DIXIE ENTRENCHED: THE TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR ON THE SOUTH

A Thesis
by
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Abstract

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The First World War's impact on the American South is often downplayed in favor of changes brought about by the New Deal and the Second World War. This thesis analyzes the changes the war made to the South culturally, socially, and economically and the impact of those changes in the 21st century. Literature, music, and other forms of popular culture demonstrate how the image of the South in popular culture shifted as a result of increased contact with the North and as federal investment brought economic boom to the region. Newspaper accounts show how social movements such as civil rights, unionization, and prohibition gained and lost momentum in the face of the war's democratic rhetoric and the long-standing biases and views of Southerners. Finally, economic data shows how the war turned cigarettes into a national addiction to the economic benefit of the South and how textiles migrated from New England to the South and became a key component of the Southern economy for the next century. Even as these industries have declined, the military bases built for the war continue to support Southern communities, as evidenced by state employment and economic impact data.

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Dedication

To my late grandparents and my late stepfather.

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Introduction

In some ways, the First World War is still being fought well into the 21st century. Several post-colonial struggles throughout Africa and the Middle East ultimately have their origins in the divvying up of German overseas possessions and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Not only can the conflicts themselves be traced back to the war, but the weapons with which those conflicts are fought with can be as well. When American Marines seized a Taliban weapons cache in 2010, amongst the expected haul of Kalashnikov variants were a British-made Lee-Enfield rifle, stamped 1915, and a Martini-Henry rifle, a type that was last produced in the 1890s but was still in limited service during the First World War.[1] Even the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine has its origins in the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, when Ukraine first tried to establish itself independent of Russia. In the conflict ongoing between the two nations, Russian-variants of the famous Maxim machine gun are in service with the Ukrainians and Mosin-Nagant rifles, the standard-issue Russian service rifle from the late 19th century until the end of the Second World War, are in the hands of Russian-supported separatists in eastern Ukraine.[2]

Given its far reaching implications, it is peculiar that the First World War does not hold a more prominent place in American thinking. Kimberly Licursi, in her book *Remembering World War I in America* (2018), described state-commissioned war histories as "an atom of interest in an ocean of apathy."[3] There are several reasons that the First World

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[1] C.J. Chivers, "One Way to Retire an Old Rifle" *New York Times Magazine,* December 10, 2010, https://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/12/10/rifles-of-advanced-age-remain-in-use-in-afghanistan/

[2] Dan Parsons, "Is This an Antique Cannon Guarding a Russian Checkpoint in Ukraine?" The Drive, May 18, 2022, https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/is-this-an-antique-cannon-guarding-a-russian-checkpoint-in-ukraine

[3] Kimberly J. Lamay Licursi, *Remembering World War I in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 1.

War, despite its long reaching consequences, continues to be passed over in American popular culture in favor of the Second World War or the Civil War. Firstly, although the war lasted from 1914 until 1918, the United States was only directly involved from 1917 on. The brevity of American involvement meant that while it was a defining moment in the nation's history, it did not linger the way the Second World War and the Civil War did. Another issue is that of recentness. The Second World War is much closer to the present than the First World War is. There are still veterans of that conflict alive today and civilians who lived through the war years. Additionally, film and photography were more common by the Second World War, allowing a then-unprecedented amount of material to be recorded during the conflict. However, perhaps the greatest barrier to the First World War being recalled in the United States is the fact that many of the First World War generation did not want to remember the war themselves. When Virginia sent out questionnaires to returning veterans to get the details of their service, the silence was deafening. Even though states across the country raced to document and memorialize their efforts to support the war, those that actually fought in the conflict seemed more reluctant to recount their experiences compared to the previous Civil War generation and the future Second World War generation. Although the war does not occupy the same place in American consciousness as other wars, its long-term effects are still felt across the country, and the South in particular, well into the 21st century.

The traditional reading of the First World War's effect on the South is one of transient change. The economic, social, and political changes brought on by the war were around just long enough to be crushed by the backlash that followed in the immediate postwar years, whether this was in the form of racial violence or economic turmoil as the

nation came off its war footing. Historian Annette Cox, in "World War I and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," an essay in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War* (2018), depicts the meteoric rise of North Carolina's textile industry as an Icarus story. The industry grew and expanded on wartime demand before ultimately being burned by the constricted market of the postwar years. Cox concludes that, despite the growth of textiles in North Carolina, they had to wait "for another war to bring back prosperity."[4] In that same volume, Pamela Edwards, in her chapter "'Let me Have One of my Boys Back': Class Based Mobilization of Labor on the Tar Heel Homefront," describes the period as "an era of missed opportunities" as, she argues, racial attitudes in the South hampered organizing efforts.[5]

Other scholars offer an alternative perspective, that the First World War did have lasting changes on the South even if there was severe pushback. Among these are George Tindall, who discussed the changes brought about by the war in *The Emergence of the New South: 1913-1945* (1968). Tindall's chapter on the war is entitled "World War I: Southern Horizons Expanded," and in that chapter he describes how industries from chemical goods to cotton mills grew and established footholds in the South as a result of the war.[6] Even more than that, "Sectionalism had retreated before nationalism…parochialism had diminished in the face of extensive contacts with the outside world."[7] The war fundamentally changed the South in tangible and intangible ways. James C. Cobb, in *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (2005), is less steadfast in his appraisal of the war's changes on the South

[4]Annette Cox, "World War I and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* eds. Shepherd W. McKinley and Steven Sabol (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2018), 306.
[5] Pamela Edwards, "'Let me Have One of my Boys Back': Class Based Mobilization of Labor on the Tar Heel Homefront" in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 310.
[6] George Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South: 1913-1945,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 33.
[7] Ibid., 69.

but still maintains that the war brought about significant changes to how the South saw itself and how the country saw the South. Cobb quotes both Allan Tate, who compared the outpouring of Southern literature after the war to "'…the end of the sixteenth century when commercial England began to crush feudal England,'" and Robert Penn Warren, who said that the Southern Renaissance was "comparable 'to what happened on a larger scale in the Italian Renaissance or Elizabethan England.'"[8] In *World War I and Southern Modernism* (2018), Donald Davis focuses on how the war shaped Southern thinking and literature. Primarily, he argues that the interaction of outsiders with the South and Southerners with the outside world transformed how both saw each other, arguing "The population shift of northerners into the South and southerners into the North allowed for the diffusion of new social, political, and economic practices into the region."[9] The transformational nature of the war should not be discounted simply because the New Deal and the Second World War brought more changes with them, even without those two major events, the changes brought by the First World War fundamentally changed the South and its position in the nation. In contrast to Cox, Jaquelyn Dowd Hall, et al. in *Like a Family: The Makings of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (1987), identifies the war as "a turning point" that led to "two decades of modernization and rebellion that culminated in the General Textile Strike of 1934."[10] Far from Edwards' "missed opportunity," the war kicked off years of labor unrest; rather than being stuck waiting for the prosperity of the post Second World War boom, the Southern textile industry struggled forth and advanced in the face of adversity.

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[8] James Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 112.
[9] Donald Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism,* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018), 10-11.
[10] Jaquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Makings of a Southern Cotton Mill World,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), xvii.

Even these scholars, however, fail to consider the full extent of these changes. Davis, although he is concerned with the growth of Southern literature in the aftermath of the war, does not fully consider how this literary output changed the South's place in the national consciousness. Tindall sees wide ranging changes in the Southern economy, but he does not discuss how the war created a military economy that was in full swing when he was writing in the late 1960s. The objective of this thesis is to further support the argument that the war brought widespread changes to the South culturally, socially, and economically. In addition, this thesis seeks to expand the understanding of the impact of these changes by linking them to their consequences in the 21st century. The objective is not to downplay the importance of the New Deal and the Second World War, but rather elevate the importance of the First World War in changing the American South into a more modernized and industrial part of the United States and recognize that many of the changes identified with that period actually have their roots in the First World War.

The first chapter of this thesis describes the changes in Southern culture and changes in the South's place in the national culture as a result of the war. The transformation of Southern culture broadly, and the Lost Cause in particular, from a regional phenomenon into a national one has its roots in the First World War. Although efforts at sectional reconciliation were underway at the close of the 19th century, it was the First World War that brought Southern culture into a place of prominence in the United States. Soldiers came to training camps across the South named for Confederate generals, lived in communities with shiny new Confederate monuments, and experienced a South that was in the midst of a war-time boom. When they returned from overseas, if they even deployed, they brought back with them a new and different image of the South compared to the ones that were popular in

both fiction and non-fiction writing. Similarly, the war and the changes it brought spurred forth the Southern Renaissance, a period of literary output that brought the Southern experience into national homes. Armed with first-hand experience and a new outpouring of Southern writing, the image of the South in the national consciousness changed. The South was no longer a colony within the mother country nor was it a cultural backwater, it was a bustling, premier part of the nation with expanding infrastructure and industry and educated people producing literary masterpieces. Southern culture leaked into the wider American consciousness and brought myths of the Old and New Souths to a national audience that still clamors at the opportunity to consume that culture in the 21st century.

The second chapter looks at the war's impact on social movements. Most significantly, Southern industrial labor organized in earnest for the first time. Cotton mill towns that had never experienced a strike suddenly found themselves in the midst of walkouts. Unionization efforts led to bloody confrontations across the South, and even if these labor actions often failed to achieve their desired changes, they kick-started almost two decades of labor unrest across the South that would continue through the Great Depression. White laborers were not the only ones who tried to expand their rights. African Americans seized upon the opportunity to advance their Civil Rights in the face of Jim Crow segregation. Like white laborers, though, African Americans met fierce and violent resistance. The immediate post-war period was marked by years of race riots and violence across the country, ranging from the massacre in rural Elaine, Arkansas, to the destruction of a thriving black community in the growing city of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The experience of fighting to make the world safe for democracy, to paraphrase Woodrow Wilson, galvanized black leaders and black civilians to fight, often literally, to preserve their rights, even if it

came at great cost. Finally, prohibition, a movement that was already gaining momentum before the war, grew in strength as temperance advocates used the necessities of war time to try and curtail the sale and consumption of drink. With training camps built all around the country, prohibition advocates argued that sober soldiers were ready soldiers and sober workers were productive workers. On the backs of increased interest and support, national prohibition passed shortly after the war came to an end.

The final chapter analyzes the economic impact of the war, both in the short and long term. Although tobacco and cotton were both long-time staples of the Southern economy, their role in it changed as a result of the war. Cigarette smoking grew from a popular but novel way of consuming tobacco into the primary form of tobacco usage as a result of the proliferation of the cancer sticks amongst the armed forces. The South, particularly North Carolina and Virginia where many of the big cigarette firms were based, benefited from this development and the cigarette became a key component in the Southern economy and Southern culture.

The other staple, cotton, had long been sent either northward or overseas for processing. In spite of the efforts of the adherents of the New South Creed, industry grew slowly in the South and textiles remained primarily a New England pursuit. That changed when the war arrived and brought thousands of dollars of federal contracts to Southern firms. The Southern textile industry grew sharply, and even when the textile market crashed in the immediate post-war period, the industry continued to grow in the region, siphoning off factories from New England. The war and its long-term effects brought the New South dream of an industrialized South into reality, and textile manufacturing would be a cornerstone of the Southern economy for the rest of the 20th century. However, just as the industry fled New

England, it also eventually fled the South and as the 20th century drew to a close many communities lost their primary employers. Cigarettes, as well, are not the drivers of employment they once were. The shuttering of the Brown and Williamson cigarette factory in Petersburg, Virginia, proved devastating for a once vibrant Southern city, and Durham, North Carolina, was saddled with the blighted American Tobacco Campus after its usefulness as a cigarette manufacturing center was over, until private interests redeveloped it into a trendy downtown space.

Even as these industries recede from Southern shores, the military economy established by the First World War continues to directly employ thousands and indirectly support the jobs of thousands more in communities across the South. All throughout the South, bases built for the First World War remain and continue to bring employment opportunities to starved communities. Fort Bragg is inseparable from Fayetteville, North Carolina, and its economic impact and employment statistics bear this out. The same is true for Fort Benning near Columbus, Georgia, and Fort Lee near Petersburg, Virginia. All of these bases have their origins in the First World War, and all of them play a key role in their local economies and in national defense well into the 21st century.

The First World War's impact on the South is largely underplayed in scholarship, even if it has some prominent defenders. The shadow of the New Deal and the Second World War loom large, and as a result it is difficult for many to see the changes brought on by the First World War as anything more than placeholders until the real changes could be implemented. The war did have lasting changes on the South, however, and those changes are still felt well into 21st century. The textile plants built to take advantage of the wartime boom continue to tower over Southern communities big and small. The dreaded cigarette,

which solidified its hold on American lungs as a result of its increased use in the war, are still filled with Virginia and North Carolina tobacco and packaged and sold by firms headquartered in Virginia and North Carolina. Military bases built to accommodate a swelling armed forces still dot the South and bring in thousands of visitors to Southern communities year after year. The First World War is still not completely over, and neither are the changes it brought on the South.

Chapter I

"Hooray for Dixie!": The First World War and the Americanization of the Lost Cause

In the years to come, 2020 will be the topic of journal articles, dissertations (in multiple fields), and full-length monographs. With a pandemic raging, the state of Michigan reinstated a series of restrictions meant to combat the spread of the virus. These restrictions were met with protests that culminated in the storming of the Michigan statehouse and violent threats against state officials, including the governor. In front of the statue of Michigan's Civil War era governor, a Confederate flag was spotted. When the United States Capital Building was stormed on January 6th, 2021 (a date which will also be the topic of numerous scholarly treatments) the Confederate standard again made its appearance. The flag appeared at rallies for then-president Donald Trump across the country, and it became fashionable to fly one on pick-up trucks, usually in conjunction with a Gadsden Flag or a more vulgar banner directed at current president Joe Biden.

The Confederate flag has been a common symbol amongst white supremacy organizations for decades and it was a common site across the South during the Great Resistance to the Civil Rights movement. However, the significance of the Confederate flag in white America goes beyond this racial level. There are numerous symbols of white supremacy available to any one of these groups, but it could be argued that the Confederate flag is the most socially acceptable of them all. Southern rock mainstays Lynyrd Skynyrd used a large Confederate flag as their background on stage (which was their record label's idea). Even Tom Petty, an artist not usually associated with Southern rock although he was from Florida, used Confederate imagery while touring in support of his *Southern Accents* album in 1985. He apologized for using that imagery in 2015. Texan guitarist Dimebag

Darrel, of the metal group Pantera, famously played an electric guitar blazoned with the flag. While these efforts by Southern musicians to associate themselves with a Southern symbol may be unsurprising, the flag's use by Michiganders Ted Nugent and Kid Rock is more puzzling.

A symbol of a failed rebellion that threatened to permanently render the United States asunder and a symbol that was used by the Ku Klux Klan amongst others, was welcomed into white American homes and into white American pop culture. The television comedy *The Dukes of Hazzard* (1979-1985) featured the symbol painted on the roof of the General Lee, a bright orange 1969 Dodge Charger that also featured a horn that played "Dixie." When ABC covered the 1986 Atlanta 500 at (predictably) Atlanta Motor Speedway in Georgia, they opened with a shot of a Confederate flag flying in the parking lot of the track, and after a lengthy introduction describing the place of stock racing and other professional sports in the South concluded by saying, "Sports like baseball and football will be the meat and potatoes of the American spectator's buffet, but stock car racing, by tradition and by choice, is the grits."[11] These examples are perhaps uniquely Southern (or unique in that they are meant to be depictions of Southerners—the fictional Hazzard County, Georgia looked an awful lot like southern California). The Confederate flag became an American flag, Confederate heroes became American heroes. Today, a quick online search will reveal of any number of novelty license plates that are split evenly between the American and Confederate flags and a wide variety of the classic "American by birth, Southern by the grace of God" t-shirts and bumper stickers. It has become so rote and routine that the incredible nature of these juxtapositions

[11] SMIFF TV, "1986 Motorcraft 500," YouTube video, 3:48:21, December 8, 2016 https://youtu.be/mzzyRJXgWvg The video, and much of the branding around the track, refers to the race as the Motorcraft 500, but the announcers and the television graphics all refer to it as the Atlanta 500.

has lost some of its impact. The process that transitioned Confederates from traitors to heroes can trace its roots to the earliest days of the Lost Cause, but it was the First World War when this evolution was exported to the rest of the country.

The Lost Cause is a somewhat nebulous term used to define a series of beliefs about the American Civil War, slavery, and the South. In the late 19th century, a concerted effort was made to rehabilitate the South's image in the wake of the disastrous Civil War. In the last decades of 1800s, concentrated efforts by various individuals and groups transformed the "recent unpleasantness" into a cause celebre. Through lionization and memorialization, the nature of the war and of the Confederacy changed. The Confederacy was no longer the belligerent in a war to preserve slavery, rather they were the noble defenders of a chivalrous way of life, doomed to destruction by the coming of the industrial revolution. The antebellum South was a society "gone with the wind," so to speak. Edward Ayers, in *The Promise of the New South* (1992), describes how the memory of the Civil War was transformed over the span of a scant 20 years. Organizations such as the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy sprang up across the South and pushed for greater recognition of the South's supposedly glorious but doomed fight.[12] As the turn of the century approached, more and more statues dotted the courthouse grounds and town squares across the South. Statues were even going up in states like Kentucky, which never actually left the Union. Historian Anne Marshall, in her book *Creating a Confederate Kentucky* (2010), concluded that through the violent treatment of Unionists and the zealous efforts of Lost Cause acolytes, Kentucky existed in popular consciousness as a former Confederate state by

[12] Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 334. Ayers claims that by the 1890s, ¾ of Southern counties had a UCV camp accounting for roughly a ¼ of living Confederate veterans at the time.

1895.[13] The Lost Cause was so appealing it was causing states to join the fight thirty years after it ended.

Ayer's description of the Lost Cause's effect on the legacy of the Civil War is particularly informative: "The Civil War came to seem not unlike a ball game, its importance based on the sportsmanship and effort its participants displayed rather than on the questions of fundamental human importance for which they fought."[14] The Confederates fought well and with honor, so far as the Lost Cause acolytes were concerned, for the glorious but doomed cause of States' Rights. Those proud Confederates could be counted amongst the South's proud military heritage that stretched back to the American Revolution and at that point extended to the Spanish American War. The first American casualty of that war was from North Carolina after all; certainly he could be counted amongst the proud and honorable dead of his Confederate ancestors.[15]

The last few years have brought a renewed focus on the Lost Cause and its monuments. Streets and schools have been renamed, and many of the statues that Ayer describes as "vigilant forever as they faced to the north" have been relieved of their watch, either peaceably or otherwise. Incidents of racial violence in the past few years have forced cities and towns to reevaluate their monuments. In 2017, Baltimore, Maryland, became noteworthy as one of the first large municipalities to remove its Confederate statues. Maryland, although a slave state, never actually left the Union and its monuments mostly dated from the early 20th century, with a Stonewall Jackson memorial erected as late as

[13] Anne Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 110.
[14] Ibid., 338.
[15] Ibid., 332.

1948.[16] Virginia was home to the capital of the Confederacy and was the birthplace of many of its heroes, so naturally it has been home to a great amount of Lost Cause iconography. In 1991, Tennessee-born actress Park Overall remarked on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, "My boyfriend just did a job in Virginia, he said that not only do they think they won the war they think they fought it alone."[17] However, in the wake of the George Floyd protests of 2020 even in Virginia the situation has changed. Mechanicsville's Lee-Davis High School (which was home to the Confederates) has been renamed to Mechanicsville High School and Richmond's Monument Avenue has been stripped of its Confederate monuments. Robert E. Lee's statue, which 100,000 white Southerners saw unveiled in 1890, was the last to go.[18] Yet while these monuments to the Lost Cause begin to be taken down and debates rage over what to rename schools and what to do with the large bronze statues, some elements of this celebration of the Confederacy continue to live on. Most notably, military installations across the South continue to bear the names of Confederate generals, and many of these bases trace their origin to the First World War. General Lee's statue may no longer be welcome in Richmond proper, but he can continue to lend his name to Fort Lee, a base that began its life as Camp Lee during the First World War.

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Lee was not the only one to receive the honor of lending his name to a military installation of the very force he fought against. The much-maligned Braxton Bragg managed

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[16] Aaron Bryant, Elissa Blout-Moorehead, Donna Cypress, Larry Gibson, Elford Jackson, and Elizabeth Nix, *Report on Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments,* August 16, 2016, https://www.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Confederate%20Monuments%20report.pdf, 16.
[17] Josh S, "Johnny Carson with guests Robin Williams, Jonathan Winters and Park Overall" YouTube video, 34:06, September 13, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUC3YcKliG4
[18] Ayer, *The Promise of the New South,* 335.

to get his name attached to Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and John B. Gordon lent his name to a Camp Gordon in Atlanta and then, in the Second World War, to Fort Gordon in Augusta which still stands. For all the bases built in the First World War, even more were established in the Second World War with more Confederates being honored. The practice of naming bases for American (or Confederate) military heroes became common practice, if not official policy, during the First World War. The trend was percolating before the conflict, as the Army traces the trend of naming bases for heroes to an 1893 report by Brigadier General Richard Napoleon Batchelder. Batchelder wanted to see heroes of the American military honored by lending their names to bases.[19]

The Army maintains that during the First World War it was within the purview of the Secretary of War, then Newton D. Baker, II, to name bases, but there is very little about the naming process in the multitude of books written about him and his wartime service. However, the West Virginia-born Secretary Baker was the son of a Confederate cavalryman and grew up reading books on the Civil War and being regaled with his father's memories and interpretations of the events of the war. More notably, his mother was a full-throated supporter of the Confederacy who, amongst other things, was a smuggler for the cause and, according to one biographer "…until her death in 1922 never saw a good looking Negro girl without a desire to buy her."[20] That same biographer maintained that Baker's father had a "tolerant attitude" and that Baker took after his father's "reconstructed Confederate viewpoint."[21] Perhaps this relationship to the Civil War affected his decision-making in terms

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[19] James Tobias, "Naming Army Installations," U. S. Army Center of Military History, November 14, 2006, https://history.army.mil/faq/base_name.htm General Batchelder also supports the argument that the 19th century had the best named military officers of any century.
[20] C.H. Cramer, *Newton D. Baker: A Biography,* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1961), 14.
[21] Ibid., 14.

of naming bases, or perhaps it was, as the authors of an article on Atlanta's Camp Gordon argued, a move aimed at reconciliation.[22] Fort Bragg's official history offers an alternative explanation. According to these historians, Fort Bragg was named "…for native North Carolinian Gen. Braxton Bragg for his efforts during the Mexican-American war."[23] There is no mention of Bragg's service in the Confederacy or of the Civil War in general.

While Bragg did enjoy success in the Mexican American War as an artillery officer, he is much more famous for his service in the Confederacy. His experience the Mexican-American war certainly affected the choice of his name for an artillery training school; but given the pattern of naming installations after Confederates it is hard to believe that his Civil War service played no part in his consideration. In writing about Fort Lee, Kenneth Finlayson presents a more straightforward explanation, if a defensive one, "Camp Lee reflected the convention of the times, which favored naming cantonments south of the Mason-Dixon Line for Confederate generals. (The presence of influential southern Democratic senators on the major committees in Congress was a significant factor.)"[24] Another contributing factor was the location of Camp Lee. It was situated in an area that, 50 years earlier, was the site of the siege of Petersburg, where Lee mounted a doomed defense of the city which ultimately led to the fall of Richmond. Not only was Camp Lee an American base named after a Confederate commander, but it also honored one of that commander's last defeats. The story is similar across the South; prominent members of the Confederacy were honored with base names, usually due to some geographic connection to

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[22] Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza, "Transforming the Atlanta Home Front: Camp Gordon During World War I" *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* Vol. 101, No.2 (2017): 149.
[23] "Fort Bragg History" U.S. Army Fort Bragg, accessed: 7 December 2021 https://home.army.mil/bragg/index.php/about/fort-bragg-history This is a believable explanation for Fort Bragg, California which was also named after Braxton Bragg and was built in 1857.
[24] Kenneth Finlayson, "The Three Lives of Fort Lee, Virginia: World War I" United States Army, June 29, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/189328/the_three_lives_of_fort_lee_virginia_world_war_i

the area.

Given his ancestry, Secretary of War Baker had ample reason to see no conflict in naming bases for Confederate war heroes. More broadly, he was part of the Woodrow Wilson administration, which was composed of Southern or Southern-friendly officials, including the president himself. Wilson was the first Southern-born president since Andrew Johnson and the first to be elected to the position since the Civil War. This distinct honor did not go unnoticed, and at his inauguration in 1913 the crowd consisted of a large number of Southerners and Confederate veterans who let loose rebel yells and sang "Dixie" throughout the ceremony.[25] Wilson, despite living much of his life in the North, having been president of Princeton University and governor of New Jersey before becoming president, made political use of his heritage. Wilson notably touted his experience growing up in the aftermath of the Civil War in Georgia as part of why he was hesitant to commit to the war in France.[26]

The inauguration of Woodrow Wilson can be seen as the apotheosis of a movement to conflate American and Confederate imagery that had been underway for decades. Pictures from the dedication of the Robert E. Lee statue in Richmond in 1890 feature American flags interspersed throughout the crowd, and a Confederate veteran described his fellow veterans at an 1897 reunion as "…distinctly American of the unmixed Anglo-Saxon type."[27] The racial overtones are as obvious as the reconciliationist spirit. While veteran reunions orchestrated by various Union or Confederate organizations were common in the years after the Civil War, and would continue into 20th century, the late 19th century also marked the beginning of joint reunions that saw Confederate and Union veterans mixing and mingling.

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[25] Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South,* 1-2.
[26] Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience,* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 52.
[27] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South,* 337.

The occurrence of such a reunion in Kentucky in 1895 was met with great praise as a sign that sectional animosity was finally healing, made even more remarkable by the fact that Unionist groups in that state had found themselves violently harassed through much of Reconstruction.[28] Woodrow Wilson's ascent to power likewise signaled that the South was finally rejoining the Union and doing so in a forceful way.

While the national political power of Southern whites was expanding and sectional animosity seemed to be waning at last, the South still faced cultural hurdles in integrating with the rest of the country. Despite the best efforts of New South boosters, much of the country still viewed the South with bemused detachment. The development of industry helped dispel some notions of the South as being a colony within the mother country, but it was still largely seen as a rural and backwards region. This image of the South as a strange and foreign land reach back to the early republic if not earlier, as James Cobb explained in *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (2005).[29] The Lost Cause and the New South were blended together, even if their proponents did not always see eye to eye. Cobb traces how New South boosters tried to connect the glorious past envisioned by the Lost Cause to the glorious present they hoped to create. If the Old South had been a carefully cared for land of agrarian prosperity, the New South would be a land of commercial prosperity carefully overseen by paternalistic businessmen. While the boosters of the New South tried to extol the progress on all fronts, including on race (a lie that fooled few, if any, African Americans), it would be the First World War that would bring Northern prosperity to the South and Southern culture to the rest of the country. Not only would the war bring people into the South, but it would bring federal money into the South as well. White

[28] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky,* 109-110.
[29] Cobb, *Away Down South,* 26.

Northerners who had been regaled with stories, both fictional and not, of a still wild and violent land would have an opportunity to view it up close. What the New South boosters hoped these new travelers would encounter was a region that was growing, active, and industrious while still honoring its supposed gentle and chivalrous past.

The destruction of the war in Europe was not lost on American military planners. While there were hopes that the United States' troop commitment could remain low, the reality of the war (and the potential for enrichment by way of government contracts) meant that the military would need to embark on an aggressive building campaign.[30] Bases sprung up all over the country, and especially in aeras where New South boosters sought to capitalize on the economic benefit of doubling or tripling the size of their communities almost overnight. Camp Lee, with a capacity of over 60,000 men, would have been the third largest community in Virginia when at full capacity.[31] Camp Gordon, with the capacity for 47,000 men, was the fifth largest community and the third largest "city" in Georgia.[32] Almost overnight, Atlanta grew by nearly a quarter. The War Department sought to take advantage of the fact that Southern weather would, in theory, be cheaper to account for than the extremes of Northern winters. Eighteen of the 32 total training camps were built in the South, counting Texas and Kentucky (Texas had been part of the Confederacy, and Kentucky sent thousands of soldiers into gray-clad armies during the Civil War).[33] Through those camps would pass thousands of men who would get a chance to view the strange and exotic

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[30] Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War Vol. 1* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company 1931), 236

[31] Finlayson, "The Three Lives of Fort Lee, Virginia: World War I" and "Population of Virginia-1920" Virginia Places, accessed December 7, 2021, http://www.virginiaplaces.org/population/pop1920numbers.html

[32] James Clifford, "Camp Gordon, Georgia" *On Point,* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Winter 2008-2009), 43 and U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Population 1920: Number and Distribution of Inhabitants,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 207-222.

[33] Leonard Ayers, *The War With Germany: A Statistical Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1919), 28.

southland up close and personal. The same was true of white Southern troops who often found themselves in the North, coming face to face with the strange industrious world of their grandfathers' Civil War enemies.

Many of the troops that filtered through the South on their way to France were Northerners and white; Southern municipalities were not too keen on barracking African American soldiers and lobbied the War Department to keep black troops out of Southern camps, though they eventually had to yield to the demands of the war effort. These recruits found their way into bases named for Confederates in communities that had new, shiny monuments to their Civil War past. They encountered a South that was attempting to catch up to the modern world, and whose efforts to that end were buoyed by the influx of federal money. While there were fluctuations in the cotton and tobacco market in the run-up to America's entry into the war, the textile and cigarette industries exploded as government contracts for uniforms, tents, cigarettes, and other provisions of war rolled in. The heart of the New South, Atlanta, took the opportunity presented by its training camp to open up an entirely new quarter into which the city could expand. Peachtree Street was extended to reach Camp Gordon, and services aimed at the service men began popping up in the area, hardly a surprise as Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza claimed that Camp Gordon was "…the largest construction project in Atlanta's history up to 1917…"[34] Fort Bragg turned Fayetteville from a sleepy merchant hamlet into a thriving military community that persists to this day. The proponents of the New South could have scarcely dreamed of a better opportunity. Local construction companies suddenly had an abundance of work, local hospitality services could hardly keep up with demand, and Southern industry was in higher

[34] Hudson and Mirza, "Transforming the Atlanta Homefront," 154.

demand than ever before. The popularity of cigarettes, not just as a consumer product but also for use in official rations, saw Winston-Salem, North Carolina double in size.[35] The thousands of non-Southerners that passed through these camps were exposed to a region that seemed to be lively and active, a stark contrast to traditional views of the region that depicted it as staid and backward.

Recruits were not the only ones on the move. A parade in Washington, D.C., attracted a number of Confederate veterans who marched with signs reading "Send Us if the Boys Can't Do the Job."[36] Confederate veterans were "volunteering" for the very military whom they had tried to kill. The naming of bases for Confederate heroes and this outpouring of patriotic fervor from former Confederates marked a transition. Now the acts and deeds of the Lost Cause adherents were not simply for local consumption, they could be exported. With the exception of Jubal Early's 1864 attack on Fort Stevens, the Confederate army did not make a direct assault on Washington D.C., and yet here was a parade of veterans proudly marching down the thoroughfares of the city. In patriotic parades across the South, marchers carried the American flag alongside the Confederate, suggesting a unity between the Confederate army of the Civil War and the American Army of the present. A Memorial Day postcard from 1917 featured artistic depictions of America's fighting men. In the middle of the frame are a grey-haired Confederate veteran walking alongside a grey-haired Union veteran, both carrying American flags.[37] At Camp Lee in Virginia, Confederate flags adorned the base YMCA, situated between a pair of French and British flags and the American flag.[38]

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[35] Evan P. Bennett, "Tobacco Agriculture and the Great War" in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 288.
[36] Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism*, 23.
[37] "Honor the Brave, Memorial Day, May 30, 1917," Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, accessed June 28, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/item/00652857/
[38] "Fort Lee: A Century of Change 1917-2017," *The Progress Index,* (Petersburg, VA), August 25, 2017, 11.

Half a century after Lee surrendered, the Confederacy stood in conjunction with the Union, not against it.

This process was not instantaneous and there were those who were still thoroughly entrenched in their sectional alliances. Tennessee author Donald Davis found himself disturbed and confused by a speech he heard while at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia. A retired Union officer who was part of the Civil War Battle of Chickamauga described the action in vivid detail, including the killing of large numbers of Confederates. Davis felt conflicted, "'How could Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, or even Braxton Bragg be equated, as enemies to be slaughtered, with Kaiser Wilhelm, Hindenburg, and *Les Boches?*'"[39] Clearly, there were still those among the Civil War generation, and likely amongst some of the younger Northerners as well, who still saw the Confederates as enemies of the United States. Union veterans were not the only ones who still felt the sectional conflict. The president of the Nashville chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy fought to keep the American flag out of festivities as both a Confederate reunion and the return of American soldiers from Manila, after the end of the Spanish-American war, took place at the same time in 1899.[40] While the experience of the war, particularly the travel between the regions of the country, helped to ease sectional tensions, popular culture would help solidify this reunion of North and South and help transform white Southern identity into white American identity.

Underlying all of these efforts and demonstrations is the specter of white supremacy. War propaganda peddlers whipped the nation's nativist and xenophobic sentiments into a frenzy. Immigrant communities were not "real" Americans, even if they were a few

[39] Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism*., 72.
[40] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South,* 332.

generations deep. At least one German family in North Carolina made it a point to display their patriotism as openly as possible, even though they had been in the United States since the Revolutionary period, such was their fear of nativist attack.[41] The South's claim to having the "purest" racial lineage suddenly had currency across the country. Before the war, such claims were met with derision, with at least one writer using the claim in conjunction with the backward state of affairs on race and economics to try and disprove white supremacist arguments.[42] Now, alongside British allies facing the "savage Huns" of Germany, Anglo-Saxon racial lineage suddenly became an ideal throughout the nation. Not only were new travelers being exposed to the Lost Cause by way of the military, but propaganda efforts were also carrying Southern ideas across the country.[43] This was a critical transformation aided by concerns rising in Northern cities over the influx of immigrants and African Americans. The South had boasted of its "pure" heritage; now that boast was paying dividends.

In 1915, film history was made with the release of *Birth of a Nation.* Arguably the first block-buster motion picture, *Birth of a Nation* represented incredible technological advances in film making and swept the country by storm. It was also incredibly racist, even accounting for the standards of 1915. It depicted the Ku Klux Klan as a saving grace in America's struggle against "savage" minorities. It brought the Lost Cause into movie theatres across the country in a bombastic and awe-inspiring way. Citizens learned that Woodrow Wilson enjoyed the film and screened it at the White House. *Birth of a Nation* also brought

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[41] Gary R. Freeze "'There May be a Few Obstructionists About' Mobilization and Resistance in the Germanic Counties of Piedmont North Carolina, 1917-1918" in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 109.
[42] Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism,* 22-23.
[43] Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South,* 185.

about a resurgence of the Klan itself, this iteration spreading out beyond the borders of the former Confederacy. Not only were white non-Southerners being exposed to Lost Cause mythos on screen, they had the opportunity to join up with an organization that connected them to it directly-all while "protecting" their communities from the horrors of diversity, whether the "threat" to their Anglo-Saxon, Protestant way of life came from immigrants, Catholics, or African Americans. The Klan also had a role to play in this Americanization of the Lost Cause. They were more than happy to co-opt American iconography to stand alongside Confederate images, and during the First World War they harassed those known as "slackers" (draft dodgers, labor organizers, or anyone they thought were not "American" enough) and immigrants.[44] While *Birth of a Nation* and the Klan represented some of the vilest ways that the Lost Cause escaped the South, the years after the war brought a less violent form of exportation.

The years after the First World War are typically identified as the Southern Renaissance, this was a time when authors such as William Faulkner burst onto the scene and wrote literary classics that continue to be praised (and loathed by high school English students) well into the 21st century. While many scholars have identified one of the major themes of the Southern Renaissance as the reckoning of the South's past with its present and future, as was the case with many of Faulkner's works, there was undeniably a significant amount of romanticism that was imbued in some of the works.[45] While the more modernist among that generation often pushed against many of the "traditional" values of the South, many others embraced them and ruefully mused on the ideal past of brave Confederates fighting for their homes. Their homes, of course, being carefully maintained plantations with

[44] Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, 188.
[45] Cobb, *Away Down South,* 130.

happy slaves running around while a proud and paternalistic slave master watched carefully. This fiction proved to be quite popular both within and without the South, and the "moonlight and magnolias" image of the antebellum South was being solidified not just in the former Confederacy but across the nation.

For almost as long as there had been an Untied States, Northerners who have never been to the South have written about it all the same. Often there was little room between praise and damnation in this regional popular fiction. There were brief periods where Northerners were just as entranced by the Cavalier mythology, a forerunner to the Lost Cause that built up the planters of Virginia as noble and chivalrous descendants of the Cavaliers of the English Civil War, as Southerners were, and the gentle and amicable, if a bit dimwitted, Southern planter became a popular literary character.[46] As the Civil War approached and as Reconstruction dragged on thereafter, Northern depictions of the South soured, and white Southerners became caricatures. As reconciliation began to take hold in the late 1800s, more positive descriptions began appearing again. Annie Fellows Johnston's children's book series *The Little Colonel,* based partially on a trip the New York author made to Kentucky where she met a colorful Confederate colonel and his granddaughter, had reconciliation as a core theme and painted a very idyllic picture of a South untouched by the ravages of the industry.[47] Of course, the world of *The Little Colonel* was also a world where African Americans gladly deferred to whites and felt content and happy in their place of subservience.

Literature was not the only medium where this took place. With the advent of recorded music and the popularity of sheet music, many songs about the South circulated

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[46] Ibid., 24.
[47] Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky,* 133-134.

throughout the early 1900s. One of the most famous of these was "Are You From Dixie?," first recorded by Billy Murray in 1916 and written by George Cobb and Songwriting Hall of Fame member Jack Yellen. Featuring the boastful chorus, "If you're from Alabama, Tennessee, or Caroline, any place below the Mason-Dixon line, then you're from Dixie, hooray for Dixie! Cause I'm from Dixie too!" the song was immensely popular and was performed regularly at training camps and military parades in the South during the First World War and was advertised alongside other patriotic standards in newspapers.[48] The answer to the question begged by the title, however, is no. Neither Billy Murray nor George Cobb nor Jack Yellen were from Dixie at all. Murray was from Philadelphia, Cobb was from New York, and Yellen was a Polish immigrant who also lived in New York.[49]

In the wake of the First World War, depictions of the South by Northern writers changed. Spurred by interactions with a South that was at once crystallizing a mythic past and bravely entering the modern world on the backs of government contracts and New South industry, many white Northerners found themselves smitten by the region. F. Scott Fitzgerald, who was one of the many Northerners sent to the South during the war, wrote glowingly of the South and embraced many of the fictions established by the Lost Cause.[50] At once, Fitzgerald's Tarleton, Georgia, a fictionalized place he based on his experiences in the South during the war years, is antique and modern. Unlike *The Little Colonel,* which seemed to be stuck in some antebellum Twilight Zone, Tarleton was a town embracing modern technologies like automobiles and paved roads. In "The Ice Palace," when he

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[48] In the intervening century, the song has been recorded multiple times. Most famously, the song was performed by *Hee-Haw* regular Grandpa Joe in 1965 and country musician Jerry Reed in 1969.
[49] "Biography," The Official Website of Billy Murray (1877-1954): The Legendary Denver Nightingale*,* 2010, http://www.denvernightingale.com/biography.html and "Jack Yellen," Songwriters Hall of Fame*,* 2022, https://www.songhall.org/profile/Jack_Yellen and Ted Tjaden, "The Rags of George Linus Cobb," Ragtime Piano, June 2006, http://www.ragtimepiano.ca/rags/cobb.htm
[50] Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism,* 30-31.

describes Clark Darrow and how he passes the time in the Southern town, he writes, "Hanging round he found not at all difficult; a crowd of little girls had grown up beautifully…and they enjoyed being swum with and danced with and made love to in the flower-filled summery evenings."[51] These are not the gentle, chaste women of plantation mythology. These are modern women living in the early 20th century. At the same time, Sally Carrol, the main character of the story, clearly has a fondness for the glorious days of Confederate gallantry and commanding, elegant planation homes (an era she never knew), even as she is about to run away with a Yankee.[52] Not only was there a change in attitude towards the South as evidenced by the popularity of *The Little Colonel,* but the popular image of the South was changing as well. Where *The Little Colonel* presented an idealized image of the South that seemed stuck in time, Fitzgerald and others depicted a South that had a clear continuity with that imagined past but was steadily joining the modern world. The key difference was that Fitzgerald and others were viewing the South through the lens of the changes taking place during the First World War. The South was recreating itself and there was a white audience waiting to eat it up. Not only were they interested in a region that was rapidly gaining pace with the rest of the industrialized world, but they also had a fascination with the fantastical past the Lost Cause had carefully constructed.

For white Northerners trying to reconcile themselves with a rapidly changing world the idyllic, pastoral South championed by the Lost Cause held considerable appeal. The architects of the Lost Cause created the image of an agrarian utopia filled with the romantic notions of chivalry and honor, where women were respectable and men were brave, where

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[51] F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Ice Palace," Washington State University, 1 https://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/engl494/icepalace.pdf
[52] Davis, *World War I and Southern Modernism,* 31.

the pursuit of money had not consumed every aspect of life. The idea of an agrarian utopia hidden away from the horrors of civilization has been a common theme in western literature and art since Classical times, so when it seemed that "civilization" had reached a bloody and horrific crescendo in the form of the First World War, it is only natural that many would seek to find escape in some kind of modern Arcadia. While the First World War expedited the process of this idea being sold to the Northern masses and bolstered the number of writers peddling it, the first wave of this nostalgia hit in the 1880s.[53] It is not a coincidence that this pining for an agrarian paradise coincided with some of the worst depredations of the Industrial Revolution. Of course, this was a very selective paradise. This idealized land free from the horrors of the industrial world was also a place where whites were fully "white," that is Anglo-Saxon, and African Americans were kept under the watchful eyes of white masters, something surely on the minds of white Northerners as African Americans began migrating out of the South and into Northern centers of industry and as immigrants continued to make their way into the country.

All of this happened in a remarkably short time span. While the Lost Cause built momentum over the course of years, the sudden spurt of building, the dissemination of propaganda, and the country's actual involvement in the war lasted scarcely a full year. Many of the defense plants built to support the war effort were only just coming online when hostilities ceased, and a great number of soldiers never deployed from their training bases. However, the effects of the war stretch much further than the year and half the United States actually fought. The build-up to the war kicked off an industrial boom across the South that, while short lived, brought about permanent and lasting changes that fundamentally altered

[53] Cobb, *Away Down South,* 77-78.

the South for decades to come. As the war drew to a close, a literary renaissance kicked off across the South, spurred in part due to the changes wrought by the war. The horrors of the First World War and the industrialized world in general (not to mention a not insignificant amount of racism and xenophobia) made the idyllic antebellum South sold by the Lost Cause appealing to white Northerners. The very traits that earlier writers had decried about the South now made it more appealing than ever, at least in an idealized form, to many outside of it.

The First World War provided the catalyst to turn the Lost Cause into an American phenomenon instead of a Southern one. White soldiers trained in military bases named for ex-Confederates, in areas that had recently been adorned with monuments to the Confederacy, interacted with a population ready, willing, and able to provide the white newcomers with ample amounts of Southern hospitality. These military camps were big business, after all, and the still industry-deficient South needed whatever revenue it could draw. Between the large numbers of whites moving through a thoroughly lost-cause-addled South, the popularity of such white Southern-friendly pop-culture as *Birth of a Nation* and the literary renaissance after the war that brought the words of Southerners to a mass audience, the ideology of the Lost Cause began to leak into the rest of the country. The idealization of the South in white popular culture would continue throughout the 20th century, perhaps most notably with both the book and movie *Gone with the Wind,* then with the plethora of rural and Southern-themed programing in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating with the explosion of country music and NASCAR in the 1980s and 1990s. The First World War marked the beginning of the South's transformation from cultural backwater to media darling, and that transition brought the Lost Cause with it.

These changes were not restricted to literature nor were they exclusively for export. The First World War came at the end of the Progressive Era, which itself was different in the South than it had been in other parts of the country. Many of the changes noted in literature and touted by New South boosters were the result of progressive reformers, many of whom were fighting an uphill battle in the rural, fiercely parochial South. The war would change the nature of these movements as well. As labor movements were crushed under the demands of war and the subsequent red scare, progressive changes in the South began to take a more business focused approach that tried to ensure economic prosperity, if these changes made wholesale improvements for the Southern poor then all the better, but the popular thrust of progressivism in the South was dulled.

Chapter II

"We Return Fighting": The First World War and Southern Progressivism.

On April 2, 1917, in a speech asking Congress to declare war on Germany, Woodrow Wilson proclaimed, "The world must be made safe for democracy."[54] The phrase is among the most famous quotes in American history, and it swept across the country as the United States began mobilizing for war. The rhetoric of freedom and democracy was not lost on Americans at home. This plea to make the world safe for democracy came at the end of a forty-year period of reform and progressive spirit, and reformers would take the rhetoric of the war and run with it. The war years and the immediate post-war years were particularly turbulent in the South. In labor, a perfect storm of democratic fervor, labor shortages, and demand combined to bring about an explosion in labor organizing and worker empowerment. African American activists took the war as an opportunity to make their case for their rights as citizens, and, to paraphrase W.E.B. DuBois, they came back fighting for civil rights. Prohibition, a movement that had been steadily gaining momentum throughout the late 19th century, received a boost of support as morality became public policy in an effort to keep soldiers sober and healthy.

As the 1920s wore on, these efforts all met with frustration. Labor lost momentum as depressed post-war markets gave workers less power and popular opinion shifted against them. African Americans met with severe violence across the Red Summers of 1919 and 1920, effectively checking any advancements African American activists had hoped to make on the back of their service in the European War. However, in each case the First World War

[54] Woodrow Wilson, "Woodrow Wilson Requests War (April 2, 1917)," The American Yawp Reader, Stanford University Press, accessed June 28, 2022, https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/21-world-war-i/woodrow-wilson-requests-war-april-2-1917/

created a foundation for what was to come. Southern labor seriously exercised its power for the first time in the aftermath of the war, and that spirit would result in more unrest and activism throughout the ‘20s and into the ‘30s. In spite of the violent resistance African Americans encountered in the postwar years, the First World War created a blueprint for the Double V campaign of the Second that led to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Prohibition failed before it ever really started, but the push for public health would have long lasting effects well beyond the war years. In spite of the conservative backlash of the 1920s, the progress made in the South during the First World War could not be wholly undone, and the stage was set for greater changes later.

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By the time of the First World War, labor unions were a common sight in industries across the country, except in the South. The region that had most embraced slavery was also the most resistant to the organizing of labor. One issue facing labor organizers in the South is that Southern workers did not have many other options for employment. In large parts of the South, the options for most poor white Southerners were to either work in the local industry, be that cotton, tobacco, or lumber, or try to eke out an existence tenant farming, where they would be shackled to their landowner by way of debt and crop liens. The situation was even worse for African Americans, who were often denied the opportunity to work in the industrial sector. When they were allowed to work, they often found themselves doing the hardest and most dangerous work for less than their white counterparts.

While some strikes, such as the Streetcar Worker Strike of 1903 that brought Richmond’s public transportation to a standstill (some say it is still at a standstill), did disrupt Southern life, by and large labor activities were going on outside of the South. 1903 saw

several large strikes take place, mostly in the American west. That year, Colonel Thomas G. Bush of Alabama, president of the Alabama Consolidated Iron and Coal Company, penned a lengthy opinion piece, entitled "Labor and Capital," that took up an entire page and part of a second in the *Birmingham News.* This opinion piece followed a shorter column, also written by Bush, on a preceding page that argued that wage increases for coal miners had actually outpaced profits for the mine operators and that, in fact, it was the mine operators who were being taken advantage of by the workers. Regarding competition and the rise of large corporations, he wrote, "It is claimed that by these combinations, competition is lessened, and that competition is the life of trade. Many instances can be cited where competition has been the destruction of trade." He does not cite any specific instances where competition was the destruction of trade, but he does claim that "Competition, with loss of profit, has induced many manufacturers to sell their plants, or enter combinations…"[55] His opinion of labor unions was not much more favorable. In phrasing similar to the "silent majority" rhetoric of the Richard Nixon era, Bush wrote, "…I think it is equally as true that in many of the unions the aggressive minority tyrannize over the conservative majority." Bush also praised "strike breakers" as "The other class is one which chooses to be independent and make its own terms for the sale of its services." His explanation for why Alabama had been "unusually fortunate" in how few labor disputes it had experienced was that it was "due largely to the good sense and conservatism of both sides; and I think also due to the liberal and fair treatment which labor has received."[56] So liberal and fair was Bush's treatment of his labor force that, only a month after he shared his detailed thoughts on the relationship of labor and

[55] T.H. Bush, "Labor and Capital," *The Birmingham News,* July 2, 1903, 9.
[56] Ibid., Interestingly, Col. Bush also made a statement about how the building of large armies and navies prevented conflict due to the potential destruction it would cause. He would not live to see this image of a conventional mutually assured destruction deterrent be brutally destroyed, as he passed in 1909.

capital, he was before a board of arbitration arguing against an eight-hour workday and defending his commissary system from charges that it was run for profit and not the benefit of his workers.[57]

The claim that Northern industrialists were harsher and less fair than their Southern counterparts was a familiar argument and echoed similar statements in the polemics of slavery apologists in the antebellum period. Just as Bush insisted that American coal miners were better compensated than they were anywhere else in the world, antebellum pro-slavery advocate George Fitzhugh had proclaimed that Northern laborers worked "harder and longer for less allowance" than Southern slaves. [58] In fact, much work had been done connecting the generous paternalists of the antebellum period to the new breed of industrialists emerging in the New South.[59] These men, it was supposed, contributed greatly to their communities, and took care of their workers, the way a father would take care of his family; there had been similar expectations of slave owners in the antebellum period.

Conditions in mill villages, both before and after the First World War, could be abysmal. Unpaved roads, a lack of proper sanitation and water systems, and the prevalence of unpenned livestock made for unpleasant living.[60] The First World War provided a financial boon to help improve conditions. Historian George Tindall pointed to the boom created by the war as the impetus for the remodeling of mill villages across the South.[61] Even if mill villages lacked proper sanitation services, running water and electricity were far more likely to be found in the mill villages than they were on a farmstead. Likewise, the profits of the

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[57] "Judge Gray Interested in Commissary System," *The Birmingham News,* August 14, 1903, 1.
[58] Cobb, *Away Down South* 46.
[59] Ibid., 104-106. While certainly not the only one, U. B. Philips was perhaps the most influential of those making the connection.
[60] Hall et al., *Like a Family,* 119.
[61] Ibid, 325.

war years found their way into progressive causes, such as schools and health systems. These efforts to provide for workers, in addition to the fact that the alternatives were not much better, helped to sap some of the spirit of labor organizing. While conditions in mill villages certainly left something to be desired, they were a good bit better than starving on tenant farms.

Colonel Bush might have claimed these developments as reasons why Southerners were less inclined to unionism and striking, but the reality was not so benevolent. The mill villages were closed systems; the mill owners could control who came and went. If someone dared to challenge mill authority, they could be sent away. A South Carolina mill owner seemingly proved the point of a visiting preacher when he threw the preacher out of the mill village for insinuating that the mill owner paid local preachers in an effort to control the messaging coming from the pulpit.[62] When another preacher, again in South Carolina, criticized the mill management, he found his church locked up and eventually was outright evicted from the village.[63] Criticism of such liberal and fair owners could not be tolerated.

A thread that runs through Southern history is the idea that the current generation is of a subpar status, and they are to blame for whatever shortfalls plague the present moment. Bad slave owners, driven by greed, destroyed the supposed glorious order of their ancestors by losing the Civil War. The first generation of New South industrialists were destroying the traditional lifestyles of the South, and the second generation of industrialists lacked the wonderful paternalistic characteristics that made their fathers so enviable. The labor disputes that began to arise after the First World War brought forth these accusations against that generation of mill owners. It was reasoned that the older generation had not needed to face

[62] Ibid, 328.
[63] Ibid., 126.

these issues because they were of a higher caliber, and that this current crop had gotten so caught up with modern conceptions of business and class that they had failed in their duty to provide for their charges. Therefore, so far as many contemporaries were concerned, the issue was not so much that working conditions in the South were inhumane or that laborers had a better sense of community, but that the owners of these mills and interests simply were not up to the standards of their parents. In reality, however, these mill owners were not necessarily of a lesser character, but they were presiding over labor during a time of intense change and organization.

The propaganda of the First World War, centered on ensuring freedom and democracy, found a second life amongst labor organizers. If Europe was to be granted democracy, then so should the American laborer. Efforts to expand union membership across the country and the power held by laborers in general were also aided by a labor-friendly (or at least non-hostile) administration in Washington. The administration of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson recognized that work stoppages on account of strikes, especially in a time where labor would be hard to come by as many of the country's able-bodied men would be off for the war, could prove disastrous for the war effort. In an effort to keep America's industry humming, the Wilson administration created the National War Labor Board (NWLB), headed by former president Howard Taft and labor advocate Frank Walsh.[64] The NWLB, in conjunction with increased wages and a general labor shortage, resulted in a boom in unionism. The federal government was incentivized to agree to almost any demands unionists and labor organizers made. Since there was a shortage of workers, the laborers themselves also enjoyed greater power to make demands. By making use of the democratic

[64] Zieger, *America's Great War,* 120-121.

fervor that accompanied the flood of war propaganda and by being able to get results, unions such as the AFL and the United Textile Workers saw massive growth over the war years. From the start of the European war in 1914 through to 1920, the UTW could boast an additional 70,000 members.[65]

The South was not a stranger to unions and unionization, even if they had failed to take root. The Knights of Labor had managed to enlist roughly 45,000 members across the South in the 1880s, and various trades had their own unions dating back to before the Civil War.[66] However, Southerners did not strike as frequently or successfully. When Southern labor did go on strike, it was usually workers from transportation industries, such as the aforementioned streetcar worker strike in Richmond in 1903. Major industries such as tobacco and textiles seldom ever experienced labor strife before the First World War. In the rare instances where Southerners did go on strike they met with a less-than-50 per cent success rate, compared with a better-than-60 per cent rate of success for Northern strikers.[67] The Richmond Streetcar Workers Strike, for example, was violently suppressed by militia units and strikebreakers operated the streetcars.[68] In the postwar period, there was more activity from common industrial workers, particularly in the textile industry, but while the number of strikes would be higher than it had been before the war, their success rate would remain low.

The years, 1919, 1920, and 1921 all saw large scale labor strikes across the South.[69] The increased demand for textiles quickly snapped back to prewar levels. As a result, mill

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[65] Hall et al., *Like a Family,* 186-187.
[66] F. Ray Marshall, *Labor in the South,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1967), 22.
[67] Ibid., 27-28.
[68] "The Richmond Trolley Strike of 1903," Church Hill People's News, August 3, 2012, https://chpn.net/2012/08/03/the-richmond-trolley-strike-of-1903/
[69] Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South,* 334-337.

operators sought to bring costs down by lowering wages, ending the bonus systems that were created to incentivize working during the war, and cutting down hours. In the textile heavy areas around Charlotte, North Carolina, workers, many of whom joined the UTW during the war years or would join the union in short order, went on strike in opposition to these new measures. The strike quickly spread from the Highland Park cotton mill to many other mills around the area. Despite the sheer size of the strike, it proved largely unsuccessful. It came at a time when the cotton industry was shrinking as wartime demand gave way to peacetime depression. Some industrialists were content to not have to pay their workers or deal with the excess product they would be creating if they were working and as a result the strike failed to achieve any of its goals and the workers eventually went back to work.[70] Coal miners went on a general strike late in 1919, including many mines across the South, but this strike was met with a wave of unfavorable newspaper press.

Public opinion turned against organized labor as the first wave of the "Red Scare" began sweeping the country and anti-labor interests ramped up their own campaigns. Driven by fear in the wake of the Russian Revolution that saw Tsar Nicholas II and his family deposed and executed, anti-communist sentiment began to coalesce in the United States. Given the relationship between communism and labor activism, the period of growth and expansion enjoyed during the war was brought to a devastating halt. As part of their Sunday edition on June 8, 1919, the *Chattanooga Daily Times* printed an article aimed at helping readers spot "Bolshevik" propaganda. In form that would make Senator Joseph McCarthy proud, the *Daily Times* named names (and listed addresses) of prominent authors and activists supposedly working towards a communist overthrow of the American government,

[70] Ibid., 334.

their connections to labor unions being inextricable from their work for the advancement of communism. The section that likely garnered the greatest reaction from the *Daily Times'* white readership was the last one, which charged that these Bolshevik activists were intent on mobilizing blacks to help bring about a communist revolution.[71] These charges are comparable to the ones of German agents infiltrating black communities that circulated during the war.[72]

When labor activism was not directly linked to attempting to bring down the whole of United States, it was linked to selfishness, laziness, and inconvenience. The *Knoxville Sentinel*, reporting on the nationwide coal miners' strike on November 1, 1919, led with the headline, "Thousands of Non-Union Miners Working," with actual news about those who were striking further down the page.[73] Reporting on the same action, *The Sunday Journal and Tribune,* also of Knoxville, ran a political cartoon with a train marked "Winter" rounding the bend, while a man labeled "public" was nailed to the tracks by a large pickax labeled "non-production of coal."[74] The *Birmingham News*, the very paper in which Thomas Bush had penned his op-ed years earlier, ran a story about a railroad strike in 1921 under the headline "Strike Menace Growing."[75] The common theme through these stories is the inconvenience of the strikes, rather than the actual demands and needs of those striking. While public opinion was being turned against labor, the government had its own response. Although President Wilson had largely been friendly to labor, there was a distinct need to keep the country moving. When coal miners across the country went on strike in 1919, the Wilson

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[71] Sherman Rogers, "How Bolsheviks Group Works in Spreading Propaganda," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 8, 1919, 27.
[72] Janet Hudson, "Black Carolinians Test Boundaries" in *The American South and the Great War,* eds. Matthew L. Downs and M. Ryan Floyd, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 142.
[73] "Thousands of Non-Union Miners Working," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, November,1 1919, 1.
[74] "And Just Around the Corner," *The Sunday Journal and Tribune,* (Knoxville, TN), November 2, 1919, 1.
[75] "Strike Menace Growing," *The Birmingham News*, October 17, 1921, 1.

administration declared that the Treaty of Versailles had not been finalized, therefore the war-time controls on wages were still in effect.[76]

The labor spirit was bruised but not broken, and by the end of the 1920s labor agitation was again spiking in the South. The fury of labor activity that marked the first post-war years cooled off as the wartime boom gave way to peacetime bust. This was in part due to the economic recession that struck Southern industry, especially the textile industry. With depressed profits, the threat of workers walking off the job, and therefore not being paid, was less effective. Even as these strikes came to an end and the general spurt of labor activity cooled, the precedent for Southern industrial labor going on strike was set. The Harriet and Henderson Cotton Mills in Henderson, North Carolina, avoided the strife of the immediate post-war period, in fact there had never been a strike in Henderson period; but in 1924 workers staged a walkout over the discontinuation of a bonus program. Although they failed to get the system restarted, they secured promises that the system would be reinstated when the economy improved. After three years, the bonus system was still not reimplemented and the workers walked out in 1927 over the issue. Still meeting with little success, they tried again in 1929.[77] This story is an example of the kind of labor activity taking place in the South in the 1920s. Workers, unionized or not, would go on strike in an effort to recapture wartime prosperity, but between mill owners refusing to recognize unions and the general state of the economy, the strikes had little effect on the bottom line and eventually workers were forced to relent. Towards the end of the decade, the AFL once again tried to increase its Southern membership. The Great Depression brought dreams of a fully unionized South to an

[76] "Placed Outside Pale of the Law," *The Journal and Tribune,* (Knoxville, TN), October 30, 1919, 1.
[77] Daniel J. Clark, *Like Night and Day: Unionization in a Southern Mill Town,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) 19-20.

end, but even in the midst of the greatest economic crisis the world had ever seen, Southern textile workers went on mass strike in 1934. For nearly twenty years after the war ended, Southern labor continued to organize and fight for their rights in a way unseen in the period before the war.

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White laborers were not the only ones to translate Wilson's call to action into domestic reforms. While the "Double V" campaign is often associated with the Second World War, it's progenitor can be found in black activists during the First. The guiding principle, as it had been in wars before and since, was that black excellence on the battlefield would help overcome racial biases at home. African American leaders gave patriotic speeches, held war-bond drives, and engaged in all the various forms of patriotic rabble-rousing to be expected of good citizens. These came in the form of rallies and speeches where black leaders emphasized African Americans' loyalty to the United States. To quote historian Janet Hudson, "At a public rally, Beaufort's black residents asserted, 'We love our country today as in 1775, in 1812, in 1861-1865, in 1898, and in all the years of its existence.'"[78] Not all of these efforts were organic, however. The white press often spread rumors of disloyalty or the presence of German agents within black communities, and the government kept careful tabs on anyone, especially anyone black, who vocally opposed the war.[79] Fiercely patriotic declarations from black leaders could be just as much a defensive mechanism as earnest calls to action. These efforts apparently met with some success. The state of Virginia commissioned a series of histories to record the activities of each county and

[78] Hudson, "Black Carolinians Test Boundaries," 144.
[79] Ibid., 142-143.

city (they are separate in Virginia, a unique quirk of the Commonwealth). In the record for Mecklenburg County, the author saw fit to include a sub-heading, "War Work of the Negros," where he asserted, "With regard to the draft, the Red Cross, the conservation of food and other features of the period, no more willing service was rendered, as far as their understanding of conditions went, than by the colored people of Mecklenburg."[80]

While black activists vocally announced their commitment to patriotism, democracy, and the American way at home and won hard-fought glory on the battlefields of Europe, race relations in the United States remained strained at best. In the South, the idea of blacks in uniform was particularly unsavory. The first area of conflict was the very training of black soldiers. Many Southern communities actively resisted the barracking of black troops in their areas, forcing the War Department to shuffle their black trainees around from camp to camp in something of a shell game.[81] The result was that all-black units were spread across hundreds of miles and multiple camps, meaning that members of the same unit would have limited contact with their fellow soldiers before their deployment. The case of Camp Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina, is illustrative of white Southerners resistance to the encampment of black soldiers. In the months leading up to the opening of the camp, local newspapers ran story after story highlighting the anxiety white members of the community felt over the prospect of black soldiers being trained on their doorstep, to say nothing of the rumors that Puerto Ricans would also be trained there. Columns ran almost daily decrying the idea that black soldiers would be barracked in their community, with some even going so far as to suggest that the camp be dismantled rather than have black troops there. The

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[80] F.C. Bedinger, "Mecklenburg County," in *Publications of the Virginia War History Commission Source Volume VI: Virginia Communities in War Time,* ed. Arthur Kyle Davis, (Richmond: The Executive Committee, 1926), 266-267.
[81] Hudson, "Black Carolinians Test Boundaries," 148.

situation reached such a fevered pitch that the governor of South Carolina sent a telegram to Secretary of War Newton Baker and traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with him in person to voice his concerns.[82] The meeting was at least partially successful, as the governor received assurance that there would be no Puerto Ricans trained at Camp Jackson, and any black soldiers trained there would be thoroughly segregated from the whites. While Secretary Baker may have been able to reassure the governor, not everyone was quite so receptive to the concerns of these white South Carolinians. When Senator Ben Tillman passed through Colombia on a whistle-stop tour, *The State* newspaper reported that "[Tillman] said that since the people of Columbia have commercialized the camp they have to take the disagreeable things along with the good."[83] This stern bit of paternal reprimand did little to assuage the fears and anxieties of white Colombians.

Black soldiers were trained at Camp Jackson, but the newspaper offensive did not let up. Stories abounded of the supposed incompetence of black troops, ranging from not being able to recognize a major general to a black draftee (or "selectmen" as they were called at the time) from Florida believing he was in France already with no one able to convince him otherwise.[84] Another report claimed that white draftees reported in an orderly and correct fashion, whereas the black troops had gone directly to the commanding officer of the post, not knowing any better.[85] Other stories read like a racist take on *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*, with black soldiers supposedly giving incorrect salutes, not recognizing rank insignia, and committing other faux paus that the supposedly intellectually superior white soldiers would

[82] "Manning Voices Strong Protest" *The State,* (Columbia, SC), August 19, 1917, 1.
[83] "Camp Jackson and the Negro" *The State,* (Columbia, SC), August 24, 1917, 10.
[84] Cliff Langford, "Many Humorous Happenings are Reported at Camp," *The Columbia Record,* October 7, 1917, 3.
[85] "White and Negro Selectmen Pour Into Local Camp," *The Columbia Record,* October 4, 1917, 3.

never commit.[86] These caricatures painted by the white press of Columbia, obviously, had no basis in reality, but they illustrate how white Southerners coped with a sudden influx of black troops into their communities. Unfortunately, not every community responded so peacefully.

On August 23, 1917, Sara Travers, a black woman living in Houston, had her home ransacked and faced verbal and physical abuse from two white Houston police officers. Displeased with what they thought was insolence from Travers, the two officers took her into custody and waited on the street for a transport to carry her downtown. A crowd gathered in the black neighborhood as the two officers and Travers waited by the street. Private Alonzo Edwards, a member of the all-black 24th Infantry regiment stationed at the nearby Camp Logan and wearing his uniform, attempted to intervene. For his trouble, Edwards was pistol whipped and hauled away with Travers. Later that day, when Corporal Charles Baltimore, a black military policeman with the 24th tasked with patrolling the neighborhood, supposedly in conjuncture with the Houston Police Department, confronted the two cops over reports they had beaten and arrested one of his troops, he found himself beaten, shot at, and arrested. News of the day's events made its way to the rest of the 24th at Camp Logan, where anger and frustration fermented all throughout the day and into the evening. When (false) rumors of a white mob marching on the camp spread, several companies of men went into full-on mutiny and marched, armed, on the city. What followed was three hours of violence as the black troops battled with white cops, destroyed property, and hit civilians caught in the crossfire. Seventeen whites and two blacks were dead when the violence finally came to an end, but more deaths would come as more whites succumbed to their injuries and as the

[86] Langford, "Many Humorous Happenings are Reported at Camp," 3.

Army meted out death sentences for some of the mutineers.[87]

The response to the violence that had gripped Houston was dramatic. *The Columbia Record*, which had been reporting on the planned training of blacks at Camp Jackson, ran the headline "Negro Soldiers go on Rampage: More Riots May Happen at Any Time."[88] The anxiety of whites across the South was elevated by the events in Houston, which was not helped by responses in the black press that stopped short of endorsing the violence but pointed out that it would not have happened were blacks treated equally. Ultimately, though, other than raising the blood pressure of apprehensive whites within a day's march of training camps, the actual fallout was minimal. The soldiers involved were heavily punished, but some saw their sentences commuted or reduced by Wilson, who was pressured by the NAACP to do so.[89] Secretary Baker remained committed to the drafting, training, and use of black troops in the army.

Racism, of course, was not exclusive to the South. The Army itself was segregated; the Marine Corps outright refused admittance of blacks; and the Navy would only have them for cooks and other janitorial staffs. In the Army, the segregated units were largely restricted to labor units and almost always were under white officers who, more often than not, held contempt for their charges. All of the effort black leaders at home put into expressing their patriotism and extolling their communities to join the armed services ultimately resulted in many blacks facing conditions that were not that different from civilian life, if not worse. Many black troops from the North faced *de jure* segregation for first time as they entered the American South. When a train carrying black troops to camp in Texas stopped in the town of

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[87] Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 43-80, Smith devotes an entire chapter to this event and provides greater detail.
[88] "More Riots May Happen at Any Time" *The Columbia Record,* August 24, 1917, 1.
[89] Lentz-Smith*, Freedom Struggles,* 73.

Bostwick, Texas, black troops took it upon themselves to ransack the store of a Chinese grocer who had failed to remove his Jim Crow signage before their arrival. There were no consequences for this incredible display.[90] This misunderstanding actually went the other way, as well as many whites encountered integration for the first time. When white Southerners were encamped in Michigan, they hassled black troops who dared to eat in the same mess hall as them until the commanding officer restored order.[91]

Not all black servicemen were condemned to dig ditches. Many found their way onto the front lines where they distinguished themselves in combat. The "Harlem Hellfighters," officially the 369th Infantry Regiment, were sent overseas ahead of schedule due to racial tensions around their training camp in South Carolina. Once they were overseas, however, they became one of the most famous units of the First World War. Both the black and white press ran with stories of the heroism of black soldiers overseas, and black activists would capitalize on these stories to further their efforts to secure equal rights. The Raleigh *News and Observer,* a paper once owned by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels and which had inflamed racial tensions in the 1890s, ran a lengthy column praising not just black soldiers participating in the current European war, but the service of black soldiers throughout American history and the service of black colonial troops in the armies of the French and British.[92] The black-run *Richmond Planet* saw visions of equality in the war proceedings, reporting on instances where black troops received the same treatment as their white colleagues, including a full page spread dedicated to equal service by Red Cross canteens.[93]

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[90] Nina Mjagkij, *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience During World War I* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), 83-84.
[91] Charles Williams, *Sidelights on Negro Soldiers* (Boston: B.J. Bimmer Company, 1923), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/67093/67093-h/67093-h.htm.
[92] Walter Clark, "Part of Negroes in Previous Wars," *The News and Observer,* (Raleigh, NC), July 7, 1918, 16.
[93] "American Red Cross Canteen: Service for Negro Troops," *The Richmond Planet*, October 26, 1918, 3.

Although there were many black leaders calling their communities to join in the patriotic cause, there were many others who opposed the war and black participation in it. They balked at the idea that black men should enlist and risk their lives to make the world safe for democracy when they could not be assured democracy in their own country. To take an anti-war position, whether white or black, was a dangerous proposition. The federal government cracked down on dissenting voices in an effort to ensure popular support for the war. Many leaders, such as W.E.B. DuBois, played the wartime propaganda to their advantage, and encouraged black service in the armed forces. The needs of the war were also used to spread the message of equality at home. During the war, the still-new National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, founded in 1909) worked its way through the South, increasing their membership amongst the region's large black population and flexed its growing power. When black women were barred from working as weavers at the Charleston Navy Yard in South Carolina, the NAACP lobbied for their admittance citing the acute labor shortage and highlighting how the need for war material superseded racial prejudice.[94] The NAACP was also among the groups that lobbied the Wilson administration for more lenient treatment of some of the Houston rioters and kept the pressure on the War Department not to change their plans for the drafting and training of black soldiers.

However, these efforts to bring about racial equality did not go unnoticed. The "Red Summers" of 1919, 1920, and 1921 were plagued by racial violence across the South and the country at large. After years of disenfranchisement and the slow but steady implementation of Jim Crow laws, the democratic flurry that surrounded the First World War spurred African

[94] Hudson, "Black Carolinians Test Boundaries," 149.

American efforts to reassert their civil rights more strongly in the public sphere. Black soldiers, in particular, sought to capitalize on their service as a way to earn the respect and rights for which they had fought. In some cases, this could be simply the act of wearing their uniform in public, as was the case of Wilbur Little of Georgia. After returning home from the war, a gang of local whites warned Little not to wear his uniform to town. He wore it anyway and was lynched for his display.[95] The act of serving in the military and the wearing of an Army uniform obviously carried significance for both whites and blacks. Where blacks saw a confirmation of their manhood and their rights as citizens, whites saw a second-class citizen trying to rise above his station. Conflict broke out throughout the country, making the Houston riot look like a polite disagreement. Winston-Salem, North Carolina, saw racial violence break out on November 18, 1918, which necessitated the deployment of troops to patrol the streets of the city and maintain order. Scarcely had the American Expeditionary Force begun its occupation of Europe when it was needed to occupy their own city streets.[96] Racial violence broke out across the country for another three years.

Of the many riots and other incidents of violence that took place in the post war period, the Elaine Massacre of 1919 represents a unique blending of the issues sweeping the South and the nation at large. The riot resulted from both increased racial tensions and increased labor activism. Black sharecroppers around Elaine, Arkansas sought unionization as a means of fighting back against the predatory crop-lien system that many white landlords employed. In this system, which effected both black and white sharecroppers, the tenant farmer worked a section of the landlord's land. In exchange, the tenant shared the proceeds

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[95] Davis, *WWI and Southern Modernism,* 81.
[96] Janet Hudson, "Black North Carolinians as Soldiers: The First, the Proud, the Brave," in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 83 and "More Arrests of the Alleged Members of Sunday Night's Mob," *Winston-Salem Journal,* November 20, 1918, 1.

from the crop with the landlord. Many landlords imposed restrictions on tenants, however, forcing them to only buy goods and farming equipment from the landlord at inflated prices. Unable to pay, the sharecroppers would purchase what they needed by borrowing against the prospective returns from that year's crop. The result was that many tenant farmers were so deep in debt that they could never leave their tenant farm and the landlord reaped almost all of the profits of their labor. For whites, the emergence of industry across the South offered a chance at relief, if they could find a way to get out of their debts. For blacks, who were often barred from working in industrial settings, there were fewer options available.

Robert Lee Hill, a black veteran of the First World War himself, founded the Progressive Farmer and Household Union of America in 1918.[97] Seeking to provide non-industrial labor with an organized voice, Hill and others set about trying to enlist sharecroppers and other agricultural workers in their union. Although landowners did not recognize the union, it grew in strength in rural Arkansas. On September 30, 1919, black sharecroppers around Elaine seeking to unionize met at a small church under cover of darkness to discuss the opportunity. Fearing white interference, armed guards were posted outside. What would be the opening shots of the massacre occurred when police officers arrived at the church. The police and the guards exchanged gunfire, leaving one of the white men dead. The police claimed they were passing through the area and that the armed guards protecting the church fired first, the sharecroppers said the police fired first. Regardless of who shot first, a white man was dead at the hands of armed black men and panic gripped the white community. Over the course of October 1st, violence broke out between blacks and

[97] Brain K. Mitchell, "Soldiers and Veterans at the Elaine Race Massacre" in *The War at Home: Perspectives on the Arkansas Experience During World War I,* ed. Mark K. Christ, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020), 130.

whites in the area and many of those who attended the unionization meeting were arrested. The governor of Arkansas was informed that violence had erupted around Elaine, and he called for the Army to restore order in the area.[98]

The situation did not improve when the Army finally arrived on the morning of October 2nd. The official reports vary considerably and often contradict themselves, but it is clear from the reports and from the testimony of eyewitnesses that the Army was not gentle in its treatment of the supposed black militants. Gerald Lampert claimed that the Army burned a black union leader alive on his planation, for example.[99] Anyone who admitted to being a member of the union was arrested outright and many of its leaders were later executed by the state.[100] The exact death toll from the massacre is not known, but estimates range from 50 to in excess of 800 blacks killed, in reality this figure probably sits somewhere close to a hundred.[101] This horrific event brought veterans of the First World War in direct conflict with each other and pitted black veterans against the very military they served with. Many of those involved with the union were veterans of the war, and the local American Legion post supplied a number of its members to help put down the supposed revolt.[102] The experience of serving in First World War emboldened blacks to express their rights and fight for equality and their chance at a better life. Unfortunately, these efforts usually met violent ends.

Another, more famous incident came in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Tulsa was home to a thriving black community in the Greenwood neighborhood and both that neighborhood and

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[98] Ibid., 130-132.
[99] Ibid., 136.
[100] Ibid., 139.
[101] Ibid., 141.
[102] Ibid., 131.

the city at large grew through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By 1920, the city reported over 72,000 residents with the vast majority being native-born whites (60,876) and a smaller portion of blacks (8,878).[103] On the evening of May 31st and into the morning of June 1st, 1921, violence erupted that destroyed the Greenwood neighborhood and inflicted many casualties.

The origins of the Tulsa race riot are familiar, many other incidents of racial violence across the country started similarly. The trouble began on May 30th, when a black man named Dick Rowland allegedly assaulted a white woman, Sarah Page, who worked as an elevator operator. Supposedly, Dick Rowland was riding the elevator when he scratched Page's hands and tore her clothes. He took off running when the elevator reached the next floor. The counter narrative to this is that Rowland accidently stepped on Page's foot and reached out to keep her from falling, at which point she screamed.[104] Regardless, on May 31st Rowland was arrested and placed in the Tulsa jail.

As evening drew near, tensions climbed throughout the city. Rowland was in jail, and rumors and reports of white lynch mobs reached Greenwood. A group of armed black men went downtown themselves to see to the protection of Rowland but were initially dissuaded and turned away by the town sheriff. A white crowd did gather, however, and another group of armed blacks, this one larger than the last, arrived at the courthouse at 10:30pm. Things were tense, but peaceful, and the black group was beginning to leave when a white man attempted to wrestle a handgun away from one of the black men. A shot was fired in the

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[103] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States State Compendium: Oklahoma* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), 40.

[104] Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 46-47. Oklahoma may not be a "traditional" Southern state, but George Tindall covered in *The Emergence of the New South* and given its propensity for college football and country music, it seems reasonable for it to be included.

struggle, and thus began one of the worst race riots of this period.[105]

Violence spread overnight and the National Guard was called in to restore order. A white mob congregated at the edge of the Greenwood neighborhood, and despite efforts by blacks and a small contingent of guards under the auspicious of Police Inspector C. W. Daley, the mob invaded the neighborhood and began burning and looting black homes and businesses. By the end of the day on June 1st, Tulsa was under martial law and the once thriving black neighborhood and anywhere from 27 to 250 people were dead.[106] The *Tulsa Tribune,* in its late edition of June 1st, reported nine whites and 68 blacks killed.[107] Although some whites were arrested in the course of the riot, by far and away blacks were the ones that were hauled away. Ultimately, some 6,000 blacks were detained, some three quarters of the city's entire black population.[108]

What is important about this incident is not just the level of destruction wrought upon a successful black community, and it was significant, but rather how blacks responded to the violence. From the outset, African Americans set out to defend themselves and their homes. Whether it was showing up armed, twice, to the courthouse in defense of Rowland or in the neighborhood itself, blacks took the initiative to defend themselves from white violence. The riot that destroyed Greenwood bears a closer resemblance to military-style urban combat than typical social unrest, with black defenders firing on white mob members from upper story windows.[109] Part of this defense was influenced, no doubt, by the fact that many of the blacks involved were veterans of the First World War. The altercation that started the riot occurred

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[105] Ibid., 49-53 In his book, Ellsworth recounts a story of a similar incident a year earlier where a white mob gathered and lynched a white man accused of robbery and murder, suggesting that blacks had ample reason to fear that the white mob was not there to picnic.
[106] Ibid., 49-66.
[107] "Martial Law Halts Race War," *Tulsa Tribune*, June 1, 1921, 1.
[108] Ibid., 1.
[109] Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land,* 55.

when a white man tried to wrestle an Army-issued service pistol from a black veteran in front of the courthouse.[110] When news first broke that a white mob was on its way to Greenwood, another black veteran grabbed his service pistol and kept watch on one of the places the mob could enter the neighborhood.[111]

In both Elaine, Arkansas and Tulsa, Oklahoma, violence broke out when African Americans attempted to exercise their rights. In both cases, the rhetoric and experience of the First World War influenced the willingness of blacks to physically push back on the systemic oppression that surrounded them. In Elaine, ideas about democracy and the rights of workers to be treated fairly led to African Americans attempting to unionize. In Tulsa, the experience of the war literally prepared and armed blacks to fight back against the mob that threatened them. The war emboldened African Americans to take a more active and physical role in resisting white violence, even if it came at a great cost. As violence swept the nation. W. E. B. DuBois published his galvanizing "Returning Soldiers." In it, he condemned the violence blacks and black veterans faced and boldly declared: "We *return from fighting.* We *return fighting.* Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why."[112] As Elaine, Tulsa, and numerous other occasions show, the message was taken to heart.

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The violence that came with progress was greatly distasteful to many middle and upper-class reformers who held romantic notions of uplifting the poor and downtrodden and

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[110] Ibid., 52.
[111] Ibid., 54.
[112] W.E.B. DuBois, "Returning Soldiers," The American Yawp Reader, Stanford University Press, accessed June 18, 2022 https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/21-world-war-i/w-e-b-dubois-returning-soldiers-may-1919/

healing the sick. In the South, where race and gender issue further complicated an already difficult struggle, wholesale improvements to the lives of those living in poverty were daunting. The Progressive reforms that were able to gain traction amongst the general public were those that could be considered policies of respectability, especially as mobilization began for the First World War, and the health and sobriety of a new nation of soldiers became a top priority. Prohibition, to take an example, ripped through the South as quickly as the illicit liquor it made necessary. Tennessee enacted statewide prohibition in 1909, Virginia proclaimed statewide prohibition in 1914, and South Carolina heavily restricted the trade of liquor in 1915.[113] Clergymen and respectable women gave speeches, held rallies and parades, and participated in various other forms of activism in the cause to put an end to the demon drink. As national prohibition loomed, newspapers across the South published what can best be described as progress reports which updated readers on the likelihood of the passage of the 18th amendment and the balance of dry and wet counties across the country. Much of this information came from groups such as the Methodist Board, an organization of Methodist clergymen who worked to promote prohibition.

The propositions proposed by the proponents of temperance were tempting. They preached that enacting prohibition would help end the battering of women and keep families together. It would help the poor find work and hang on to their money, and, they argued, it was simply the moral thing to do. These arguments proved persuasive in theory if not in practice. Many areas where dry laws were passed simply saw legal drink replaced with illegal drink, either homemade or brought in from places where it was legal. The situation

[113] Tindall, *Emergence of the New South,* 18 and William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism: 1880-1930,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 316. Virginia enacted statewide prohibition in 1914, but enforcement began in 1916.

was dire in one county in Virginia where a woman wrote that when even the Justice of the Peace was endorsing the making of illicit alcohol: "it was 'almost impossible to get anything done against it.'"[114] When national prohibition did finally pass, a large still was discovered on the Texas ranch of Morris Shepard, the "'father of national prohibition.'"[115]

While prohibition enjoyed considerable popularity, there were still many who were not convinced that it would be effective. The *Alabama Staats-Zeitung,* a German language newspaper, was decidedly a "wet" rag. A two-page spread in a 1916 issue highlighted problems with prohibition and even included photos of French and German soldiers drinking to emphasize the point that drink did not prevent men from being fit and active. In a sign of things to come, a column on the edge of the page purported to come from an Oklahoma woman who warned that prohibition had only increased crime, as bootlegging had become big business and many of its profiteers could be counted amongst the most ardent of prohibitionists.[116] Similar spreads decrying the ineffectiveness of prohibition appeared almost weekly in the *Staats-Zeitung.* What is even more notable about this is that Alabama had already enacted statewide prohibition over a year earlier in January of 1915, so the *Staats-Zeitung* was continuing to rail against the prohibition crusade even after it had passed in their own state and was continuing to rack-up victories elsewhere. A common retort of the "wets" was that alcohol consumption had only increased over the last few years. This affected more states than just Alabama. The North Carolina *Charlotte News* also pointed out the steady increase in alcohol consumption in spite of the march of "dry laws" spreading not just across the South but across the country.[117] Unfortunately for these opponents of prohibition, the

[114] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism,* 318.
[115] Tindall, *Emergence of the New South,* 221 and Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism,* 318.
[116] "Oklahoma's Sad Plight," *Alabama Staats-Zeitung,* (Mobile, AL), November 24, 1916, 9.
[117] "Nearly a Half of the States Have Voted Dry" *The Charlotte News,* November 26, 1916, 28.

media blitz of the "drys" would prevail.

Although prohibition was gaining traction throughout the early 20th century, the war accelerated the movement and other moralistic reforms. A need to keep the soon-to-be soldiers healthy and sober (It is not recommended to undertake bayonet drills while impaired) resulted in waves of legislation putting restrictions on gambling, drinking, prostitution, and various other vices. In addition, public health measures also expanded. The state of North Carolina went so far as to create the Bureau of Venereal Disease as part of the larger State Board of Health to help combat the spread of indecent infections amongst inducted servicemen.[118] This organization was part of a double pronged assault on immorality. The federal government was interested in keeping soldiers healthy and ready for battle, and the South was interested in keep their communities in line with their ideals of chaste womanhood. Likewise, many areas that had already enacted dry laws found the efficacies of these measures tested by the presence of thirsty servicemen. Camp Greene, near the supposedly dry Charlotte, North Carolina, had the distinct honor of being in the vicinity of "one-third of all illegal liquor distilleries," seized across the country in 1917.[119] The story was similar across the entirety of the "dry" South, alcohol was easily available to those who sought it out, as were the "working girls" whom organizations like the Bureau of Venereal Disease attempted to police.

While prohibition failed, first on a local and then on a national scale, a particular set of Progressive reforms that did take and grow in strength was public health policies. During the war years, health policies were critical to keeping soldiers fit and fighting, but even

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[118] Karin L. Zipf, "In Defense of the Nation: Syphilis, North Carolina's 'Girl Problem,' and World War I" in *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXXIX, No. 3, (July 2012): 276.
[119] Kurt D. Geske, "Charlotte and Camp Greene" in *North Carolina's Experience during the First World War,* 28-29.

before the war state and local health programs had been spreading across the South. The Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease worked its way across the South from 1909-1915.[120] Supported by the philanthropic efforts of upper- and middle-class benefactors, the Rockefeller Commission worked to educate Southerners on how to prevent contracting the illness and sought to treat those who were already affected by it. Although the campaign ended in 1915, its legacy lived on in the creation of county health "dispensaries," county-based organizations that provided education and healthcare to communities. This program established the foundation for a healthcare bureaucracy, and the First World War (and the Spanish Flu Pandemic that followed) would result in the expansion of this system. North Carolina, for example, increased its spending on healthcare by over 800% between 1915-1925.[121] While there were difficulties in spreading reforms to rural populations that were largely cut off from more urban-centric reforms, and campaigns such as the fight against hookworm did not meet with victory everywhere it went, they set important wheels in motions that changed the way Southerners viewed healthcare and the government's role in it.

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While middle-class reformers worked to save souls and heal the sick, and poor and black activists fought (often literally) for their rights and labor protections, the upper echelons of Southern politics and business developed their own ideas about what progressivism should look like. The paternalism of mill owners and other wealthy Southerners had its roots in slavery times. Where a "good" slaveholder was supposed to see

[120] Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism,* 142.
[121] William P. Brand and Lauren A. Austin, "W. S. Rankin and Public Health in North Carolina" in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 234-235.

to the care and health of his slaves while also being a pillar of the community, the New South industrialists were expected to invest in their mill villages and the public good. In the industrial era, such leaders did often donate to altruistic causes. Duke University, although athletically inferior to its public colleague at Chapel Hill, was the result of the largesse of the powerful Duke family, whose money came from cotton mills and tobacco. Well into the 21st century, this example of industrial paternalism continues to provide education and health services at a world class level.

Due to the lack of democratic control in the South, a peculiar form of Progressivism developed around these paternalistic leaders. George Tindall called it "business progressivism." Many of the Progressive reforms that took root after the First World War were focused on continuing the development of Southern industry. Mill owners and other industrialists, such as the Duke family, took their income and supported causes such as health and education. In other cases, they invested in their mill villages in an effort to keep their workers healthy, happy, and away from unions. State governments also put their energies into stimulating growth in the South. Driven in part by the aristocratic nature of Southern politics, progressive policies were put in place that benefitted businesses directly and the public indirectly. North Carolina expanded its public services over the course of the war years and into the 1920s, embarking on an ambitious road paving scheme along the way.[122] The popular thrust of progressivism had struggled to take root in the South to begin with, but the rhetoric and experience of the First World War ignited a spark that brought popular causes to the forefront. When these had been sufficiently snuffed out, they were replaced by a scheme that sought to bring positive changes to the South not through unionism or

[122] Tindall, *Emergence of the New South,* 224-225.

agitation, but by economic improvements carefully overseen by the region's aristocrats.

The South's peculiarity fractured progressive reform efforts. The intersection of race, gender, and politics is always a complex one to navigate, but in the South reformers found a region that seemed at once to be coveting old modes of life while engaging in many of the deprivations of the modern world. Children could labor in cotton mills, but it would be improper for women to vote. An aristocratic and disenfranchised society, popular reform movements struggled to gain momentum, owing partially to Southern culture and to the machinations of the aristocrats who were most likely to be harmed by those reforms. The First World War, however, and its rhetoric of democracy and freedom, brought new life to popular, democratic movements in the South. Labor organizers began to find stronger footing after the war, even in the face of intense resistance. Black civil rights activists took the moment to try and forward civil rights, and while they too would meet with violent push-back, they would lay the foundations for the "Double-V" campaign of the Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement that followed. In other ways, the war accelerated movements that were already underway. The South had already been enraptured with moral crusades around drinking and vice, and the need to keep training soldiers in good health helped advance efforts to banish drink and curb licentious behavior. Furthermore, the influx of money further empowered the emerging business class that had been building its fortune in the New South. With immense resources, a rigged political system, and a paternalistic bent, these businessmen implemented their own form of progressivism that benefited them directly and the public incidentally.

The money that bought the businessmen of the South even more power than they enjoyed before the war also had another effect; it altered the Southern economy.

Mechanization brought with it increased production and fewer labor needs, not just in the factories and mills but on farmlands, too. Brought to an abrupt end by the post-war recession, the South experienced a period of economic flourishing during the war years that would alter the landscape for years to come.

Chapter III

In the Land of Processed Cotton: The Economic Impact of the First World War on the South

In 1917, North Carolina businessman L.D. Peeler sought to create a soda amid a war-induced sugar shortage. Peeler was previously a local distributor for a Kentucky-based soda company and therefore had the machinery necessary to bottle and distribute whatever new concoction he cooked up. Peeler purchased a cherry soda recipe from a St. Louis based traveling salesman, and he was in business. The cherry flavoring helped to sweeten the taste of the drink without using as much sugar and it gave the soda a distinctive red coloring. Because of that coloring, the drink was christened Cheerwine. It became a part of North Carolina's culinary tradition and has grown over the last 105 years into a regional staple with forays out of its native southland. Still headquartered in North Carolina, Cheerwine continues to help drive the Southern economy, its popular taste a direct result of the First World War.[123]

The Southern economy grew exponentially during the war years. North Carolina, with its booming textile and cigarette industries, saw triple digit increases in the value of products.[124] Virginia, with its own textile and tobacco interests plus defense industries like shipbuilding and chemical production, also saw huge increases.[125] Even Mississippi saw a

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[123] "Cheerwine," North Carolina History Project, 2016, https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/cheerwine/ and Whitney Filloon, "A Brief History of Cheerwine," Eater, March 23, 2017, https://www.eater.com/2017/3/23/14950304/cheerwine-history and "The Cheerwine Story," Cheerwine, https://cheerwine.com/about/#:~:text=Peeler%20created%20Cheerwine%20in%201917,secured%2C%20he%20needed%20a%20name. all accessed 29 May 2022. The details of this story change depending on which outlet you get the information from, but the broad strokes are the same across the board. It is also worth noting that, despite its sugar deprived origins, a modern can of Cheerwine has more sugar than a comparable can of Coca-Cola.

[124] U. S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States State Compendium: North Carolina* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), 120.

[125] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States State Compendium: Virginia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), 113.

triple-digit increase during the war years after experiencing a 1.2% decrease in the period 1909-1914.[126] In Virginia, cigar and cigarette firms produced $21,330,634 worth of product in 1914 and by 1919 that figure grew to $63,278,138. Cotton goods tripled, from $10,216,185 in 1914 to 32,534,934 in 1919.[127] In 1914, North Carolina cotton goods manufactures produced $90,743,683 worth of product, but by 1919 they produced $318,368,181 worth of product, an increase of more than 300%.[128] In 1909, North Carolina's combined tobacco manufacturers produced $35,987,000 worth of product.[129] In 1919, cigars and cigarettes alone produced $226,636,000 worth.[130] Fighting foreign wars was big business. Unfortunately, peace was not quite as profitable. The recession that came with the post-war years hurt the Southern economy greatly and many firms that had experienced growth and success during the war found themselves in financial turmoil as the excess capacity they had created to meet increased demand became a liability as demand dropped to pre-war levels. Many historians have centered their studies on this boom and bust. In "World War I and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," historian Annette Cox discusses how the recession that followed the war, and the Great Depression that followed that, sent the whole industry into a tailspin that, in her words, "lasted until another war brought back prosperity."[131] However this boom-and-bust is not the whole story of the economic changes created by the war. Although the 1920s and 1930s proved to be difficult decades, the result was that the South actually ended up with the majority of the country's textile industry. Already growing

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[126] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States State Compendium: Mississippi* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925), 106.
[127] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume IX: Manufactures 1919* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 1533.
[128] Ibid., 1112.
[129] U.S. Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Volume IX: Manufactures 1909* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), 898.
[130] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume IX,* 1104.
[131] Cox, "WWI and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," 306.

before the war and expanding greatly during it, the recession that followed drove many producers out of New England and into the South. Cox recognizes this shift but does not examine the larger meaning: boom or bust, the result of the First World War was that South won textile manufacturing from New England. Similar changes can be seen in other sectors of the Southern economy.

By the time the war broke out in Europe in 1914, the South was already 30 years into the process of transforming itself into the "New" South. The term "New South" is quite vague and is used to describe a variety of time periods and ideas. Historian James C. Cobb recalls Edwin Yoder's observation that there "have been roughly as many New Souths as 'French constitutions and theories on the decline of Rome.'"[132] However, the original New South traces its origins to Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* in the 1880s. Seeking to revitalize and rebuild the South in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction, Grady went on speaking tours across New England soliciting investors to help turn the South into an industrial powerhouse. Speaking to the Bay State Club in Boston, Grady described the condition of Southern manufacturing by way of a story about the burial of a Confederate veteran:

> "They buried him in the midst of a marble quarry: they cut through solid marble to make his grave; and yet a little tombstone they put above him was from Vermont. They buried him in the heart of a pine forest, and yet the pine coffin was imported from Cincinnati…The South didn't furnish a thing on earth for that funeral but the corpse and hole in the ground."[133]

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[132] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 7.
[133] Edna Henry Lee Turpin, *The New South and Other Addresses by Henry Woodfin Grady: With Biography, Critical Opinions, and Explanatory Notes,* (New York: Charles E. Merrill Co. 1904). 133. James Cobb refers to

For Grady, and others like him, the New South meant a land where raw materials were harvested next to the factories that would use them. No longer would the South need to send cotton thousands of miles north, only for the finished product to be shipped back to them. With Atlanta as its crown jewel, this New South was poised to ring in a new era. Although there was measurable growth throughout the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the First World War would provide the catalyst to fully send the South into the industrial age.

There were certainly textile mills and other forms of industry in the South before the Civil War, but by and large the Southern economy relied on exporting raw materials overseas and to industrial centers in the North. In wake of the Civil War and thanks to the efforts of modernizers and industrialists like Grady, the South's industrial strength began to grow. To use North Carolina as an example, the 1880 census recorded 49 cotton goods manufacturers in the state. By 1909 that number increased to 231.[134] New England, the traditional center for the American textile industry, now had serious competition from the South. Although the South was becoming competitive, for the New England firms there seemed to be little to worry about. Most Southern textile products were coarse, low-quality goods compared to the more refined products of Northern manufacturers. When North Carolina reported 231 cotton goods manufacturers in 1909, Massachusetts had 182 manufacturers, despite being one fifth the size of North Carolina by area.[135] Those 182 mills in Massachusetts also employed more people and produced a value of product $114 million higher than North Carolina's.[136] By

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this passage similarly in *Away Down South* and claims that it was "appropriated from an antebellum orator's attempt to rally Southerners against northern economic exploitation." *Away Down South,* 72.

[134] U.S. Census Bureau, *Tenth Census of the United States Volume II: Manufacturers of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880),* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 165.

[135] U.S. Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Volume IX, Manufactures 1909,* 491 and 898.

[136] Ibid., 491 and 898.

1929 though, the picture changed dramatically. North Carolina now had 351 cotton goods manufacturers, in spite of a decade of market fluctuations, producing $317 million in value of product compared to Massachusetts' now dwindling 133 manufacturers producing $233 million in product value.[137] South Carolina tells a similar story. Although South Carolina's census data records the loss of two cotton goods manufacturers between 1909 and 1919, the industry added 3,000 jobs overall and value of product rose from $65 million to $228 million, accounting for nearly 60% of the states' entire value of product.[138] By 1929 the industry went from 145 to 159 manufacturers and employed an additional 23,000 workers, from 48,000 in 1919 to 71,000 in 1929.[139] This incredible change had its roots in the First World War and its aftermath.

The war initially brought uncertainty into the textile and cotton markets of the United States. With European markets in flux, cotton prices rose and fell sharply.[140] Politicians, financers, and farmers all concocted plans to save the Southern economy from ruin, ranging from efforts to get state-supported warehouses built so farmers could store their bales until markets improved to banks offering money to those who promised to reduce their acreage, plus the usual calls to diversify crops.[141] Germany represented an important export market for cotton growers and when the British blockaded German ports and placed cotton on the contraband list, meaning it would be seized from any ship carrying it to German ports, Southern cotton growers were outraged. Once the British agreed to buy the excess cotton, thereby ensuring cotton exporters would still have a market for their goods even if Germany

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[137] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Manufactures: 1929 Volume III: Reports by States,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1933), 388 and 233.
[138] U.S. Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Volume IX,* 1140 and *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume IX,* 1383.
[139] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Manufactures: 1929 Volume III,* 488.
[140] Cox, "World War I and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," 296.
[141] Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South,* 34-36.

was blockaded, sentiments towards Britain warmed.[142] Once the United States entered the war, however, export markets became less important. Nearly 4.8 million men served in the military during the war, and every single one of them needed uniforms, socks, duffle bags, and all the other pieces of kit that keeps a military functioning.[143] Thanks to the power of Southern Democrats in Congress, cotton was one of the few agricultural commodities free from price controls, meaning that cotton producers could take full advantage of the increased demand and raise prices.[144] With federal money rolling in to both farmers and textile mills, many took their profits and attempted to expand their operations.[145] Although there was difficulty in securing labor, a result of the mass call up of men to the Army and competition from defense industries, the mills hummed away all day and night producing product. This period of unprecedented success and prosperity came to end after the guns fell silent in November of 1918.

Like an overstretched rubber band snapping back into place, the textile market returned to prewar levels. The surplus of goods that resulted from the canceling of federal contracts turned the shrinkage into a recession. The operators of the Harriet Henderson Mills in Henderson, North Carolina, were dismayed to discover that by early 1920, "Finished yarn sold for less per pound than the cotton required to produce it, and sales could no longer support the company payroll."[146] For many of the companies that bet on continued growth and borrowed money to expand, this meant disaster. However, their disaster meant

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[142] M. Ryan Floyd, "'A Diarrhea of Plans and Constipation of Action': The Influence of Alabama Cotton Farmers, Merchants, and Brokers on Anglo-American Diplomacy During the First World War, 1914-1915" in *The American South and The Great War 1914-1924,* 30-33.
[143] "America's Wars," U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf
[144] Tindall, *Emergence of the New South,* 66.
[145] Cox, "World War I and North Carolina's Cotton Mills," 303.
[146] Clark, *Like Night and Day,* 17.

opportunity for New England mill owners looking to slash costs and upgrade to new machinery. Also hit by the sudden downturn in the market, New England proprietors were looking for ways to weather the economic storm and continue being competitive in the marketplace. New England firms looked to the South and its abundance of cheap labor and lower tax rates and realized they could purchase brand new Southern mills for less than it would cost to build a new mill in New England.[147] By 1925, more than half of the country's cotton spindles were located in the South, and by the time the Great Depression reared its ugly head the New England textile industry was a fraction of what it had been before the war.[148] Massachusetts alone lost 50,000 jobs in the cotton goods industry between 1919 and 1929.[149]

The need to slash costs due to the recession caused by the end of the First World War made the business-friendly South, home to struggling firms with shiny new factories and machinery, more appealing for New England firms than trying to remodel or rebuild in the more-labor friendly New England. The lucrative federal contracts of the war gave the mills capital to build and expand. Some firms failed in the face of the post-war turndown, and even those that did not fail on their own were at risk of buyouts. When the post-war recession hit, New England firms looking to reduce their own costs and modernize came South. Lockwood, Green, and Company of Massachusetts conducted several studies throughout the 1920s comparing the cost of running a mill in the South versus their native state. The South proved cheaper by double-digit margins every single time, and in 1923 they purchased Pelzer

[147] Hall et al., *Like a Family,* 197.
[148] Ibid., 80.
[149] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume IX,* 589 and *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Manufactures: 1929 Volume III,* 233.

Mills in South Carolina.[150] The result was that in spite of a decade of turbulence and uncertainty the South's textile industry grew dramatically at the expense of New England, solidifying the South as the heart of America's textile industry for most of the next century.

Textiles were not the only traditionally "Southern" industry to grow due to the war. Tobacco was a mainstay of Native American life before they introduced it to European colonists in the 16th century and it remains a popular vice well into the 21st century. Until the late 19th century, tobacco was most commonly enjoyed by way of pipe or cigar smoking or by chewing it. By the late 1800s, however, a new way to consume tobacco began to appear on markets. The cigarette presented a cheaper alternative to cigars and pipes and became the most common form of tobacco usage. The cigarette market proved powerful, and by the mid-20th century, stars like Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball called for Philip Morris cigarettes; R.J. Reynolds proudly boasted that more doctors smoked Camel cigarettes than any other brand; and the Marlboro Man presented the image of the classic American cowboy enjoying a cancer stick after a long day on the prairie.[151] Beyond direct print and television advertisements, cigarettes also found their way into sports sponsorships. Marlboro decals were blazoned onto the side of championship winning Formula One cars and Winston cigarettes helped turn NASCAR from a regional curiosity into a national pastime.[152] While

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[150] Hall, et al. *Like a Family,* 197 and Tindall, *Emergence of the New South,* 72.

[151] Windows OS "'I Love Lucy' Philip Morris Advertisements/Sponsor Placement (1952)" YouTube video, 9:50, April 14, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gP_bLYwXBpI and "The 'More Doctors Smoke Camels' Campaign," Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society, https://csts.ua.edu/ama/more-doctors-smoke-camels/ and Phil McCausland, "The Original 'Marlboro Man' has Died at 90. Bob Norris Himself Never Smoked," NBC News, November 9, 2019, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/obituaries/original-marlboro-man-has-died-90-bob-norris-himself-never-n1079316

[152] "About the Museum," The Winston Cup Museum, accessed June 27, 2022, https://winstoncupmuseum.com/about-the-winston-cup-museum/#:~:text=Reynolds%20Tobacco%20Company's%20Winston%20Brand,%E2%80%9Cmodern%20era%E2%80%9D%20of%20NASCAR. and "Up In Smoke: End of the Marlboro Money that lit up F1," Motor Sport, February 3, 2022, both accessed June 27, 2022, https://www.motorsportmagazine.com/articles/single-seaters/f1/up-in-smoke-end-of-the-marlboro-money-that-lit-up-f1

the cigarette has seemingly been inescapable over the last century, as the First World War loomed stringent anti-smoking campaigns and legislative efforts threatened the future of the product.

Before the First World War, several states outright banned cigarettes while others prohibited the sale of cigarettes to minors. Reformers, especially those of the middle and upper classes, considered cigarette smoking dirty, low-class, and bad for public health. As a result, there was considerable overlap between temperance supporters and antismoking advocates.[153] Popular support did not mean popular adoption. The sale of alcohol continued to grow in the late 19th and early 20th century and cigarettes likewise continued to gain in popularity. Data from the Centers for Disease control show a steady, if unimpressive, growth of cigarette production and consumption throughout the first decade and a half of the 20th century.[154] Cigarettes did have advantages over other forms of consuming tobacco. They were smaller, cheaper, and due to innovations in the blending and curing of tobacco, they were often milder (and more addictive) than other forms of tobacco consumption.[155] They were also the beneficiaries of the then-new American art of advertising. Bright, colorful advertisements appeared in magazines, newspapers, and on buildings while companies wrapped their products in eye catching packages and included trading cards to incentivize purchase.[156] During the war, however, the advertising would be taken to an entirely new level. Less about pleasure and more about patriotism, the cigarette advertising during the First World War would help transform the socially awkward smoke.

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[153] Allan M. Brant *Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall, and Deadly Persistence of the Product that Defined America,* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 2008) 45-48.
[154] "Achievements in Public Health, 1900-1999: Tobacco Use—United States, 1900-1999," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report,* Centers for Disease Control, May 2, 2001, accessed 29 May 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4843a2.htm
[155] Brandt, *Cigarette Century,* 24-25.
[156] Ibid., 31-32.

Even before the United States formally entered the war in 1917, cigarette companies were keen to associate themselves with the military. A two-page Bull Durham Tobacco advertisement from a 1916 edition of *Collier's Weekly* featured vignettes of soldiers training while the ad-copy itself extolled its value, proudly boasting that Bull Durham tobacco was "…smoked by nearly every soldier-smoker in the USA."[157] Once the United States officially entered the war in 1917, the patriotic messaging of cigarette companies only increased. A Bull Durham tobacco advertisement from that year declared it "The Great American Smoke" over a vibrant color illustration of a navy officer sharing a smoke with army soldiers.[158] This link between cigarettes and the military existed outside of advertisements. General John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force in France, asked that cigarettes be distributed as part of soldiers' rations and aid organizations such as the Red Cross handed them out, both overseas and at training encampments stateside.[159]

Advertisements portrayed cigarette smoking as patriotic and manly, and an entire generation of young men, who may have either not smoked or engaged in pipe or cigar smoking instead, were introduced to tobacco through cigarettes. One sailor, arguing against a proposed ban on cigarettes for sailors under 21, unwittingly hinted at the cigarette's deadly addictive properties when he declared, "'when you once get to liking the little sticks there's nothing that can take their place.'"[160] Nothing could take the place of cigarettes, but cigarettes could take the place of other forms of tobacco consumption. Department of

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[157] "We Want You…to Smoke: Tobacco Advertising in WWI," The Makin's of a Nation: Tobacco and World War I, https://csts.ua.edu/wwi/tobacco-advertising-wwi/
[158] Ibid.,
[159] David M. Burns, Lora Lee, Larry Z. Shen, Elizabeth Gilpin, H. Dennis Tolley, Jerry Vaughn, and Thomas G. Shanks, "Cigarette Smoking Behavior in the United States" in *Changes in Cigarette-Related Disease Risks and the Implications for Prevention and Control Monography No. 8,* eds. National Cancer Institute (Bethesda, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997), 17.
[160] Brant, *Cigarette Century,* 50-51.

Agriculture data shows a dramatic rise in cigarette production and consumption starting in the later-half of the 1910s and continuing into the middle half of the 20th century, with cigarette production topping 100 billion by the mid-1920s.[161] America had a new obsession, and the South would be the beneficiaries of it.

Even the decennial census reflected these changes, not simply in numbers but in language as well. In the state-by-state manufacturers report for 1880, the census made a clear distinction between "chewing, smoking, and snuff" tobacco and "cigars and cigarettes."[162] By 1929, it only counted "cigars and cigarettes" as a category.[163] In 1900, Virginia and North Carolina were listed amongst the five largest producers of chewing, smoking, and snuff tobacco.[164] In that year, North Carolina boasted 80 manufacturers of chewing, smoking, and snuff tobacco, as opposed to only 16 manufacturers of cigars and cigarettes.[165] The total capital of the chewing, smoking, and snuff tobacco manufacturers was valued at $6,874,908 and it employed 6,408 wage earners.[166] Virginia had more cigarette and cigar manufacturers than chewing, smoking, and snuff (89 to 69), but the total capital and the number of wage earners disproportionately leans towards chewing, smoking, and snuff. Those 69 manufacturers of chewing, smoking, and snuff tobacco had a total capital valued at $5,728,857 as opposed to cigar and cigarettes with $780,261, and they employed 6,061 wage earners versus 2,505.[167] Such detailed statistics are not available for 1909 as all tobacco

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[161] Burns et al. "Cigarette Smoking Behavior in the United States," 14.
[162] U.S. Census Bureau, *Compendium of the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880) Part II,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 161.
[163] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Manufactures: 1929 Volume III,* 388.
[164] U. S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States Volume IX: Manufactures Part III: Special Reports on Selected Industries,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 662.
[165] U. S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States Volume VIII: Manufactures Part II: States and Territories,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1902), 668.
[166] Ibid., 668.
[167] U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States Volume VIII: Manufactures: Part II, States and Territories,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), 906.

manufacturers were counted together that year (which was quite inconsiderate on their part) but the split is renewed for 1919. By that year, though, the script completely flipped in Virginia. There was an absolute shrinkage for both types of manufacturers, but the drop off was steeper for chewing and smoking tobacco. That industry dropped to 14 manufacturers employing 2,078 wage earners producing a value of product of $15 million.[168] Cigar and cigarettes, on the other hand, dropped to 49 total manufacturers employing 7,335 wage earners and producing a value of product of $63 million, nearly 10% of the state's total value of product.[169] In North Carolina there were 18 cigar and cigarette manufacturers reported, employing 11,683 wage earners and producing $119 million in value of product, accounting for 28.7% of the states' total.[170] Cigar and cigarette manufacturers lagged behind only cotton goods manufacturers for number of wage earners and value of products produced.[171]

The American Tobacco Company that James Duke created was one of the leviathans of the early 20th century. Headquartered in the center of all things Duke, Durham, North Carolina, the American Tobacco Company held a virtual monopoly on the tobacco market. Like another early 20th century titan, Standard Oil, American Tobacco was forcibly dissolved by the federal government in 1911.[172] The dissolution resulted in four new firms, all centered in North Carolina: American Tobacco Company (Durham), Liggett and Myers (also in Durham), RJ Reynolds (Winston-Salem), and P. Lorillard (Greensboro). Add in Richmond, Virginia-based Philip Morris and the stage was set for cigarette manufacturing to become a major facet of the Southern economy for the next century. Even today as tobacco usage in

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[168] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume IX,* 1524
[169] Ibid., 1524.
[170] Ibid., 1104.
[171] Ibid., 1104.
[172] Brandt, *Cigarette Century,* 39.

general decreases, the Southern companies have a tight grip on the market. Marlboro, a brand of Philip Morris, now Philip Morris USA, a subsidiary of Altria International, accounted for a whopping 40% of the American cigarette market in 2017.[173] RJ Reynolds (now a subsidiary of British American Tobacco) was also well-represented within the top 8 brands, with Newport, Camels, and Winston all making an appearance.[174] Although anti-smoking measures have contracted the market over the last few decades, the industry is still raking in billions of dollars of revenue. Things are even looking up; the Federal Trade Commission reported that, for the first time in 20 years, cigarette sales rose in 2020 compared to 2019.[175] The "Little White Slaver," as one anti-smoking advocate described it, refuses to go away, even if its manufacturing footprint has shrunk significantly.[176]

Although these changes would pay off over the long term (and then turn around and bite these communities in the even longer term, as textile mills closed, and cigarettes shortened thousands of lives) towns and cities wanted more immediate economic growth. New South boosters were well aware of the benefits of having the Army build training camps in their communities. Towns such as Fayetteville, North Carolina, sent dispatches, ran editorials, and even sent men to Washington, D.C., to lobby to get some kind of encampment or defense factory for their area.[177] The *Fayetteville Observer,* speculating at the possibility of getting a training camp, estimated that it would take the small city and give it a payroll,

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[173] "Tobacco Brand Preferences" Centers for Disease Control, May 14, 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/brand_preference/index.htm
[174] Ibid.,
[175] "FTC Report Find Annual Cigarette Sales Increased for the First Time in 20 Years" Federal Trade Commission, October 26, 2021, https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2021/10/ftc-report-finds-annual-cigarette-sales-increased-first-time-20-years
[176] Brandt, *Cigarette Century,* 47.
[177] Jonathan F. Phillips "'Now it is All Good and Better': Fayetteville and the Origins of Fort Bragg" in *North Carolina's Experience During the First World War,* 10-11.

"'equal to that of a city of about 230,000 residents.'"[178] The benefits of having a training camp were manifold. Even if local firms did not get the contracts to actually construct the camps, the presence of out-of-town contractors, and the pay they brought with them, ensured that the local economy benefited directly from the building of the camps from the outset.[179] Then came the soldiers, and with capacity in the thousands these camps stood to significantly increase the population of any area they occupied. Those thousands of men would, in turn, need services to attend to their needs and keep them occupied when they were not training. Thus, local hospitality services suddenly found themselves with new customers who had few better ways to pass the day than spending their money in local stores, bars, and restaurants. Although these benefits were often temporary, as many of the camps built for the First World War were torn down thereafter, it established an important precedent: the South was open for military business. When the Second World War came around more training camps and permanent bases were built, sometimes on the sites of First World War encampments. The Southern economy could now boast military support services as part of its resume, and as manufacturing jobs left the United States for overseas in the late 20th century, those military posts would prove more important than ever.

Approximately ten of the Army and National Guard bases active in the South today date to the First World War.[180] In many cases, the bases were decommissioned after the end of the First World War but were brought online for the Second. Several of these installations hold important roles for the Army today. Fort Lee, outside of Petersburg, Virginia, is home to

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[178] Ibid., 11.
[179] Catherine A Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 30-31.
[180] These are: Fort Benning, GA, Fort Knox, KY, Camp Beauregard, LA, Fort Belvoir, Fort Eustis, and Fort Lee (Marine Corps Base Quantico was also built at this time) VA, Camp Bullis, TX, Fort Jackson, SC, Fort Bragg, NC, and Camp Shelby, MS. Camp Stanley, TX was named such during this period but had already been established as Camp Funston.

the Quartermaster Corps. Fort Benning, Georgia is home to the Army's infantry school, and Fort Bragg, in Fayetteville, North Carolina is home to the Army's Special Operations Command and the famed 82nd Airborne Division, a unit that itself has its roots in the First World War as an infantry division.[181] Not only are these bases important to the upkeep of the United States Army, they are also major drivers of the local economies of their respective cities.

When the guns fell silent in November of 1918, Fort Bragg had only been under construction for a couple of months. Fayetteville, North Carolina, had fought hard to get a training camp in their community, and the military rewarded their efforts. Although other camps in North Carolina were destined to be deactivated and dismantled, Fort Bragg was set to become a permanent installation for the training of artillery crews.[182] Fort Bragg would not open its gates until February of 1919, its existence a direct result of the increased role artillery played in modern warfare. The town of Fayetteville was a healthy, if small, mercantile town and textile hub on the Cape Fear River. The city saw little growth between 1890 and 1900, but by 1920 the population had grown from about 4,000 to a little over 8,000.[183] By 1930, after Fort Bragg had been operational for a little more than a decade, Fayetteville recorded 13,000 residents.[184]

Fort Bragg helped to support the local economy through the Great Depression. Although perhaps not as successful in keeping Fayetteville economically stable as other installations did for their communities, the steady pay servicemembers received and the need

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[181] "General Information," 82nd Airborne Division War Memorial and Museum, May 28, 2022, https://www.82ndairbornedivisionmuseum.com/general-information/
[182] Phillips, "Fayetteville and Origins of Fort Bragg," 16.
[183] U. S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Volume I: Population: 1920,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 540.
[184] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States Volume I: Population: Number and Distribution of Inhabitants,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), 800.

for civilian workers on base helped to support a local economy that largely relied on the struggling textile industry.[185] The Second World War, predictably, represented a major departure from the lean years of the Depression. Even before the United States formally entered the war, millions of dollars in improvements were made to the post and thousands of soldiers were posted to the base as the nation prepared for the possibility of war in 1940.[186] As the war raged on, Fort Bragg reached a peak population of 159,000 soldiers, nine-times Fayetteville's size in 1940.[187] Although the wartime numbers could not be sustained in peacetime, by 1950 Fayetteville's population had nearly doubled to 34,000 residents.[188]

The Vietnam-era was more turbulent, but ultimately proved economically stimulating. Many of the first regiments to set foot in country were deployed from Fort Bragg, and the base once again became a hub of activity. Hay Street in Fayetteville garnered a reputation for being a thriving, if rough and tumble, collection of bars and other sites of leisure that one longtime Fayetteville resident compared to Bourbon Street in New Orleans.[189] Fort Bragg even had a role to play in the larger anti-war movement. *Bragg Briefs,* a soldier-run anti-war newspaper, was written and distributed at the base.[190] Half a century after Fayetteville fought and lobbied the military to build something of value in their community, the base was a major facet of the city and basically inseparable from the city's identity.

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[185] Lutz, *Homefront*, 39-40.
[186] Ibid., 49-50.
[187] "Boom Town: Fort Bragg During WWII" U.S. Army Airborne and Special Operations Museum, accessed June 26, 2022, https://www.asomf.org/boom-town-fort-bragg-during-wwii/#:~:text=When%20World%20War%20II%20erupted,population%20peaked%20at%20159%2C000%20troops. And U.S. Census Bureau, *Sixteenth Census of the United States Volume I: Population: Number of Inhabitants,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), 782.
[188] U.S. Census Bureau, *Seventeenth Census of the United States Volume I: Number of Inhabitants,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 33-19.
[189] Lutz, *Homefront,* 134.
[190] Ibid., 141.

The story was similar throughout the rest of the 20th and into the 21st centuries. American involvement in conflicts in the Middle East have kept the base active and kept soldiers coming through the area on their way to and from conflict zones. As tensions rose in Europe ahead of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Fort Bragg soldiers were deployed to Europe.[191] As a result, the installation continues to be a boon to the Fayetteville area economy. A 2017 report estimated that every 100 active-duty military personnel supported at least 60 civilian jobs outside of the base.[192] With an active-duty population of 52,280 soldiers, that means that Fort Bragg supports over 31,000 civilian jobs in the Fayetteville area. Including the 62,962 family members of those soldiers, that's an additional 37,000 jobs.[193] Statistics from the North Carolina Employment Commission indicate that the Department of Defense (and associated services) are among the largest employers in the Fayetteville area.[194] Fort Bragg has been a driver of the Fayetteville economy for over a century and it continues to provide economic stimulus to region even as the traditional manufacturing jobs dwindle.[195]

Fort Benning, Georgia, also traces its history to the First World War. Originally built as Camp Benning (there's a pattern here), Fort Benning became home to the Army's infantry school. Located near the city of Columbus, Georgia, Fort Benning averages about 32,000

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[191] Rachel Riley, "5 Things we Know About Fort Bragg Soldiers Deploying to Europe," *Fayetteville Observer*, February 16, 2022, https://www.fayobserver.com/story/news/2022/02/16/fort-bragg-troops-deploying-europe-what-we-know/6790988001/ .

[192] Pamela Jackson et al., *Impact Greater Fayetteville: Regional Impact Analysis for Reduction of Personnel at Fort Bragg and Recommendations for Economic Diversification in Cumberland, Hoke, and Harnett Counties* Fayetteville State University and Creative Economic Development Consulting, LLC, May 2017 https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/7761/636374616167130000

[193] "Fort Bragg: In Depth Overview," Military Installations, accessed May 28, 2022, https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/in-depth-overview/fort-bragg

[194] "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Largest Employers," Quarter 4 2021, North Carolina Department of Commerce, accessed May 28, 2022.

[195] Gregory Phillips, "Cumberland County's Textile Mills Have Faded Away," *Fayetteville Observer*, January 30, 2009, archived on TMCnet.com, https://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2009/01/30/3951898.htm

soldiers, depending on how many trainees are present. The Columbus Chamber of Commerce estimates that $4.75 billion is brought into the local economy every year by the base.[196] Columbus itself had textile manufacturing well before the First World War. Driven by the Chattahoochee River, textile industry grew and prospered in the city. The largest and most prominent of these, the Eagle and Phenix Mill, has its roots in the antebellum period. Various textile manufacturers operated on the site throughout the 20th century, but ultimately the mill closed in the early 2000s; it has since been redeveloped into shops and condominiums.[197]

Camp Benning continued to operate after the end of the First World War, unlike many other installations that were dismantled. Even though the size of the Army dropped dramatically, the base was still active with soldiers throughout the interwar years. Columbus weathered the Great Depression better than many other parts of Georgia, in no small part due to Fort Benning. In *Red Clay, White Water, and Blues: A History of Columbus Georgia* (2019), Virginia E. Causey reports, "'Thanks to Fort Benning' the city manager announced, Columbus had fewer unemployed and got less direct relief than any other city in Georgia."[198] New Deal "alphabet agencies" worked at, on, and around Fort Benning and the constant presence of soldiers and other Army personnel ensured there were people with a steady income around to help keep the local economy functioning by shopping and participating in leisure activities in the city.[199] The Great Depression gave way to the Second World War, and Fort Benning once again went on war footing. Being home to Army's infantry training

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[196] "Amazing Military" Amazing Columbus, Georgia, accessed 28 May 2022, https://amazingcolumbusga.com/live/military/
[197] "The History of Eagle and Phenix," Eagle and Phenix: Historic Riverfront Living, accessed May 29, 2022 https://www.eagleandphenix.com/about#:~:text=During%20this%20period%20of%20expansion,services%20it%20provided%20its%20workers.
[198] Virginia E. Causey, *Red Clay, White Water, and Blues: A History of Columbus, Georgia,* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), "Columbus in the 1930s and 1940s" [E-book with no page numbers].
[199] Ibid., "Columbus in the 1930s and 1940s."

school, Fort Benning, and consequently Columbus, was soon flooded with new soldiers. By the middle years of the war, the small Georgia city boasted a new airport with direct flights to and from New York and Houston.[200] Thousands moved into the region either with the Army or in pursuit of work opportunities in defense industries. Entire neighborhoods sprang up as quickly as materials could be acquired to build them (which was fairly slow, given the demands of the Second World War.)[201] Like other parts of the country, Columbus enjoyed economic growth throughout the post-war years. Local industry boomed, and the needs of the Cold War meant that Fort Benning remained active, if not as busy as it was during the Second World War.

The pattern continued through the Vietnam War. Much like Fort Bragg, Benning played a critical role in the training and deployment of troops overseas and as a result the base was active throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, continuing to expand and bring thousands of soldiers into the region and support jobs in the local economy even as the post-Second World War boom finally came to an end. Even after hostilities in Vietnam ceased and the wartime buildup wound down, Benning continued to propel the local economy. Although it could not sustain the entire economy by itself, it provided a crucial buoy for the region during the depths of "stagflation." In fact, in the late 1970s the city even expressed concern at how closely intertwined Columbus' economy was with that of the base.[202]

Whereas Columbus's industry has shrunk like many other textile towns, Fort Benning has continued to grow. American conflicts overseas throughout the later part of the 20th century and beginning decades of the 21st have meant that the need to train infantrymen has

[200] Ibid., "Columbus in the 1930s and 1940s."
[201] Ibid., "Columbus in the 1930s and 1940s."
[202] Ibid., "Columbus in the 1930s and 1940s."

remained high. Benning benefited from the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure initiative, and even as late as 2019 local officials were pointing to the expansion of Fort Benning as an offsetting force against recent layoffs and closures at employers in the area.[203] The Department of Defense was reported as the third largest employer in the Columbus area in the 4th quarter of 2021.[204] Just like Forts Lee and Bragg, Fort Benning continues to support the civilian work force even as other industries leave.

The area around Fort Lee, Virginia, is rich with American military tradition dating back to the colonial period. Two of the cities in that region, Petersburg and Hopewell, have longstanding traditions as industrial centers. Petersburg was one of the many cities in the South to benefit from the growing cigarette market in the early 20th century. British American Tobacco established a cigarette factory there in 1910. BAT left in 1930, but Brown and Williamson Tobacco took over the plant in 1932.[205] Petersburg had long been a tobacco town, but the growing popularity of highly addictive cigarettes brought more jobs in production. In 1985, however, Brown and Williamson closed shop. The company slowly whittled away its employees from a high of 3,200 down to zero.[206] The closing of the cigarette plant, and the general flight of industry out of the country, left Petersburg in much the same condition it was in 1865; a burned-out ruin patrolled by armed men. Petersburg is not alone in its economic troubles. The smaller city of Hopewell has suffered its own economic woes. Although sections of Hopewell date back to the 17th century, by and large

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[203] Tony Adams, "2018 Layoffs in Georgia Include Big Names" *Columbus Ledger-Inquirer*, January 19, 2019, 3A.
[204] "columbus21Q4," Georgia Department of Labor, 2021.
[205] Anne Burnett, Ray Owens, and Santiago Pinto, "The Rise and Decline of Petersburg, Va.," in *Econ Focus,* Fourth Quarter 2017, 29.
[206] "B&W Disclose Plan to Phase out Plant," *Newport News Daily Press*, December 14, 1983, 28, and Ibid., 29

the city was constructed in support of a DuPont chemical facility built there in 1914.[207] In many ways it is a city that was built by the war, as DuPont began making dynamite and switched to guncotton, a key component in gunpowder and explosives, during the war resulting in a population explosion (though thankfully not a guncotton explosion) for the city. Even after DuPont left shortly after the war ended, chemical manufacturing remained an important part of the city's economy throughout the 20th century.[208] As plants closed, however, the situation became bleak. So bleak, in fact, that the hit zombie apocalypse television show *The Walking Dead* saw fit to film within the city.[209] Thankfully for both Hopewell and Petersburg, another legacy of the First World War continues to drive employment in their area.

Camp Lee was one of the 32 military training camps constructed for the First World War. At maximum capacity, it held 60,000 soldiers making it one of the largest "cities" in Virginia and the second largest training camp built for the war.[210] Unlike Camp Benning and Fort Bragg, Camp Lee was dismantled after hostilities ceased. As part of the same build-up that saw Fort Bragg dramatically increase in size and population, the Army re-activated Camp Lee in 1940 and moved the Quartermaster's School there from Philadelphia.[211] The needs of the Army for trained quartermasters meant that Fort Lee's population exploded during the Second World War, and it again became one of the largest "cities" in Virginia as

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[207] "City History," City of Hopewell, Virginia, accessed May 28, 2022, https://hopewellva.gov/city-history/#:~:text=Hopewell%20was%20developed%20by%20the,since%20located%20in%20the%20city.
[208] Ibid., and Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South,* 56-57. Tindall describes the city as "turbulent," as would many from that region.
[209] "New 'Walking Dead' Show Returns to Hopewell for More Filming" WTVR, September 28, 2019 https://www.wtvr.com/2019/09/28/amc-monument-returning-to-film-in-hopewell/
[210] Finlayson, "The Three Lives of Fort Lee, Virginia."
[211] "History," U.S. Army Garrison Fort Lee, accessed June 26, 2022, https://home.army.mil/lee/index.php/about/history

more than 300,000 soldiers passed through camp on their way overseas.[212] After the Second World War ended, there were discussions about closing the base, but the needs of the Cold War made Camp Lee necessary, and shortly before the Korean War broke out in 1950, Camp Lee became the permanent Fort Lee.[213]

Turning the base from a temporary training camp for the Second World War into a permanent installation occupied most of the next decade, and between Korea and Vietnam the base kept a flow of soldiers coming through the area while also infusing the local economy with the revenue from the steady work of improving the base. During Vietnam, for example, Fort Lee was so overwhelmed with troops that, "For a time the [Quartermasters'] school maintained three shifts, and round the clock training."[214] While the end of Vietnam represented a general decrease in the size of the Army, Fort Lee continued to hum along. Since the end of that conflict, Fort Lee has benefited from the increasingly complex nature of war, and the Quartermasters' School's need to expand to better meet the modern challenges of the battlefield.

Prince George County, the county which surrounds Petersburg and Hopewell and is home to Fort Lee, estimated that the $517 million worth of spending supported 6,042 jobs in the area in a 2020 study.[215] The Virginia Employment Commission reported that the Department of Defense and related fields accounted for three of Prince George County's top ten largest employers, and that the Department of the Defense was the second largest employer in the VEC-designated Crater Planning District Commission region, which

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[212] Ibid.,
[213] Ibid.,
[214] Ibid.,
[215] CHUMRA Economics and Analytics, *Economic Impact Analysis of Fort Lee, Virginia,* August 14, 2020, https://craterpdc.org/DocumentLibrary/Economic_Development/Fort_Lee_Economic_Impact_Analysis-08142020.pdf

stretches from Chesterfield County (south of Richmond) to the City of Emporia (on the Virginia/North Carolina state line).[216] Where industry has shrunk in Petersburg and Hopewell, Fort Lee has grown. With the Base Realignment and Closure program of 2005, $1.4 billion was invested into the installation to accommodate the troops coming in from other bases.[217] Although the traditional tobacco manufacturing jobs in Petersburg and the chemical industry jobs in Hopewell have left for (temporarily) greener pastures, Fort Lee has proven itself to be an evergreen economic driver that benefits even when the Army downsizes.

The South's industrial economy slowly withered across the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Industries such as textile and cigarette manufacturing that experienced incredible growth as a result of the First World War slipped from Southern grasp and went overseas as manufacturers chased lower overhead and better market conditions, the same market forces that drove the textile industry to the South in the first place. Although those industries are largely gone, the military economy the South carved out for itself continues to hum along. Even after all the cotton mills have been turned into coffee shops and ridiculously overpriced apartments with a "rustic" aesthetic, the bases built to accommodate America's entry into the Great War continue to bring people, jobs, and income to Southern communities.

The First World War established the basis for the Southern economy for the next

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[216] Virginia Employment Commission, *Virginia Community Profile: Prince George County,* https://cms1files.revize.com/princegeorgeva/document_center/PG%20County%20Community%20Profile.pdf 21, and *Virginia Community Profile: Crater PDC,* https://virginiaworks.com/_docs/Local-Area-Profiles/5109000319.pdf 21, both last updated April 20, 2022. In Virginia even economic development zones must be tied to the Civil War.

[217] Jeremy Slayton, "Fort Lee's BRAC Expansion Nearly Done," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 5, 2022, https://richmond.com/archive/fort-lees-brac-expansion-nearly-done/article_6aeab7f6-0e5b-52f0-a25a-05d1ae0577b8.html.

century. Textiles, which were already in a period of growth due to the efforts of New South entrepreneurs, received lucrative government contracts that enabled them to expand their operations and begin mechanizing. Even when the bottom dropped out in the early 1920s, conditions were so much more favorable in the South that New England operators made their way South. Textile production remained a staple of the Southern economy until the industry moved overseas at the end of the 20th century. Tobacco and tobacco products were already a cash crop and major industry in the South, but the cigarette revolution that took place during and after the war turned the industry into a cancer-causing giant that would define the South's economy, culture, and health for the next century. As cigarette usage declined and its manufacturing went overseas, much as it had with textiles, the military economy left behind by the building of bases in the First World War (and the building of further bases in the Second) provided a consistent buoy for various Southern economies that could, and can, count on direct and indirect spending the keep thousands of civilians employed.

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Vita

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