Daniels' *News & Observer* routinely attacked the Third Regiment and its colonel James Young. Articles often referred to them as "Russell's pets" and "the colored volunteer 'soldiers' of the Third Regiment," implying that they were illegitimate and not of the same caliber as the white soldiers in the First and Second Regiments. Daniels' newspaper repeatedly asserted that they were lazy and corrupt, "enjoying life to its fullest extent." When some soldiers from the Third Regiment visited nearby towns, the *News & Observer* described them as attempting to "paint the town red" drunk on corn liquor, or "clean out the town." Daniels believed that the uniform had a deleterious effect on racial etiquette: the African Americans soldiers "in uniform … felt entitled to making themselves offensive to white people." Daniels concluded that "the useless encumbrances of the Third Regiment of North Carolina" should be mustered out immediately. "This regiment is the only one in the United States commanded by colored officers," which he saw as an affront to "the white Manhood of North Carolina."[110]

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[108] Raleigh *Times,* 30 June 1898.
[109] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War,* 16, 19, 28, 31, 34, 37, 41, 44, 53, 56, 59, 62, 69, 75, 78, 87, 96, 99, 102, 105, 108, 111, 114, 117.
[110] *News & Observer*, 18 August 1898, 19 August 1898.

The *News & Observer* implied that the conduct of soldiers in the Third Regiment portented violence. Reprinting a piece from the *Morehead City Pilot*, it noted,"The negro soldiers at Fort Macon camp have within the past week given unmistakable evidence of a disposition to involve the white people of this city in a riot." While it admitted that the soldiers' conduct amounted to "outrages of minor importance," mostly public drunkenness, it claimed that "the day will come when white men will take the law into their own hands and defend their homes and loved ones." This comment foreshadowed the kind of violence that would take place later that year at the Wilmington Massacre, only ninety miles to the south.[111]

Faced with racist criticism, especially in the *News & Observer*, some soldiers in the Third Regiment spoke out in their own defense. An instructor at Shaw University who had been accepted for service in the Black regiment, Nathaniel C. Bruce, wrote to the *News & Observer,* in protest against their coverage. "Much is being said about Negro soldiers in the present war," he wrote, that is "unmanly, unwise, and uncharitable." According to Bruce, "nobody seriously suggests any want of patriotism, courage, intelligence or boldness on the part of the black soldier boys." The black experience in the USCT during the Civil War demonstrated "a settled truth that these [soldiers] can fight and fight well and long and hard." Subverting racist stereotypes, Bruce argued that "an implicit obedience to orders" and "capacity for enduring privation and hardship" made "the Negro … a superior man for making the true soldier."

[111] *News & Observer*, 19 August 1898.

Bruce situated the Black service in the Spanish American War within the long tradition of Black military service throughout American history. “This is our country,” Bruce claimed, “Negroes helped to make it and what it is in war and in peace.” Despite the challenges faced by African Americans, Bruce argued that only a few “fools or worse” made the argument that “the colored man has nothing to fight for in this country, where [sic] is subject to more humiliation, maltreatment, lynching and other contumely than the ‘unspeakable Turk,’ the treacherous, barbarous Spaniard or the alien anarchist, nihilist or socialist.” Instead, he argued that “negoes have in every past crisis forgotten their little hardships, forgotten their chains even, forgotten every ache and pain and have unhesitatingly come to their country’s call.” Bruce placed their service within an interracial pantheon of military and political leaders: they were fighting for the “nation of Washington, Attucks, Douglass, Lincoln and McKinley, by making it do right by all her children, white and black alike.” Like in the Revolution and in the Civil War, Bruce argued, Africans Americans fought for their country and for their freedom, equality, and dignity. “The war [against Spain] was begun for Justice to Humanity -- Justice at home as well as abroad,” he claimed. “It will not end until any and every color of American man will be gladly welcomed into the trenches alongside of the other boys to fight for Christ’s peace and justice on earth.” Bruce also took aim at the idea of “immunes,” the concept that African Americans were more resilient in the face of “fever, hot weather, foul air, bad stenches, and hard work.” In this, Bruce saw more

prejudice than anything else, a trick to get "Negroes into service respected by the other soldiers to begin with as a person respects mules and oxen."[112]

The Third Regiment remained in camp at Fort Macon until September 14. By this point, the conflict with Spain had drawn to a close, as Spanish, and American authorities had agreed to a cease fire a month earlier. The Third Regiment received orders to board trains for Camp Poland, just north of Knoxville, Tennessee. The trip was not without incident, as one of the train cars overturned near Asheville, severely wounding a few soldiers.[113] En route to Tennessee, the soldiers debated how long they would be away from home, whether they would ever see foreign soil, and what their time in uniform meant. While they were still soldiers, they had become soldiers without a war to fight.

[112] *News & Observer*, 22 May 1898; Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees*, 106-108. Although Bruce was "accepted for service," he does not appear to have actually served in the Regiment. His name does appear, however, in records from Shaw University, confirming his identity.
[113] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers*, 89-90.

Chapter 2: Deployment

After training in North Carolina, all three Tar Heel regiments spent months deployed in camps across the southeastern United States. They left in order: the First Regiment departed for Camp Cuba Libre in Jacksonville, Florida on May 22, the Second divided among a handful of camps in South Carolina and Georgia on July 15, and the Third left for Camp Poland, near Knoxville, Tennessee, on September 14. For all three regiments, this initial deployment proved profoundly challenging. They were far from home, but also far from combat. They suffered much of the homesickness, boredom, and malaise endemic to life in a military camp, but accumulated none of the glory that had driven them to enlist in the first place. To varying degrees, soldiers in all three regiments struggled to find meaning in their military experiences.

The First's travels began with celebrations as they passed through the towns from which its men were recruited. However, ten miles from Savannah Georgia, they had a significant accident, as their train collided with a freight train going in the other direction. In a letter to his sister, Provost Sergeant Quint Smith described being woken up as their train came to a complete stop in an attempt to mitigate the crash. The men who were able to evacuate the train were "half waist deep in tide mire." While the vast majority of the men on the train made it to safety, Sargent Smith saw two people flung from the train, one who died nearly immediately, and another who was only "minorly hurt."[114] This minor hurt in fact proved lethal.

[114] *Daily Concord Standard,* 24 May 1898.

The First North Carolina arrived in Jacksonville on May 24, where they encamped at Camp Springfield, recently rebranded as Camp Cuba Libre. They were among the first soldiers to arrive in Jacksonville, an overflow site from the main staging ground in Tampa. Many of the North Carolina soldiers expected that they would only stay in city briefly before embarking for Cuba or Puerto Rico. Harry Deaton reported to the *Daily Concord Standard* that the men were "perfectly content with their lot, and are growing fat on government rations." Located in a "pine grove and dry marsh" one mile north of the city, Deaton noted that "a more pleasant or convenient location could hardly be found." Jacksonville was "a beautiful city," replete with "handsome residences and public buildings." He also reported "comparatively no sickness, debarring a few slight cases of dysentery." Anticipating that their stay in north Florida would be brief, the soldiers tried to take in as many of the attractions as possible. Many of them flocked to the beach to "enjoy the surf bathing."[115]

Within weeks of their arrival, more than seven thousand soldiers from across the country joined the First North Carolina at Camp Cuba Libre. According to Charles M. McCorkle of Company A, they were "encamped between the 2nd Wisconsin and the 2nd Illinois." The soldiers did not appear to demonstrate any hostility to their placement between two Northern regiments and lingering sectional tension from the Civil War era provided a point of demonstrative reconciliation. "Every night the bands play," McCorkle noted, "they

[115] *Daily Concord Standard,* 30 May 1898.

never forget to play 'Dixie' and 'Yankee Doodle.' The Northern boys yell for 'Dixie' with the Southerners, and vice versa, with the Southern boys for 'Yankee Doodle.'"[116]

The First North Carolina spent five months at Camp Cuba Libre. During this time, the regiment faced several major challenges that resulted in a crisis in morale. The men had not been paid since their enlistment, which prompted repeated complaints from both soldiers and officers. The clamor over back pay became so pronounced that in June, Julian Carr, the wealthy industrialist and Lost Cause proponent, offered to advance the money to the soldiers of the First Regiment, but Army regulations prohibited it.[117] There were accusations made in mid-June about "depredations committed by the men of the First North Carolina upon booths, gardens and other private property belonging to citizens of this city. Complaints have also been made that enlisted men are begging on the streets, and are consorting with disreputable characters."[118] The men would not receive their first payment until the third week of June and would habitually receive their pay late throughout the summer and fall.[119]

Despite grumbling about late pay, the soldiers in the First Regiment found their military duties light at Camp Cuba Libre and had ample time for recreation and leisure. At the end of June, Forney Mills wrote to his sister that "I have never spent two months so pleasantly in my life." While he devoted his free time to collecting buttons, reading, and writing for the Statesville Record and Landmark, Mills noted a fellow soldier who was "one

[116] Newton *Enterprise,* 10 June 1898.
[117] *Daily Concord Standard,* 13 June 1898.
[118] Statesville Record and Landmark*,* 14 June 1898.
[119] Raleigh *Morning Post,* 23 June 1898; Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 5 July 1898.

of those ladies men who is having the best time he ever had in his life."[120] While newspaper correspondents like Forney Mills or Harry Deaton emphasized the more innocent pastimes of the soldiers in camp, such as fishing and crabbing in the brackish waters of the St. John's River or forming a glee club, their private writings suggest a much more diverse set of recreational activities.[121] Drinking, gambling, and womanizing seemed endemic in Forney Mills' letters home, though he always denied participating in these activities himself. He wrote, "There are some of the boys who gamble away their money & some who get drunk and have it stolen from them or else they lose it, while some will buy anything that is brought out here for sale no matter what shape or form."[122] He blamed some of the decadent behavior of his fellow soldier on the "women of Jacksonville," whom he described as "the most reckless set that I have ever seen & stay in camp way after dark."[123] Many of the soldiers bristled at how military regulations encroached upon their leisure activities. One of the requirements to leave camp was securing a pass, something that the men of the First North Carolina seemed to have chafed at, with one surviving pass reading "With the compliments of a patriot who totes a pass the same as a coon" referring to the old slave system of passes.[124]

[120] James Forney Mills to Beccie, 26 June 1898; James Mills to Quincy Mills, 7 June 1898, Hugh Harrison Mills Collection, ECU.
[121] Statesville Record and Landmark, 10 June 1898; *Daily Concord Standard,* 29 July 1898.
[122] James Forney Mills to Beccie 18 July 1898, Hugh Harrison Mills Collection, ECU.
[123] James Forney Mills to Beccie, 26 June 1898, Hugh Harrison Mills Collection, ECU
[124] 1st NC Regiment pass, 1 August 1898, Hugh Harrison Mills Collection, ECU.

The pay problems reflected broader logistical problems faced by the First North Carolina. Most of the soldiers arrived in Jacksonville without a full uniform or equipment. One reporter noted that they carried "undoubtedly the poorest excuse for arms in the camp," a set of "second hand Springfield Rifles of an obsolete pattern," some of them relics from the Civil War. Drawn from State arsenals, the First had the pick of the set, an indication as to the sorry state of the prewar State Guard.[125] J. F. Mills, writing to the Statesville *Record and Landmark,* noted that "Uncle Sam has his hands full and can't equip them the first day, they should therefore provide as good clothing (I mean substantial) as possible."[126] In mid-June, a Jacksonville newspaper reported that "the First North Carolina is in need of considerable equipment, such as leggings, bayonets, bayonet scabbards, blue shirts, uniforms, haversacks and the like." It noted that while the regiment appeared woefully ill-equipped, they had "a much better appearance than when they arrived here," a testament to how empty-handed they were when they left North Carolina. In early July, the regiment received a shipment from Federal depots of 345 Springfield rifles, along with the accompanying gun slings and bayonet scabbards and 372 sets of haversacks, canteens, meat cans, cutlery, tin cups, and blanket bags. Even this influx of materials left the Regiment short-handed. By August, only half the regiment managed to be equipped to full specification.[127]

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[125] The Wilson *Advance,* 14 July 1898; *Farmer and Mechanic,* 31 May 1898; *News & Observer,* 9 July 1898; *Morning Post,* 16 June 1898.
[126] Statesville *Record and Landmark,* 7 June 1898.
[127] Jacksonville *Times-Union*, quoted in Raleigh *Morning Post*, 16 June 1898; Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 19 July 1898; Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 9 August 1898.

Conditions in Camp Cuba Libre deteriorated over the summer. The First Regiment's site proved prone to flooding. In early July, the camp was hit with three days of continuous rain, turning the low lying camp into a shallow lake. The unit suffered from leaky, poorly ventilated tents that had been purchased 22 years earlier. In three days, 43 enlisted and two officers fell sick. "With the rain has come an alarming increase of sickness in the soldiers," claimed a journalist with the Raleigh *Farmer & Mechanic* newspaper. "The typhoid and malaria fevers here," he observed, "are often of a most malignant and fatal type." He noted that 200 soldiers from the First were confined to the camp hospital and "a still larger number sick in quarters." To compound their problems, the Regimental pharmacist had taken "french leave" to return home shortly after arriving in Jacksonville, leaving the regiment without a full medical staff.[128] Forney Mills, writing home, complained to his family that the medical staff was incompetent and inept: "I hope that our Drs. will show up better in the campaign than they have up to date, for if they don't God pity us if we get wounded."[129] Across the division there were over two hundred sick. A reporter noted the effect that disease had on the regiment's morale: they "would rather face mauser rifles and dynamite guns than yellow fever" as only "one bullet in five hundred is fatal, while one victim out of five succumbs to yellow fever."[130]

[128] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic* 19 July 1898
[129] James Forney Mills to Beecie, 26 June 1898, Hugh Harrison Mills Collection, ECU.
[130] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 19 July 1898.

In July and August, nine soldiers died and another 54 were discharged with disability.[131] Other regiments encamped at Cuba Libre also suffered that summer from a myriad of camp illnesses, though the First North Carolina seemed to have suffered more than most. Most seem to have originated outside of the camp, with multiple regiments bringing the mildly sick in with them.[132] For most of the summer, the Regiment did not have enough healthy soldiers to be combat ready. By late July, it was recognized that the area was "a most excellent birthplace for Fever, Malaria, and Rheumatism." At the same time, the division hospital was sending sick soldiers back to their tents long before it was medically sound in order to make room for more sick soldiers.[133]

At the height of the health crisis, the First Regiment also experienced a rash of desertions. In mid-June, North Carolina newspapers reported on "seven desertions from the Goldsboro company." According to these reports, "not being in an actual war," the men were not eligible for the death penalty, but faced 18 months hard labor.[134] In July, ten dollar rewards (about two thirds of a soldier's monthly pay) were offered for twelve members of the regiment that had deserted.[135] While the majority of deserters were either quickly captured or returned to camp voluntarily, some deserters remained at large for months. William Queen deserted on August 18 and was not caught until the end of September. Regimental officers

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[131] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers,* 6-44.
[132] Michael W. Vogt, "Death Stalks Camp Cuba Libre: Iowa's 49th in the Spanish-American War," *The Palimpsest* 90, no. 3 (2009): 110-118; E. M. Nolan, "ONE OF THE CAUSES OF AN EPIDEMIC OF TYPHOID FEVER IN MILITARY CAMPS. SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CAMP CUBA LIBRE," *Medical Record (1866-1922)* 54, no. 14 (1898): 499.
[133] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 2 August 1898.
[134] Asheville *Weekly Citizen*, 24 June 1898.
[135] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 19 July 1898.

found Queen at his home in Old Fort, suggesting a relatively lax enforcement of regulation.[136] A few deserters managed to avoid capture until the regiment was disbanded. The scant and incomplete regimental records offer little insight into why soldiers deserted or how they were punished if recaptured. However, the poor living conditions, epidemic disease, late payments, and increasing odds that they would not see combat probably played significant roles in the men's decisions to desert. Also on August 18, the *News & Observer* reported that three soldiers in the First had been issued dishonorable discharges and sentenced to six months of labor for being absent without leave, drunkenness, and "cursing his captain."[137]

Across the long hot summer in Jacksonville, the First was perpetually understrength. While in camp at Cuba Libre, there were nine deaths, and eleven listed desertions. Additionally, there were many discharges, both for disability and "by order." In total, 145 men of the First were discharged for some reason, 54 of them for Disability, which likely meant complications from disease or injury.[138] To fill vacancies in the regiment, recruiting continued through the summer, though recruiting officers found few young men interested in military service. A hostile Democratic reporter blamed the recruiting difficulties on Governor Russell. "The people of North Carolina," he claimed, "are sick and tired of politics in military affairs. Even the Governor of the state has shown his contempt for the men who

[136] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War* 16; Asheville *Citizen Times,* 29 September 1898.
[137] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 18 August 1898.
[138] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War.*

have taken their lives in their hands." He argued that Russell had constantly refused to give the soldiers the resources necessary, leaving them ill-equipped and unprepared for combat.[139] As morale continued to deteriorate over the summer, the influx of new recruits barely exceeded those lost to disease and desertion.[140]

The sum effect of these problems was that as late as the end of July, the regiment was completely unprepared for action. One of the few times the regiment was able to conduct target practice, on July 29, officers discovered that a majority of the troops had either never learned or forgotten how to properly load their rifles. Despite the First's unpreparedness, they desperately wanted a chance to go and fight, or at least get out of Jacksonville. One of the common rumored destinations was garrison duty in the mountains of Puerto Rico. At the same time, with the end of the war, a growing clamor emerged in both towns and papers for demobilization, bringing the young men of the state home.[141] By the end of August, it was an open question whether the First would be sent home, or to Cuba as part of an army of occupation. While the officers were in favor of going to Cuba, the men of the regiment were deeply divided on the issue, especially among those who had left well-paying jobs to go and fight for their country.[142] Company K's Private Stanley Faison sought an honorable discharge to pursue a profitable employment opportunity. He asked Major George Butler, brother of North Carolina Senator Marion Butler, to use connections on Capitol Hill and at the War

[139] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 5 July 1898.
[140] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 5 July 1898; Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 19 July 1898.
[141] Steelman, *North Carolina's Role in the Spanish American War*, 15-17.
[142] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 30 August 1898.

Department to secure his release from service, "as the war is practically over." Faison would not, however, be released, serving with the unit until discharged in Cuba.[143]

Their final few months in Jacksonville proved less fraught than the summer. Fall weather led to better health conditions in the camp and the soldiers were paid on time. With the passing months, however, it became clear that they would never see combat. The First North Carolina remained at Camp Cuba Libre until October 24, when they were ordered to Savannah, Georgia. They spent a relatively uneventful, or at least not widely covered, five weeks in Savannah, though the regiment lost nearly a dozen soldiers to disease and desertion. On December 7, they boarded a transport to Cuba for occupation duty, arriving on December 11.[144]

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The summer of 1898 proved even more disheartening for the Second Regiment. Under orders from the War Department, the Regiment was assigned to garrison duty in Georgia and South Carolina in mid-July. Expecting an assignment to Cuba, the soldiers greeted the news with "sorrow and great disappointment." Col. William Burgwyn lamented the "dismemberment" of his regiment and hoped that "the war department will re-consider its order and give the unit duty as a body." Speaking to the assembled soldiers, Burgwyn said "I am sorry that this is the last time I shall have the pleasure of reviewing you all together,"

[143] George Butler to Marion Butler, 26 July 1898, Marion Butler Papers, UNC; *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War,* 11, 37.
[144] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War,* 4.

hoping that they will "behave yourselves as becomes soldiers and North Carolinians."[145] Burgwyn's fears that the regiment would never again operate as a unit became reality, as the regiment was disbanded two months later, never having left the United States. During its final months, the Second Regiment experienced many of the same issues faced by the First: disease, inadequate equipment, low morale, and desertion. Indeed, the fragmented regiment was plagued with poor discipline, violence, and resentment.

Split between four sites, the soldiers of the Second Regiment quickly became disillusioned, when it became clear that they would never see combat.[146] At Camp McPherson near Atlanta, a running conflict between two officers left Company M "badly torn up." Lt. Holmes Conrad charged Capt. James Cooper with repeated drunkenness, cheating at cards, and general incompetence. According to Conrad, Cooper's actions left the men"disgraced and did not feel like they were soldiers." Cooper counter-charged Conrad, claiming that the accusations were the product of the "basest personal motives."[147] This conflict prompted a complete breakdown in company discipline. One Federal officer observed that the North Carolina "soldiers [were allowed] to come and go as they pleased in and out of the fort" and "their discipline was something like a farce comedy."[148] On Tybee Island, Companies A and E also found themselves with discipline problems. Private David Sutton had a reputation as "a troublemaker" and in August was dishonorably discharged after

[145] *News & Observer*, 14 July 1898, 15 July 1898; Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 29 July 1898
[146] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War,* 46.
[147] Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic,* 16 August 1898; Raleigh *Times*, 27 August 1898; Raleigh *Morning Post*, 14 August 1898.
[148] Raleigh *News & Observer,* 6 August 1898.

"biting a chunk from the arm of the corporal sent to arrest him."[149] At the end of August, a hurricane hit the island, destroying their camp. Their tents blown away, many of the troops spent the night in railroad boxcars.[150] Amid rumors of garrison duty in Cuba, "not ten men in the two companies [on Tybee Island] wished to remain in service."[151] Morale was also low at Land's Ends, near Port Royale, South Carolina, where the men felt "doomed to spend our two years down here with the black gratts [gnats] and mosquitos."[152]

By the end of August, discipline across the Second Regiment had collapsed. While some of the officers argued that the Regiment should be maintained, most of the soldiers wanted to be discharged. In an article headlined, "Officers Against Men," the *Raleigh Times* reported that "trouble is brewing and the existing conditions point towards a hot fight soon to be begun among the Regiment's men." According to the newspaper, more than 95% of the soldiers wanted out and had signed petitions to the War Department demanding to be released from service.[153]

On September 2, the soldiers in the Second Regiment received news that their military service would be coming to a close. The fragmented regiment would reunite in Raleigh for a brief encampment before militia companies returned to their communities and mustered out. The *News & Observer* ran the news under a doleful headline: "Poor Fellows

[149] Fayetteville *Weekly Observer,* 30 August 1898.
[150] Fayetteville *Weekly Observer,* 8 September 1898.
[151] Wilmington Messenger, 31 August 1898.
[152] Greensboro *Telegram,* 1 August 1898.
[153] Raleigh *Times*, 27 August 1898

Never Smelt Powder in This War."[154] On September 11, the first train of the 2nd North Carolina, carrying men from Tybee Island arrived around 6 AM. Quartered in a tobacco warehouse, due to their allotment of tents being blown away in storms, the *News & Observer* exhorted the people of Raleigh to welcome them as they would returning heroes.[155]

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The Second Regiment's brief encampment in Raleigh lasted only a week, but witnessed repeated clashes between the white soldiers and African American civilians. On September 17 and 18, white soldiers from the Second ventured into the predominately African American community in East Raleigh, where violent clashes erupted both nights. Armed with knives and pistols, hundreds of white soldiers confronted equally large numbers of African Americans in what the *News & Observer* described as a "race riot between soldiers and negroes." According to eyewitness accounts more than sixty shots were fired, though the identity of the shooters remained in doubt. After chiding the regiment for never seeing combat, the *News & Observer* signaled its approval of their violence directed at African Americans, claiming that "The soldiers were getting a taste of real warfare." While Josephus Daniels' paper predictably defended the soldiers' conduct, it did admit that "bad blood had existed since the regiment returned," that "there are some hoodlums and toughs in the regiment," and that "colored citizens say that soldiers have been rough in their manners towards them." Many Raleigh residents feared that the violence would escalate to engulf the

[154] *News & Observer*, 3 September 1898
[155] *News & Observer,* 11 September 1898.

entire city, prompting Col. William Burgwyn and Raleigh Mayor William Russ to visit the site of the violence in an effort to intervene and reduce tensions. For Democrats, who saw the upcoming election as critical to their white supremacy campaign, the East Raleigh riot justified escalating violence. "A clash is surely coming between the races," the *News & Observer* commented in the aftermath of the East Raleigh riot, in "such clashes the white race is always victorious."[156] These quotes were not unusual for the *News & Observer,* which had engaged in a long campaign against "Russellism" and accusing Republican orators of being in favor of "Negro Domination."[157]

After two nights of violence, the soldiers in the Second Regiment were sent home on furlough. "The boys are impatient to start their homeward journey," the *News & Observer* reported. "For three months they have worn their fighting clothes and been under strict camp discipline. They are anxious to throw off both."[158] Many of the soldiers left the Second Regiment profoundly disaffected by the experience. Describing the state of the Regiment when discharged, one officer observed that "fully 500 men in the regiment are broke."[159] They returned home not only penniless, as pay problems persisted, but without the battlefield honors that they anticipated upon enlistment. The violence in East Raleigh grew out of their profound frustration and disappointment with their military experience, coupled with white

[156] Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, 108-109; Raleigh *The Morning Post,* September 20, 1898; Raleigh *News & Observer,* 20 September 1898, 21 September 1898
[157] *News & Observer,* 13 August 1898,
[158] *News & Observer*, 16 September 1898.
[159] Wilmington *Messenger*, 20 September 1898.

supremacist rhetoric in North Carolina that encouraged and justified violence against African Americans.[160]

In the aftermath of the violence in Raleigh, some officers worried about how their men would behave when they returned home. On September 18, Captain Donald MacRae of Company K sent ahead in a letter to Wilmington warning that "It would be advisable to 'water' any stimulants which may be provided for the boys."[161] When the soldiers from Company K (Wilmington Light Infantry) returned home, they were met at the railroad station by a cheering crowd. They paraded up Front Street to Market Street to the armory, where they feasted on a "sumptuous dinner" of "chicken, roast beef, cake and refreshments galore." Addressing the returning soldiers, Alfred Waddell linked their service to their Confederate ancestors, calling them "brave sons of brave sires." Waddell claimed that their lack of combat experience in no way diminished their honor as soldiers: their willingness to fight made them just as brave as "the heroes who fought and fell on the tangled slopes of San Juan and El Caney." Indeed, they were motivated by the "same urgent inspiration that once animated your fathers." A Confederate veteran himself, Waddell would call on the Wilmington Light Infantry six weeks later when he led a violent insurrection that would topple the Republican government in Wilmington and install him as mayor. [162]

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[160] *News & Observer,* 8 September 1898; 9 September 1898.
[161] MacRae to Cronly, 18 September 1898, Cronly Family Papers, Duke.
[162] Wilmington *Messenger*, 20 September 1898, 23 September 1898.

The Third Regiment faced its own problems. No sooner had they arrived in Camp Poland, near Knoxville, than some of the white Southern soldiers in camp expressed open hostility to their presence. On the day of their arrival, soldiers from the white First Georgia Regiment assembled in the adjacent woods and fired pistols at unpacking African American soldiers in the Third North Carolina. In his official report on the incident, Col. James Young wrote that "about 4 o'clock about thirty pistol shots in the woods just east of our camp, by some white enlisted men, who were seen by several privates in my command; but who were unknown to them." According to Young, soldiers from the First Minnesota revealed the identity of the attackers.[163] Presenting a slightly different version of events, an African American soldier in the Sixth Virginia described it as a "little battle" between some soldiers from the 3rd North Carolina and the 1st Georgia, the "terrors of the camp, came into collision and blazed away at each other for nearly an hour."[164] Over the following weeks, clashes between the 3rd North Carolina and the 1st Georgia continued, with Georgians pelting them with rocks during drill and threatening African American soldiers who strayed far from their tents. Indeed, a company of white soldiers from the 2nd Ohio were ordered to separate and protect the Third North Carolina from the Georgians.[165]

After the Georgians returned home on September 23, affairs in Camp Poland settled down for the soldiers in the Third North Carolina. However, many of them were profoundly

[163] Timothy Dale Russell, "African Americans and the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection: Military Participation, Recognition, and Memory, 1898-1904," (PhD Dissertation, UC Riverside, 2013), 140
[164] Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees*, 125-126.
[165] Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment," 381.

unhappy with their new assignment. In a letter that week to the *Greensboro Record*, one "High Private" in the Third Regiment wrote that "the North Carolina boys down here at Knoxville want to come home. We are not getting half enough to eat and want to be mustered out."[166] In an anonymous letter to the Secretary of War, on October 8, 1898, they petitioned to be released from service, as they "did not join the service for garrison duty." They also complained of cramped conditions, poor food, overwork, and insufficient clothing.[167] "Down at Fort Macon we were misled," they claimed, with promises that they would be allowed to fight. "We don't want to have to leave our wives and families to go on garrison duty." Rather "We gloried in the flag and come to hold it up." For these soldiers, the goal was combat assignments, places where they could show their valor and manliness.[168] Although many of the soldiers in the Third Regiment were unhappy about their assignment, morale remained relatively high at Camp Poland. The Regiment only had three desertions during the autumn of 1898.[169] In early November, the Regiment received "a large slice of the praise that was bestowed upon Camp Poland for its cleanliness," an indication that the soldiers remained well-disciplined and motivated despite their misgivings.[170]

On the morning of November 11, 1898, the men of the Third Regiment read headlines "Bathed in Blood are the Carolinas" emblazoned in large print on the front page of the

[166] Asheville *Citizen-Times*, 3 October 1898.
[167] Letter of Members of All Companies, Third North Carolina Infantry, U.S.V. to Secretary of War, October 5, 1898 in *"Smoked Yankees" and the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902*, ed. Willard B. Gatewood, Jr. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 109.
[168] Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees*, 109-110.
[169] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers*, 108, 111, 114.
[170] Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*, 2 November 1898.

Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*. "In a day of bloodshed and turbulence," the newspaper described the violent coup that had taken place in Wilmington, with white vigilantes intent "TO BURN AND MURDER in the negro quarter" and the "manifest terror" among the city's black residents.[171] The newspaper reported nine African American deaths, though most historians have reached a much higher death toll, probably exceeding 60 people.[172] More than fifty soldiers in the Third North Carolina hailed from Wilmington, mostly in Company B and C, who worried about the safety of their homes, friends, and family.[173] The Knoxville *Journal and Tribune* reported that the camp remained quiet over the following week, though passes for soldiers from the Third regiment to visit town were restricted.[174]

The Wilmington Massacre marked the culmination of Josephus Daniels' promised white supremacy campaign. The violence resulted not only in the death of dozens of African Americans, but in what many consider the only coup in the history of the United States, as white Democrats toppled Wilmington's elected government. The Wilmington Massacre intersects with the soldier experience in the Spanish American War in two respects. First, African Americans in the Third Regiment saw the Massacre as an ominous sign that Black political power in North Carolina was in jeopardy. They had enlisted in the hopes that their service would confirm the critical role that African Americans had in the Fusion government

[171] Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*, 11 November 1898
[172] LaRae Umfleet,*1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report* (Raleigh: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2006), 5; Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie*, 327; Prather, "We Have Taken A City," in *Democracy Betrayed*, 41-2; Knoxville *Journal and Tribune,* November 11 1898.
[173] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War*, 97-102
[174] Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*, 12-14 November 1898.

and in their own claims to full citizenship. Second, furloughed soldiers from the Second Regiment joined the march of Alfred Waddell's white supremacist militia. The Wilmington Light Infantry (Company K of the Second Regiment) played an active role in the violence against African Americans in Wilmington and their Armory served as a staging ground for Alfred Waddell's white supremacist militia.

The largest city in North Carolina, Wilmington had a black majority, electing Fusionists to the mayor's office and council of aldermen. As a site of black political and economic power, Wilmington became a target for white supremacists in the leadup to the 1898 elections. They had particular ire for Alexander Manly, the editor of the *Wilmington Daily Record*, the only daily black newspaper in the state. In August 1898, Manly published an editorial objecting to Rebecca Lattimore Felton's accusations that African American men should be lynched for raping white women. Instead, he argued that white men had often sexually assaulted black women, both during slavery and afterwards. Moreover, he claimed that white women often chose to have sex with black men. This editorial was republished in white newspapers, including the *News & Observer*, which called it an "outrageous, mendacious attack on white women."[175] Throughout the autumn, white newspapers continued to republish excerpts from Manley's editorial, using it as justification for opposition to "Russellianism" and violence against African Americans.[176]

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[175] *News & Observer*, 24 August 1898.
[176] Wilmington *Star*, 15 October 1898; *News & Observer,* 8 November 1898.

Inspired by a speech from visiting South Carolina white supremacist Ben Tillman on October 21, 1898, a new paramilitary wing of the Democratic party, known as Red Shirts from their distinctive clothing, emerged to wage a war of intimidation against Republicans and Fusionists. Often mounted, masked, and armed with shotguns, Red Shirts terrorized African American voters and candidates. Emboldened by Josephus Daniels and others, the Red Shirts even threatened Governor Daniel Russell, stopping his train, and threatening to lynch him. Strongest in the eastern third of the state, Red Shirts had become a visible presence in Wilmington before the election. On November 3, they paraded through the city, armed with Winchester rifles. African American voters understood what would happen were they to show up on election day.[177]

On November 8, Election Day, Josephus Daniels devoted nearly every inch of the *News & Observer* to attacking African American and Republican candidates. "Whites Are Justified," its headline ran, "Why Negro Rule in This State is Insupportable." The Raleigh newspaper paid particular attention to affairs in Wilmington, claiming that the city was filled with "Riotous Negroes" and that it faced "a serious race problem." Whites in Wilmington, it noted, were "ready for the worst." Claiming that "Fusionists will steal the vote if they can," the *News & Observer* encouraged Democrats to ensure that they stayed at polling sites until the votes were counted. Throughout the paper, Daniels repeatedly inserted a short quotation from Democratic Chairman Furnifold Simmons: "THEY CANNOT INTIMIDATE US;

[177] H. Leon Prather, "The Red Shirt Movement in North Carolina," *Journal of Negro History* 62 (1977): 174-184; Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina*, 148-149; Crow and Durden, *Maverick Republican* 130-134.

THEY CANNOT BUY US, AND THEY SHALL NOT CHEAT US OUT OF THE FRUITS OF OUR VICTORY." He also instructed Democratic voters to close their businesses and "WORK ALL DAY TO RESTORE WHITE SUPREMACY."[178]

Democratic efforts to intimidate African American and white Fusionist voters proved successful on election day, as Democrats swept races across the state. In Wilmington, Red Shirts patrolled polling places and stuffed ballot boxes, such that in some districts there were more Democratic"votes" than registered voters. Most African American voters in Wilmington stayed home.[179] While Democrats had swept the polls, they were angry that the new officeholders would not take power until mid-January. Moreover, staggered terms meant that many Republican and Fusionist officeholders were not on the ballot. This included Wilmington's Fusionist mayor and the city's board of aldermen. For Democrats committed to making their white supremacy campaign produce swift and efficient results, victory at the polls proved insufficient and they demanded immediate political change.

On November 9, the day after the election, Hugh MacRae, a prominent Wilmington industrialist and brother of Wilmington Light Infantry Capt. Donald MacRae, called a public meeting for 11 o'clock on the steps of the Wilmington Courthouse. By late morning, nearly a thousand white men had gathered, many of them armed. Reading a document called the "White Declaration of Independence," Alfred Waddell inflamed the crowd, telling them that "we will no longer be ruled, and will never again be ruled by men of African origin." Tracing

[178] Raleigh *News & Observer,* 8 November 1898.
[179] Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie,* 167-168.

African American rule back to the Civil War, Waddell claimed that "the consequences of the war of secession were such to deprive us of the fair consideration of many of our countrymen." They demanded the immediate resignation of Fusionist Mayor S. P. Wright and Chief of Police J. R. Mullen and the expulsion from the city of black journalist Alex Manly. Failure to comply within twelve hours, he warned, and the named parties would be "expelled by force".[180] Waddell probably knew that Manly had already fled the city and the *Daily Record* had ceased publication, but he riled up the crowd in preparation for the violence the following day. It is unclear if any Wilmington Light Infantry soldiers attended the rally on November 9. However, they were garrisoned at the Wilmington Armory, only a block away from the Courthouse, and would have heard the crowds assembled nearby.[181]

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At sunrise the next morning, the white supremacist insurrectionists gathered in front of the Wilmington Armory. Their number included Waddell, armed with a Winchester rifle, Red Shirts on horseback, and hundreds of others, most of them armed and anticipating violence. Despite calls from the crowd for the Wilmington Light Infantry to lead the march on the *Wilmington Daily Record* office, the soldiers of Company K did not participate in the inaugural events of the Wilmington massacre. After the crowd had departed, Col. Walker Taylor met with Capt. Thomas C. James inside the armory to discuss how the Wilmington

[180] *News & Observer*, 10 November 1898
[181] Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie,* 176-178; Umfleet, *Day of Blood,* 73-77; Prather, *We Have Taken A City,* 107-111; Timothy B. Tyson "The Ghosts of 1898: Wilmington's Race Riot and the Rise of White Supremacy." (Raleigh *News and Observer,* November 7, 2006); Umfleet, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report*, 112-117.

Light Infantry would respond to unfolding events. Taylor, whose sympathies rested with the insurrectionists, thought that the company should remain in barracks, as he believed that if they were deployed "my duty would have been to disband" the insurrection. He sent a telegram to Governor Russell informing him "Situation here serious. I hold military awaiting your prompt orders."[182] The soldiers in the Wilmington Light Infantry seemed eager to join the mob descending on Alex Manley's office. Captain James denied requests from several soldiers for permission to join the insurrection. According to Private James D. Nutt, one of those denied, Capt. James attempted to keep the men occupied, ordering them to march "around the yard eight times." In a thinly veiled threat to his commanding officer, Nutt "told him if he did not let me move something would move." Sergeant John V. B. Metts reported that they were "kept under arms" in the armory throughout the morning.[183]

While the Wilmington Light Infantry remained in the armory, Waddell led the mob to the *Daily Record* building. Forcing the door open, the mob first destroyed the furniture and printing press before dosing the building in kerosene and setting it aflame. A black fire brigade, the Cape Fear Steam Engine Company, rushed to put out the blaze, but the mob prevented them from intervening until the building had burnt down. The *Daily Record* fire in a both literal and metaphorical sense threatened to engulf the city. Flames from the building jumped to adjacent structures, including the St. Luke's AME Church, the oldest African

[182] "Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Association of Members of the Wilmington Light Infantry, December 14, 1905." North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Umfleet, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report,* 125.
[183] "Minutes of the Organizational Meeting"; Umfleet, *1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report,* 125-126.

American church in the city. The armed mobs then spread through African American neighborhoods in the late morning, targeting Black Wilmington residents. The violence that engulfed the city that afternoon was both chaotic and targeted, as white insurrectionists operated as autonomous militias. They targeted the homes of prominent African Americans and Fusionists, intent upon terrorizing an entire community.[184]

The insurrectionists actively sought out the aid of the Wilmington Light Infantry. They approached Captain Donald MacRae, telling him that "they were going to kill the whole gang of negroes. … You have just been through the war and so you know about what should be done." MacRae declined, claiming that he "had very little stomach for it and as very few of the negroes were armed, it was little less than murder that they proposed."[185] MacRae was also concerned that both he and his company were still technically under Federal authority and worried that their intervention might invite greater Federal scrutiny.[186]

The situation changed fundamentally when Col. Walker Taylor received a telegram from Gov. Russell, instructing him to "take command of Capt. James' company at Wilmington and preserve the peace."[187] Taylor interpreted this order as justification for using the Wilmington Light Infantry to support the insurrectionists and attack African Americans. As they entered a black neighborhood, James told the soldiers, "Now, boys, I want to tell you right now I want you all to load, and when I give the command to shoot, I want you to shoot

[184] Prather, *We Have Taken a City*, 123.
[185] "Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Association of Members of the Wilmington Light Infantry, December 14, 1905." North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
[186] Harry Hayden, *The Story of the Wilmington Rebellion* (Wilmington: self-published, 1936), 17.
[187] Raleigh *News & Observer,* 11 November 1898

to kill."[188] Throughout the afternoon of November 10, the Wilmington Light Infantry contributed significantly to the violence against African Americans. Dividing into squads, the soldiers joined with Red Shirts and other insurgents to terrorize African American neighborhoods. Armed with a machine gun mounted on a horse-drawn cart, one squad opened fire on a group of African Americans near the intersection of Sixth and Brunswick streets, killing potentially as many as twenty-five.[189] Other elements conducted violence on a smaller scale, such as the manhunt for Daniel Wright, an African American politician, which culminated in soldiers from the Wilmington Light Infantry filling him with "a pint of bullets." They ransacked African Americans churches, businesses, and homes. At St. Stephens AME Church, they threatened to riddle the building with bullets from their Colt-Browning 1895 machine gun unless the pastor surrendered the site to them.[190]

By late afternoon, the insurrectionists had full control of Wilmington, as African Americans hid in their homes or attempted to flee the city. Waddell and his co-conspirators pressured Mayor Wright, the city's aldermen, and the police chief into resigning. Waddell installed himself as mayor, filling the other municipal posts with his associates.[191] That evening, the Wilmington Light Infantry played a significant role in solidifying and legitimizing Waddell's new regime, patrolling the streets and escorting banished Fusionist politicians from the city. In the days following the coup, Republican and African American

[188] "Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Association of Members of the Wilmington Light Infantry, December 14, 1905." North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
[189] Umfleet, *Day of Blood,* 96-99.
[190] Prather, *We Have Taken a City,* 125-126; David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie,* 191-219
[191] Umfleet, *Day of Blood*, 104

leaders were expelled from the city. While only some twenty one were officially banished, hundreds, potentially thousands more, migrated away in light of the violence.[192] On November 18, a week and a day after the coup, the men in the Wilmington Light Infantry were mustered out of Federal service.

For the soldiers in the Wilmington Light Infantry, their participation in the Wilmington Massacre overshadowed their role in the Spanish American War: one bloody afternoon proved more memorable than six months training for war against Spain. In 1905, the surviving members of the Wilmington Light Infantry met at Wrightsville Beach. Rather than meeting to commemorate their service in the Spanish American War, they met to commemorate their participation in the 1898 coup, promising to meet on November 10, "so long as there are any of us to meet."[193]

[192] Umfleet, *Day of Blood,* 114.
[193] "Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Association of Members of the Wilmington Light Infantry, December 14, 1905." North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Chapter 3: Occupation Duty

On the morning of December 7, 1898, the soldiers in North Carolina's First Regiment boarded the transport ship *Roumania* in Savannah. They arrived in Cuba four days later, disembarking in Havana on the evening of December 11. During their voyage, peace negotiators brought an official end to the conflict with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, four months after a ceasefire had stopped fighting in Cuba. While it would not be ratified in the US Senate until February, the war was over. The First North Carolina regiment would spend just shy of one hundred days in Cuba. During that time, they observed Cubans celebrating their independence from Spain. They also observed a racial hierarchy among Cuban revolutionaries that differentiated significantly from their experience in North Carolina.

With peace at hand, the First North Carolina's duties in Cuba proved mostly ceremonial. On January 1, 1899, they participated in the flag raising at Morro Castle, which signified the official handover of Havana to the Cuba revolutionaries. In a letter to his mother, Octavius Coke, wagonmaster for the 1st North Carolina, wrote that "the reception we got on January 1st as 'Old Glory' was hoisted over Morro Castle... so far surpasses anything of the kind that I have ever seen before."[194] The official history of the unit remarked that "They received a welcome that will ever be remembered by those that witnessed it. Pen cannot describe the intense gladness, almost bordering frenzy, displayed by the Cuban people at the sight of their liberators."[195] As to their conduct in Cuba, the official record merely

[194] Octavius Pope to his mother, 14 January 1899, Octavius Coke Papers, UNC Special Collections.
[195] *Roster of The North Carolina Volunteers in The Spanish American War,* 4

states that "The conduct of the members was beyond reproach, and their gentlemanly deportment greatly impressed the natives, who had been so accustomed to cruelty and rowdyism."[196] The official history is woefully incomplete. The crowds were silent, with the only cheering being for another unit where the soldiers were carrying small Cuban flags. Their march into Havana was part of a celebration of American military prowess and the American defeat of Spain. No Cuban rebel was allowed to take part.[197]

* * *

During their three months in Cuba, the soldiers in the First Regiment had plenty of time for sightseeing. Several soldiers brought cameras and recorded their visits to the wreck of the *Maine*, Morro Castle, Castillo de Atarès, and other landmarks.[198] In his *Concord Daily Standard* column, Harry Deaton observed that "garrison duty in Cuba … give the soldiers ample opportunities for a considerable amount of knowledge concerning the resources of the famous island." He described "A Pleasant Trip" that some of the soldiers made to the southside of the island. The expedition put the "boys were in a state of high glee" and that "kodaks, writing materials, and other provisions were taken in great quantities." The island, he noted, was "covered with the most beautiful and fragrant of flowers … with a favorable breeze the air is odorous with their delicate perfume."[199] According to a journalist that

[196] *Roster of The North Carolina Volunteers in The Spanish American War,* 5
[197] Gerald Eugene Poyo, *Exile and Revolution : José D. Poyo, Key West, and Cuban Independence* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 229-230.
[198] 1st Battalion, 1st NC Volunteer Infantry, in Cuba Collection, ECU; George E. Butler Photographs, Spanish American War Collection, North Carolina State Archives.
[199] *Daily Concord Standard,* 28 January 1899.

accompanied the soldiers, the expedition did not have a military purpose; rather, the intent was to relieve boredom and restlessness among the soldiers. [200]

On a broad scale, the men of the First North Carolina had stepped into a country that was attempting to reconcile its colonial past, with a revolutionary present, and the demands of their Afro Cuban compatriots with the prejudices of Cuban society. Several of the men brought cameras with them to document their experience in Cuba. Major George Butler took more than two dozen photographs during his time in Cuba. The younger brother of Populist senator Marion Butler, George Butler was a lawyer and educator, who also aspired to a political career.[201] .

A second, unknown member of the First battalion also took his camera to Cuba. Both photographers demonstrated similar interests and a similar perspective. Three themes run through both photographic collections. First, they captured images of historic places in Cuba, including those connected with the recently completed war. The unknown photographer seemed particularly interested in Cuban architecture, taking pictures of monuments, castles, and homes. Both photographers visited sites connected with the *Maine.* While Butler visited a graveyard memorial, the unknown photographer took pictures of the wreck itself. Both photographers also took pictures of the soldiers in the regiment, including both posed and candid shots. The photographs suggest that the soldiers duties in Cuba proved

[200] Raleigh *News & Observer,* 23 April 1899.
[201] George E. Butler Photographs, North Carolina State Archives.

mild. Although the photographs indicate that they marched frequently, the images suggest that these expeditions had a more leisurely pace and bearing than a military one.

The most intriguing images captured by these two photographers were of the Cuban people. Both took pictures of victorious Cuban soldiers, which highlight substantial differences with their American counterparts. Largely barefoot and without formal uniforms, the Cuban soldiers appeared relaxed in the presence of the Americans. For white soldiers coming from a state in the midst of a white supremacy campaign, they would have found their Cuban counterparts' ideas about race and military service shocking: both photographers captured images of racially integrated Cuban units, white and Afro-Cuban standing shoulder to shoulder.

Going back to 1868 and the First Cuban War of Independence, Cuba had undergone a paired process of national formation and revolutionary struggle. In the documentary ideals laid out by writers like Jose Marti, the ideological sphere of the revolution chose to silence differences and displace conflicting views to create a revolution dedicated to a single purpose, but not a single vision. This covered up many of the conflicting views that had crippled previous war efforts but left a number of conflicting visions of victory in the aftermath of the revolution, especially with Marti having been killed in the first weeks of the conflict.[202] One of the shatterpoints of this coalition was the role of the Afro-Cuban. Going all the way back to the First Cuban war of independence in 1868, free and enslaved Afro-

[202] Jaime Suchlicki, "The Political Ideology of José Martí" (*Caribbean Studies* 6, no. 1 (1966): 25-36); Lillian Guerra, The *Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba (*Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005).

Cubans were an integral part of Cuban freedom struggle. While in 1868 the role of the Afro-Cuban was uncertain and contested, thirty years later, they had become a core element of the revolutionary armies. However, their position was not secure, and while interracial ideals held strong during the revolution of 1895-1898, and Afro-Cubans were a substantial part of both the rank and file and leadership of the revolution, with victory against Spain, the internal divisions that had been papered over by the needs of the freedom struggle came to the surface. Playing into this were American actions, placing conservative Cubans in positions of power, and excluding the revolutionary armies from cities under American occupation. [203]

The photographers also took an interest in the Cuban civilian population. Butler labeled several of his images, including one of "natives witnessing the hoisting" of the US flag over Castle Morro on January 1, 1899. The anonymous photographer labeled images of "Cuban Senoritas" and "Cuban Family." the latter of which showed a family of three alongside a uniformed American soldier holding a pair of puppies. Smiling children of all ages appear ubiquitously in both collections, suggesting that their occupation duty did not look like a war zone. Both photographers and the few surviving letters from the First in Cuba suggest that they did not recognize that Cuba was in the midst of a political and social

[203] Jane Franklin, *Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 5; Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1995), 55-117; Rebecca J Scott, "The Provincial Archive as a Place of Memory: The Role of Former Slaves in the Cuban War of Independence (1895-98)," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 58 (October 1, 2004): 149–166; Ada Ferrer. "Rustic Men, Civilized Nation: Race, Culture, and Contention on the Eve of Cuban Independence." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (November 1, 1998): 663–86.

transformation. Guerrilla leaders, supported by racially diverse militias, envisioned a future for Cuba that embraced the island's heterogeneity to create an integrated, democractic society, while returning white exiles, supported by the United States and its military, sought to maintain a hierarchical social order, replacing the deposed Spanish overlords with themselves.[204] None of this appears in the writings or recollections of the men in the First North Carolina. While inherently part of an racialized imperial project, they seemed only dimly aware of it.

The First Regiment remained in Cuba until March 18, when they received orders to board transports for Savannah. They remained in camp near Savannah for three weeks, until they were officially mustered out and boarded trains for Raleigh, arriving on April 23.[205] The *News & Observer* relegated coverage of their return to an interior page of the newspaper, the first two page dominated by coverage of the brutal lynching of Sam Hose in Georgia. "Every town that sent a company," the newspaper noted, "was prepared to give it a royal welcome." When Company K returned to Raleigh, they were met with a large barbecue, put on by the combined efforts of the Mayor, and both Union and Confederate veterans groups, reinforcing their service as a symbol of national reunification. The men of the First Regiment resumed their role in the State Guard after a year in Federal service.[206]

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[204] Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 91-116.
[205] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in the Spanish American War,* 5.
[206] Raleigh *News & Observer*, 25 April 1899.

The First Regiment was the last North Carolina regiment to disband. The Second had disbanded in November 1898, shortly after the election and violent Wilmington Coup. The Third Regiment remained in uniform until early February 1899. Unlike the First Regiment, they never saw duty in Cuba, but remained in the Southeastern United States. During their final three months in service, the men in the Third Regiment faced violence and discrimination against a backdrop of triumph white supremacy in their home state.

Less than a week after the Wilmington Massacre, soldiers in Third Regiment learned that they were being reassigned to Macon, Georgia. News of "their departure south" was received enthusiastically, reported a Knoxville newspaper, as it brought them "a little nearer to Cuba, and if there is any more fighting to be done, they want a hand in the deal."[207] Their final days in Knoxville were not without incident. According to the Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*, a white newspaper that had expressed sympathy towards the experience of African American soldiers, "the last day and night of the stay of the members of the Third North Carolina in Knoxville will be long be remembered by many of the citizens of the city as one in which the soldiers made the most of their time in an endeavor to make life as miserable as possible for the townspeople." The newspaper complained that African American soldiers posed a threat to public safety, and "All over the city the negroes tried to intimidate citizens and run matters their own way." As a part of the apparent unrest, one soldier in the Third, Zebulon Patton, was killed after a fight with another soldier over a woman escalated.[208]

[207] Knoxville *Journal and Tribune,* 17 November 1898.
[208] Knoxville *Journal And Tribune,* 22 November 1898, 24 November 1898; Morristown *Republican,* 26 November 1898.

The Third Regiment remained in Knoxville until late November. With a ceasefire in place and peace negotiations taking place in Paris, the War Department had decided to close Camp Poland. While the soldiers appreciated the possibility of warmer weather, they demonstrated little enthusiasm for this assignment.[209] When they arrived in Camp Haskell, just outside of Macon, they found themselves among three other African American regiments, including the Sixth Virginia. Many white residents of Macon expressed alarm at the prospect of nearly four thousand armed African American men encamped on the periphery of their town.

As the *Richmond Planet* highlighted, Macon had been a hotspot for racial violence in recent years. Indeed, white residents pointed out the local lynching tree to soldiers from the Sixth Virginia upon their arrival. As historian Fitz Brundage has demonstrated, Georgia had the highest death toll from lynching in the South. Prominent white supremacist Rebecca Latimore Felton, famous for proposing in August 1898 that white Georgians should "lynch a thousand times a week if necessary," had also endorsed the Wilmington coup.[210]

The tension between the African American soldiers and the white residents of Macon erupted only a few days after the Third Regiment's arrival. William Simmons, a local saloon owner, refused to serve an African American soldier from the Third Regiment, variously reported as William Capus of Company A, Will Kemen of Company C, or Will Kempin of

[209] *Roster of the North Carolina Volunteers in The Spanish American War*, 90; Knoxville *Journal and Tribune*, 9 October 1898.
[210] Wilmington *Weekly Star,* 26 August 1898. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia 1880-1930* (Champaign IL: University of Illinois, 1993).

Company F, saying that "the bar was not for colored people." Capus (or Kemen or Kempin) returned later with other soldiers and demanded to be served. The situation escalated, culminating in Simmons shooting the soldier in the abdomen. According to a Wilmington newspaper, rumors quickly spread in Macon that black soldiers "intended to break out of camp and destroy the city, and much uneasiness is felt by both citizens and soldiers." A Raleigh newspaper noted that "white people [in Macon] are arming themselves," believing "a race riot imminent."[211] Conversely, the *Richmond Planet*, an African American newspaper, also reported on the shooting in Macon, but claimed that the fears were unfounded and that press reports were exaggerated. It did note, however, that African American soldiers had been disarmed and restricted to camp.[212] The incident at Simmons' saloon reflected African American soldiers' belief that the uniform brought with it certain claims to citizenship. Only two years after *Plessy v. Ferguson*, they maintained their right to public accommodations, even in the face of white opposition.

* * *

In December 1898, Charles Meserve, President of Shaw University, visited Camp Haskell. Originally from Massachusetts and a graduate of Colby College, Meserve served as superintendent of Haskell Institute in Kansas, a school for Native Americans, before

[211] Atlanta *Constitution*, November 30 1898; Selma *Times*, December 1 1898'; Wilmington *Morning Star* 30 November;*New York Times*, 30 November 1898; The *North Carolinian,* 1 December 1898; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 328-332.
[212] *Richmond Planet*, 3 December 1898.

assuming his position at Shaw in 1894.[213] He noted that many of the regiment's officers, including Col. Young, were graduates of Shaw. Attempting to have his impressions uninfluenced by prior preparation, he arrived at the camp "unheralded and unannounced," being stopped by one of the guards as he arrived. He described the men as having an "enthusiastic spirit and buoyancy that made their discipline and evolutions well nigh perfect." He also "told them they were on trial, and the success or failure of the experiment must be determined by themselves alone; that godliness, moral character, prompt and implicit obedience, as well as bravery and unflinching courage, were necessary attributes of the true soldier." Reflecting on his visit to Georgia, Meserve noted that "The Third North Carolina has never seen active service at the front, and, as the Hispano-American war is practically a closed chapter, it will probably be mustered out of the service without any knowledge of actual warfare." However, he saw them as a formidable military force: "if I was a soldier in a white regiment and was pitted against them, my regiment would have to do some mighty lively work to clean them out."[214]

White Georgia newspapers expressed open hostility towards the Third North Carolina Regiment. In December 1898 and January 1899, they ran a series of articles branding them as inherently violent. The *Atlanta Constitution,* never eager to let an opportunity to smear the Third North Carolina, claimed that they had an unrivaled "record for lawlessness and

[213] Grady L. E. Carroll, "Meserve, Charles Francis" NCPedia, https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/meserve-charles-francis.
[214] Edward Johnson, *History of Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War: And Other Items of Interest* (Washington: Capital Printing Company, 1899), 80-81.

murder."[215] In February 1899, the Atlanta *Journal* published an incendiary article celebrating their mustering out. "A tougher and more turbulent set of negroes were probably never gotten together before," it claimed, "Wherever this regiment went it caused trouble." The newspaper described African American soldiers as "worse than useless," prone to "ruffianism and brutality." It claimed that several soldiers from the Third had been killed in Macon in "drunken brawls" and applauded the actions of Atlanta policemen who "clubbed [them] into submission" when their train stopped briefly on their way home. Widely reprinted in North Carolina newspapers, this article appeared just as the soldiers in the Third Regiment were returning home to civilian life.[216] "Russell's Black Braves, alias Jim Young's Regiment have been mustered out," noted one North Carolina newspaper. "The regiment while in service created a terrible reputation, bringing disgrace upon their race in North Carolina."[217] Another paper claimed that the regiment should be awarded "a regimental medal made out of that precious metal, Lead, and inscribed on it in loud letters. To The Victors of Imaginary Battles at Macon Ga."[218]

* * *

The Third Regiment was mustered out by company in Macon during the first week in February 1899 and sent home piecemeal via train. After the first two companies fought with

[215] Atlanta *Constitution,* 27 December, 1898.
[216] Atlanta *Journal*, 3 February 1899; Atlanta *Constitution*, 3 February 1899; Fayetteville *Observer*, 4 February 1899; Tarboro *Southerner*, 9 February 1899; Edenton *Fisherman and Farmer*, 17 February 1899; Raleigh *News & Observer,* 5 February 1899.
[217] Oxford *Public Ledger,* 9 February 1899; Charlotte *Daily Observer,* 2 February 1899.
[218] Edenton *Fisher and Farmer,* 17 February 1899.

Atlanta policemen, subsequent companies, alarmed by the substantial police presence at the Atlanta depot, refused to get off the train, fearing further violence. They received a warmer welcome at the Raleigh Union depot, where throngs of African Americans awaited the return of friends and family. White North Carolinians demonstrated no enthusiasm for their return. The Kinston Free Press noted wryly that "Fourteen of the Kinston portion of Jim Young's regiment returned home on the freight this morning. We were glad to observe that they were sober and orderly and hoped they will be well behaved in the future."[219] Despite their lukewarm reception, many of the soldiers claimed that they were "sorry to leave the army."[220]

Within weeks of the Third Regiment's return, white supremacist politicans took steps to disarm and delegitimize Black military service. On March 4, 1899, the newly installed Democratic General Assembly passed legislation reorganizing the State Guard to prevent African Americans from serving. The legislation determined that "no organization of colored troops shall be permitted while white troops were available." In the unlikely event that the state needed African American soldiers, the legislation required that "colored troops shall be under the command of white officers."[221] The General Assembly's restructuring of the State Guard came in a flurry of legislation intending to undo reforms made under the Fusionist government and implementing new Jim Crow measures, including segregation of the state's

[219] Kinston *Free Press*, 10 February 1899.
[220] Raleigh *Times*, 6 February 1899, Fayetteville *Observer*, 16 February 1899; Wilmington *Messenger*, 11 February 1899.
[221] *Annual Report of the Adjutant General* (1899), 75; Gatewood, "Negro Regiment," 385.

railroads. Democratic newspapers applauded the change, claiming that the reorganization of the State Guard would "eliminate all future trouble with negro troops."[222]

The greatest memorial to the service of the Third Regiment was found in the *Colored American,* a national Black weekly newspaper based in Washington, D.C. On January 21, 1899, the newspaper devoted an entire issue to the Third North Carolina. The newspaper saw the Third Regiment as inheriting the mantle of African American soldiers during the Civil War, "a second grand act of a great panorama." The Third Regiment have "sustained the well earned reputation of their forefathers of thirty odd years ago, when they startled the civilized world by their valor, patriotism, and the sturdiness of their nerves in battle." What distinguished the Third Regiment from its antecedents, the *Colored American* argued, was its all-Black officer corps. "During the late rebellion it was the height of folly to think of appointing field officers from among the Negroes," the newspaper noted. The prominence of Col. James Young and other Black officers demonstrated the advancements that African Americans had made since emancipation. In detailed profiles of every officer in the regiment, the newspaper noted that nearly all of them had a college education, including some who attended medical school, and that they were men of high moral character and industrious habits, pillars of the community. The fact that the Regiment had not actually been in combat, the newspaper argued, did not detract from their accomplishment and significance. "Though not ordered to the front, the Third Regiment has been on duty and not only ready, but eager

[222] Wilmington *Messenger*, 24 March 1899.

for the fray." The *Colored American* concluded that they were "pioneers in military glory" who had heralded "a proud epoch in history."[223]

* * *

The soldiers in both the First and Third regiments struggled to make sense of what their service meant. Neither regiment saw combat, and only the First regiment left the United States. Despite this commonality, their peacetime military service in late 1898 and early 1899 differed significantly. While the First Regiment enjoyed an uneventful occupation duty in Cuba, African American soldiers in the Third faced sustained violence, discrimination, and racist criticism at home. They understood that their military service took on added meaning in the context of North Carolina's white supremacy campaign. When the two regiment returned home, they faced very different welcomes. The First Regiment were greeted at conquering heroes and heirs to the Lost Cause. Soldiers in the Third Regiment, however, returned home to find a radically different political landscape in North Carolina, one that no longer valued their service or welcomed future participation by African Americans in the political, military, or social life of the state. While the American American community, both within and outside North Carolina, saw them as heroes, white North Carolinians saw African American soldiers and veterans as a threat to social order.

[223] New York *Colored American,* 21 January 1899.

Conclusion

North Carolina's three Spanish-American War volunteer regiments have been almost entirely forgotten. The Spanish American War left few permanent memorials in North Carolina, the most prominent of which were a Raleigh Capitol grounds statue of Worth Bagley, the only US Navy officer killed during the conflict, on the grounds of the state capitol, and a Charlotte obelisk dedicated to William Ewen Shipp, a member of the 10th Cavalry who was killed at San Juan Hill.[224] Only the First Regiment has any presence on the state's memorial landscape. In 1902, the city of Durham erected a seven-foot tall marble monument in Maplewood cemetery to three local soldiers, Matthew Barbee, George Eubanks and Rufus Stem, who died from wartime accidents. The inscription recognized them as "MEMBERS OF CO. I. 1ST N.C. VOLS. / U.S.A. / WHO NOBLY LAID THEIR LIVES UPON / THEIR COUNTRY'S ALTAR DURING THE / SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR A.D. 1898 / WHEN THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED / STATES FREED STRUGGLING CUBA / FROM SPANISH TYRANNY AND / OPPRESSION".

The monument was proposed and partially funded by Julian Shakespeare Carr, a prominent local industrialist. "The community will not have done its duty," Carr claimed, unless it properly memorialized its "soldier boys" from 1898.[225] A Confederate veteran who had surrendered with Gen. Lee at Appomattox Courthouse, Carr devoted much of his

[224] William Ewen Shipp Monument, Charlotte, https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/284/ ; Worth Bagley Monument, Raleigh, https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/100/.
[225] Raleigh, *News & Observer*, 5 May 1899.

postwar life to inscribing the Lost Cause on the local landscape. While he had only been a private during his Confederate service, Carr was a relentless self-promoter, who took to wearing a Confederate General's uniform after the war to offer his positions (also substantially invented) an air of legitimacy.[226] Carr understood that both Confederate and Spanish-American War memorials would not only shape North Carolinians' memory of the past, but also promote a white supremacist political agenda.

The invisibility of North Carolina volunteer regiments on the memorial landscape reflected the brevity of the conflict and regiments' lack of combat experience. To some degree, this mirrors the invisibility of the Spanish American War in American popular memory and memorial culture. But North Carolinians forgot the experience of its three volunteer regiments for other reasons. Their military service has been overshadowed by the Wilmington Massacre, which defined 1898 for most residents of the state. This thesis has argued that the experience of the three volunteer regiments and the violence in Wilmington were fundamentally connected.

Even if they never saw overseas combat, North Carolina's volunteer soldiers all fought wars in 1898, fighting for something larger than themselves. War was a means of proving their manhood and their place within the social order. White soldiers saw the war as a means of honoring their Confederate ancestors, redeeming the stigma on Southern manhood and loyalty after Appomattox, and re-establishing white supremacy in North Carolina. Conversely, African American soldiers went to war knowing that the political,

[226] Domby, *The False Cause,* 67-69.

social, and economic gains made since emancipation were under threat and that their military service would alert their local adversaries that they would not surrender without a fight and remind the nation of their claims to citizenship.

* * *

On January 6, 1899, the Second District's George White linked the experience of African Americans at home with the recent victory over Spain. In a speech in the House of Representatives, White began by praising the American military's victory in "the recent war for liberating a much oppressed and outraged people." Widespread black disenfranchisement across the South had left him as the last African American in Congress (a distinction he would hold until 1928). White understood that he was "the only representative on this floor for 10,000,000 people, from a racial standpoint." Placing himself not as a spokesperson for African Americans in North Carolina, but for all of the United States, White attempted to join together two disparate issues. On one hand, White supported Republican imperialist claims, but he also desired federal recognition of the dangers that his people faced at home. "We seem as a race," he said, "to be going through just now a crucible, a crisis -- a peculiar crisis." He decried "white supremacy" that had prompted the disenfranchisement of African Americans across the South, calling out South Carolina and Mississippi as particular offenders. White called upon Congress to "Recognize your citizens at home, recognize those at your door, give them the encouragement, give them rights that they are justly entitled to, and then take hold of the people of Cuba and establish a stable and fixed government there that wisdom predicated, which justice may dictate." Similarly, in an endorsement of a

broader imperialist mandate, he again paired the needs of African Americans at home, with the needs of empire abroad. "Take hold of the Philippine Islands, take hold of the Hawaiian Islands, there let the Christian civilization go out and magnify and make happy those poor, half-civilized people; and then the black man, the white man—yes, all the riff-raff of the earth that are coming to our shores—will rejoice with you in that we have done God's service and done that which will elevate us in the eyes of the world."[227] For White, the imperial struggle could not be divorced from the local struggle for racial justice. White understood, not unlike Josephus Daniels, that the future of North Carolina's racial politics was fundamentally connected to its role in the Spanish-American War. To this extent, some North Carolinians came home from the Spanish-American War victorious, while others did not. As a turning point in the state's history, 1898 signaled the rise of a Democratic white supremacist power that would dominate state politics for the next sixty years.

When looking at the two memories, one key difference appears. The white soldiers had won their victory even before they had left their camps for the first time. The war had, symbolically healed the wounds between north and south. The honor, and purported bravery of the men both above and below the Mason-Dixon Line had been satisfied, and so even soldiers who never saw combat were welcomed home as conquering heroes. Comparatively, White, and the African American goals more broadly, required something more than volunteering. While the writers and politicians attempted to find some greater meaning in the

[227] *Congressional Record,* House 55th Congress, Vol. 32, pt 2: 1124-26.

service that the black soldiers were allowed to provide, they instead found that service did not guarantee citizenship, as much as they wanted it to.

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Gazette (Raleigh)
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Journal (Atlanta)
Journal and Tribune (Knoxville)
Messenger (Marion)
Messenger (Wilmington)
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Vita

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