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Change Over Time: Mississippi's Civil War Historiography

by Timothy B. Smith

There are few larger names in Civil War history than Vicksburg. Often conjoined with Gettysburg because of timing and a competitor for “most important” status among serious Civil War historians and buffs, the Mississippi town’s significance to the war is unquestioned. There, a Confederate army ceased to exist. The Mississippi River flowed again “unvexed to the sea,” as Abraham Lincoln described it. And Ulysses S. Grant secured his place among legendary American generals, and in all of history as well.¹

That Vicksburg sat in Mississippi created for that state an obvious importance, but Vicksburg is certainly not the state’s only important locale from the Civil War. Many other battles took place within Mississippi’s borders, serious affairs such as a siege and then a battle at Corinth as well as the precursors to the fighting at Vicksburg itself, including Port Gibson and Champion Hill. Smaller affairs such as Iuka, Tupelo, and Raymond were also significant. The Meridian Campaign, while less bloody and more strategic in nature, was a practice field for William T. Sherman’s later total war “March to the Sea.” Other actions in the Magnolia State have become particularly famous in popular history, such as Brices Cross Roads because of Nathan Bedford Forrest’s fame and Grierson’s Raid because of the 1959 John Wayne movie, *The Horse Soldiers*.²

Mississippi’s Civil War experience was not just on the battlefield, however. The state was second to secede, paving the way for others to follow South Carolina. That the Mississippi River bordered the state for

¹ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2005), 533; Edwin C. Bearss and J. Parker Hills, *Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg, The Campaigns That Changed the Civil War* (Washington DC: National Geographic, 2010).

² Michael B. Ballard, *The Civil War in Mississippi: Major Campaigns and Battles* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011).

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hundreds of miles brought economic importance, and the state's hundreds of thousands of slaves, who actually outnumbered the state's Whites in the 1860 census, had numerous social implications. Yet perhaps the largest contribution Mississippi made to the Civil War off the battlefield was that it sent the Confederacy its president, Jefferson Davis.³

Mississippi's role in the Civil War was extremely important because of geography, military events, personnel, and home front issues. While other states such as Virginia, Tennessee, or Missouri may have seen more fighting because of their locations on the border between the North and South, Mississippi played a vital role in the events from 1861 to 1865. It is consequently no wonder that a large literature has developed regarding the state's role in the Civil War. Yet, the way historians and writers have studied that period has changed dramatically over time.

Veteran Accounts

As would be expected of a state so much in the middle of Civil War events, writing on, about, and in relation to Mississippi's role in the war has been voluminous, and it began even during the war itself. The participants, whether Mississippians or not, wrote millions of words about the state and its role in the war, including many non-published primary sources that historians regularly use to this day. Many of these are fortunately preserved in archival repositories across the nation but most specifically in the state's major archives, including the special collections departments at the three largest universities in Hattiesburg, Oxford, and Starkville. The smaller colleges and universities across the state also contain a wealth of material, as do many local libraries and historical societies. Obviously, the most important repository of such material is in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson.⁴

Historians studying the Civil War in Mississippi can find ample sources about the military action. Soldiers were frequent correspondents as well as diary and journal keepers throughout the conflict. A dizzying array of manuscripts from both soldiers who were from Mississippi and fighting elsewhere as well as Mississippians

³ Timothy B. Smith, *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010); William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour, A Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

⁴ For the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, visit their website: <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/>.

fighting within the state have survived, although the archives contain only a fraction of what was actually produced during the war. Likewise, soldiers from other states fighting in Mississippi left a similar treasure trove of information about actions within the state.⁵

The military accounts, as important as they are, represent only one part of the valuable information about the conflict. In order to understand more than the military events alone, it is necessary to understand the context. Civilian letters and diaries provide that unblemished view from the time, offering historians of social, economic, or political topics a rich glimpse into the affairs of the state and its people during these trying years. At the same time, surviving newspapers also provide a vital look into the thinking of the time as seen through the prism of the editors. While less useful on military subjects, newspapers do show the mindsets in Mississippi in the 1860s.⁶

While most existing contemporary literary production remains in manuscript form, a few of these sources have been published and offer easier access to an amazing amount of material. Throughout the years, publishers and journals have printed books or articles containing soldiers' and civilians' contemporary letters and diaries. However, the most important outlet for Civil War military related documents is the late nineteenth century publication of the war's reports, records, and correspondence in 128 volumes titled *War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* and the 31 volume *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. Collected, organized, and published by the United States government, these series contain a staggering amount of records quickly available to researchers, although as would be expected, the coverage of Union reports and correspondence is more thorough than that of the Confederate, mainly because of destruction and the fact that toward the end of the war Confederates cared less about keeping records than sustaining their fledgling nation. Importantly, too, not all documents were located and published, and Broadfoot Publishing Company has more recently printed a one hundred volume *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. All these sets combined

⁵ For manuscripts at MDAH, see <http://opac2.mdah.state.ms.us/phpmanus/search.php?referer=http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us>.

⁶ For newspapers at MDAH, see <http://opac2.mdah.state.ms.us/msnews1.php?referer=http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us>.

offer an important view of the war in general, including Mississippi's role.⁷

After the war, participants continued to write about their exploits and further produced numerous volumes and articles filled with anecdotes and stories of events in Mississippi. Foremost among these post-war memoirs and reminiscences were those of the major luminaries such as *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* published in 1885 or Jefferson Davis's 1881 explanation of defeat, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*. Regimental histories by the score began to appear even during the war but became a flood in the decades afterward, as did articles and essays that the public consumed in journals and publications such as *Century Magazine* (later *Battle and Leaders*), *National Tribune*, *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, *Southern Historical Society Papers*, *Southern Bivouac*, and *Confederate Veteran*. Many of these publications were tied to veterans' organizations, whether national in scope or simply publication of local community-based groups. Auxiliary organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy also put out their own publications.⁸

Mississippians themselves also produced plenty of these post-war memoirs and published them in varying levels. Many were never published, but took their place as primary, if somewhat less contemporary, sources for study now housed in archives. Among the more famous post-war memoirs that were published are books such as Jefferson Davis's tomes as well as autobiographies by Mississippi Confederate generals Samuel G. French and Reuben Davis. A few civilian accounts also emerged, such as John H. Aughey's *The Iron Furnace: Or, Slavery and Secession*, Thomas W. Caskey's *Caskey's Last Book: Containing an Autobiography Sketch of His Ministerial*

⁷ *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901); *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 31 vols. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922); *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 100 vols. (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994).

⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1892); Jefferson Davis, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881); Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Being For the Most Part Contributions By Union and Confederate Officers: Based upon "The Century" War Series*, 4 vols. (New York, 1884-1887). For a modern, edited version of Grant's memoirs, see John F. Marszalek, David F. Nolen, and Louie P. Gallo, eds., *The Personal memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Life, With Essays and Sermons, and Mary Ann Loughborough's *My Cave Life in Vicksburg: With Letters of Trial and Travel*.⁹

In a more memory-related effort, veterans also placed numerous monuments on courthouse lawns, public spaces, and battlefields throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Mississippians were no different. Almost every county courthouse in the state has a Confederate monument, and other Mississippians participated in the establishment of the various national military parks such as those at Gettysburg or Shiloh. The monuments placed in them, though not as numerous as those by the Federal veterans, were nevertheless awe-inspiring, such as the Mississippi monument in the Vicksburg National Military Park, dedicated in 1909.¹⁰

As a result of all this literary and in some cases memorial effort, Mississippians and others produced a wide array of written accounts of their participation in the fighting in Mississippi and elsewhere. Yet, as contemporary diaries and letters or even later reminiscences and memoirs are by definition limited in scope and argument, these veterans were merely the first wave of the war's historiographical treatment. There was little if anything academic about these publications, not surprisingly, as professional academic historians did not even exist at the time. If there were any arguments such as the legality of secession or where the war was won or lost, these were part of the general movement that coincided with the contemporary rise of the Lost Cause myth. Southerners, Mississippians included, tried their best to explain away defeat in the war by focusing on overwhelming odds, the death of major leaders such as Stonewall Jackson or Albert Sidney Johnston, and

⁹ Samuel G. French, *Two Wars: An Autobiography of General Samuel G. French: Mexican War: War Between the States, A Diary: Reconstruction Period, His Experience: Incidents, Reminiscences, etc.* (Nashville: Confederate Veteran, 1901); Reuben Davis, *Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1890); John H. Aughey, *The Iron Furnace: Or, Slavery and Secession* (Philadelphia: William S. & Alfred Martien, 1863); Thomas W. Caskey, *Caskey's Last Book: Containing an Autobiography Sketch of His Ministerial Life, With Essays and Sermons* (Nashville: Messenger Publishing Co., 1896); Mary Ann Loughborough, *My Cave Life in Vicksburg: With Letters of Trial and Travel* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1864).

¹⁰ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2008); Michael W. Panhorst, *The Memorial Art and Architecture of Vicksburg National Military Park* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2015).

even the effect of men such as James Longstreet who turned Republican after the war. Certainly, the monuments and not a few of the post-war reminiscences tried to explain why such hearty men as Mississippians were part of the only defeat Americans had ever experienced.¹¹

Early Academics

If the 1890s was a watershed time in Civil War memory when the White North and South began to reconcile through veterans reunions, military parks, and the patriotism of imperialism and the Spanish American War, it was also a major time of change for the study of history. It was during this decade that the first academically trained historians began to appear in America and produce more nuanced and thesis-driven studies. Among these early academic historians, the Civil War was no longer part of current events but in the realm of history, even if that history was partisan and still having an important impact on American life.¹²

More modern narrative histories of the Civil War and its campaigns began to appear during this time. Attempts at national level narrative histories of Mississippi campaigns also developed and for many years became the standard volumes on these events; the Scribner's series of books published in the 1880s covered many Mississippi Civil War topics such as Manning F. Force's *From Fort Henry to Corinth* and more importantly Francis V. Greene's *The Mississippi*, which covered the Vicksburg Campaign. Other larger works on the war itself fittingly covered events in Mississippi in great detail. A couple of Mississippians also tried to provide an overarching story, some with better success than others. John C. Rietti's *Military Annals of Mississippi: Military Organizations Which Entered the Service of the Confederate States of America from the State of Mississippi* was much less successful on this account than the Mississippi volume in the *Confederate Military History* series, Charles E. Hooker's *Mississippi*.¹³

Certainly, the rise of academic history affected Mississippi's Civil

¹¹ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹² Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*.

¹³ John C. Rietti, *Military Annals of Mississippi: Military Organizations Which Entered the Service of the Confederate States of America from the State of Mississippi* (1895); Charles E. Hooker, *Mississippi* (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899); Manning F. Force, *From Fort Henry to Corinth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881); Francis V. Greene, *The Mississippi* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882).

War historiography. Academics with training as historians as well as others more involved in public history put their mark on the history of the state as well as on the Civil War, the two often combining in studies produced for readers who could not seem to get enough about what they and their fathers had done so many years ago. The newer academic movement in the 1890s and early twentieth century saw such new works specifically aimed at Mississippi's role in the war and its aftermath, books such as James W. Garner's 1901 *Reconstruction in Mississippi* making a major splash in the academic as well as popular communities.¹⁴

The rise of professional historians also had an impact in the more popular realm as well. The turn of the century saw the birth of many state archives, and Mississippi followed suit with the establishment of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1902. Perhaps as important as the establishment of such a bureaucratic department was the appointment of the first bureaucrat to head the office, Dunbar Rowland. There was likely no more influential and important historian in Mississippi's history than Rowland, who literally built what today is the cornerstone of Mississippi's historical study.¹⁵

Yet, Rowland operated at a time when the older veterans' school of thought, which had not fully exited the stage as yet, still influenced this growing professionalism. Rowland himself was a son of a Confederate veteran, and he depended heavily in terms of Confederate military study on an actual veteran, James L. Power. Together, the two developed Mississippi's Civil War history into an extremely relevant part of the state's history, both by the collection and preservation of the state's war records (which thankfully are still available in the archives today) and the publication of historical works based on that collected information. Rowland himself produced a large number of books on Mississippi history, perhaps most famously the multivolume *History of Mississippi: Heart of the South*, as well as numerous biographical and encyclopedic volumes. Not

¹⁴ James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1902).

¹⁵ Ted Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017), 835-836, 1101. For more on Rowland, see Patricia Galloway, "Archives, Power, and History: Dunbar Rowland and the Beginning of the State Archives of Mississippi (1902-1936)," *The American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2006): 79-116.

surprisingly, each was thoroughly influenced by the Lost Cause myth.¹⁶

Rowland's most lasting contribution to the state's Civil War historiography, however, was his inclusion in the state's 1908 statistical register of a major piece of work that has come to be known as "Military History of Mississippi." Although contained in a larger volume, the multi-hundred page report on the state's military history obviously contained small sections on the War of 1812 and Mexican-American War as well as the Spanish-American War, but the bulk of the text dealt with Mississippi's role in the Civil War. In a regiment by regiment and unit by unit synopsis of activities in the war, Rowland's chief body of military work quickly became the major source for information on regimental activities, and it has fortunately been reprinted at least twice since 1908 as a stand alone book.¹⁷

The emergence of a more professional realm of Civil War studies around this time also affected Mississippi in the development of a functioning state historical society and the publication of articles, known as the *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*. The war was obviously a major part of the state's history and thus it garnered a large portion of the coverage. Publications of diaries, letters, and reminiscences such as William Pitt Chambers's account of his service in the 46th Mississippi were major contributions of primary sources, while others flocked to write seminal local histories of important events. Unfortunately, the Mississippi Historical Society, originally founded in 1858 but reorganized in the 1890s, endured periods of dormancy throughout the decades. However, it has remained a strong organization in recent years, mainly due to the oversight of another of Mississippi's

¹⁶ Finding Aid for James L. Power and Family Papers, MDAH; Dunbar Rowland, *History of Mississippi: The Heart of the South*, 4 vols. (S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925); Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi; Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form*, 4 vols. (Atlanta: Southern Historical Printing Association, 1907).

¹⁷ Dunbar Rowland, *The Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, 1908* (Jackson: Secretary of State, 1908); Dunbar Rowland, *Military History of Mississippi, 1803-1898: Taken from the Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, 1908* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1978); Dunbar Rowland and H. Grady Howell, Jr., *Military History of Mississippi: 1803-1898, Including a Listing of All Known Mississippi Confederate Military Units* (Madison, MS: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 2003).

most dedicated archives department directors, Elbert Hilliard.¹⁸

The rise of professional historians working on Civil War history continued to grow from its infancy in the 1890s and early 1900s to a full fledged genre by the 1930s and 1940s. Major historians such as Douglas Southall Freeman and journalists like Bruce Catton produced some of the most seminal works on the war such as the multivolume *Lee's Lieutenants and The Army of the Potomac*. Other scholars such as Bell Wiley, Ezra Warner, E. B. Long, and Allan Nevins wrote some of the most enduring and famous studies of the war. The rise of the university press movement aided such academic work, with many books dealing with Mississippi history appearing as a result, such as a John C. Pemberton biography and Jefferson Davis studies. Commercial presses also turned out new books on the war in Mississippi and its participants, with the state's own university press being established later, in 1970.¹⁹

More influential in terms of the academic study of Mississippi history, including its Civil War events, was the major development of a scholarly journal devoted to the state's history. The *Journal of Mississippi History* began publication in 1939 during a time when the Mississippi Historical Society was in flux. The *Journal*, however, has continually published articles and essays on the state's history, including the Civil War, by some of the foremost Civil War historians. Although publishing a large number of edited diaries and letters from the Civil War early on, the peer reviewed *Journal* has over time become much more academic in nature and today publishes a wonderful assortment of historical articles, including many on all aspects of the state's Civil War history.²⁰

The early academic school thus took the study of the state's Civil War participation to a new level, wherein professional historians began to produce specialized, sometimes peer reviewed books and articles that were up to academic standards accepted throughout the nation and

¹⁸ Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, 14 vols. (Oxford: Mississippi Historical Society, 1898-1914); William P. Chambers, "My Journal," in *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Centenary Series*, 5 vols. (Jackson: Mississippi Historical Society, 1925), 5: 221-386.

¹⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942-1944); Bruce Catton, *The Army of the Potomac* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1951-1953); John C. Pemberton, *Pemberton: Defender of Vicksburg* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942). For the University Press of Mississippi, see their website: <http://www.upress.state.ms.us/>.

²⁰ Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, 840. For the *Journal*, see their website: <http://www.mississippihistory.org/journal-mississippi-history>.

the world. Yet even in this academic milieu, the study of Mississippi's Civil War history was still very much tied to the old veterans' school of thought. A large number of letters, diaries, and reminiscences as well as partisan coverage of the war was still embedded with Lost Cause mentality, accepted segregation, and White supremacy. That would begin to change, as would Mississippi itself, with the coming of major social, economic, and political upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s.²¹

The New Left

The 1950s and 1960s were certainly a time of change in America, including everything from the counter culture and civil rights movement to the politics of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. This phenomenon did not even include the Cold War crises that could have ended the world. Such a time of change took place in the historical profession as well, with the rise of the "New Left" movement wherein historians changed their focus from the top-down, great men view of history to bottom-up, social examinations. Such a development affected the study of Mississippi's Civil War history. At the same time, however, a concurrent (and larger) thread of the same old great men history continued on a parallel path, creating a dual examination of the state's rich Civil War period throughout much of the latter half of the nineteenth century.²²

In terms of the continuation of the earlier professional historians' great men examinations, many battle studies and biographies of luminaries continued to appear in books and articles throughout the decades prior to the 1990s, including major works on Vicksburg by Edwin C. Bearss. His centennial era publications such as *Rebel Victory at Vicksburg* and *Decision in Mississippi* were deeply rooted in military aspects with little of the social, political, or economic realms included. Later works such as his Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads and especially his seminal three-volume *The Vicksburg Campaign* continued the pattern. Although Bearss explored little outside the military events in his major works in both book form and numerous articles in numerous journals, he nevertheless became the major face of Mississippi Civil War writing for decades. His wife Margie Riddle Bearss also became involved, authoring

²¹ David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994).

²² Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 417-468.

Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition in 1987.²³

Other historians continued the great-man approach, most often through biographies. This era saw life examinations appear on numerous important Civil War Mississippians such as Robert W. Dubay's book on Governor John J. Pettus, James B. Murphy's writing about L. Q. C. Lamar, and Lillian A. Pereyra's study of James L. Alcorn. Military biographies of officers heavily involved in Mississippi also emerged, such as Michael B. Ballard's work on John C. Pemberton. Others produced regimental histories, such as those by Grady Howell.²⁴

While the standard manner of history continued to unfold, there was also an effort by historians to expand into more social, political, and economic realms. The process had actually begun as early as the 1930s and 1940s with major works on the common soldier by Bell I. Wiley and others, shifting some emphasis to a common man examination. The publication of the seminal *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* in 1956 by Dudley Taylor Cornish also paved the way for studies about Black soldiers in the Civil War. Yet, civilians, soldiers in the ranks, women, African Americans, and Native Americans rarely received much if any coverage in the standard works and even in many of the military-focused publications of this era.²⁵

If there were a burst of socially-influenced studies that emerged,

²³ Edwin C. Bearss, *Rebel Victory at Vicksburg* (Vicksburg: Vicksburg Centennial Commission, 1963); Edwin C. Bearss, *Decision in Mississippi: Mississippi's Important Role in the War Between the States* (Jackson: Mississippi Commission on the War Between the States, 1962); Edwin C. Bearss, *The Vicksburg Campaign*, 3 vols. (Dayton: Morningside, 1985); Edwin C. Bearss, *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads and in North Mississippi in 1864* (Dayton: Morningside, 1979); Margie Riddle Bearss, *Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1987).

²⁴ Robert W. Dubay, *John Jones Pettus, Mississippi Fire-eater: His Life and Times, 1813-1867* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1975); James B. Murphy, *L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Lillian A. Pereyra, *James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966); Michael B. Ballard, *Pemberton: The General Who Lost Vicksburg* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991); H. Grady Howell, *Going to Meet the Yankees: A History of the "Bloody Sixth" Mississippi Infantry, C.S.A.* (Jackson: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 1981); H. Grady Howell, *To Live and Die in Dixie: A History of the Third Regiment Mississippi Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A.* (Jackson: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 1991).

²⁵ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1943); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1952); Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956).

much of it centered around secession and the home front. While Percy L. Rainwater's *Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession* had been a precursor as far back as the late 1930s, other works appeared later such as William L. Barney's *The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860*. Civilian life in Mississippi also gained more attention, mainly through the efforts of Mississippi State University professor John K. Bettersworth. His *Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime* set the stage a little earlier than the actual rise of the "New Left," appearing in 1943, and his subsequent works such as *Mississippi in the Confederacy: As They Saw It* (1961) and with James W. Silver their *Mississippi in the Confederacy: As Seen in Retrospect* (1961) brought a much more comprehensive examination of the state's wartime chaos.²⁶

Although there was a major emphasis emerging on civilians and even economics in this "New Left" effort, there were still many gaps left to be filled. Mainly because this field developed so close to the major social revolutions of the 1960s, it took a little time for the public social movements of the decade to enter academia, and even longer for them to take root in the popular mind of Americans. The continued dominance of military history as one of the major fields of history and the resulting work in that area was also an issue. In Mississippi specifically, a white-dominated populace reacting against the civil rights movement was similarly not very interested in new left-leaning academic studies. As a result, although some study of African Americans began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s, it did not filter down into Mississippi's Civil War historiography for several more decades. The same was true of women's roles and activities in the war; the gains that began to be made in gender equality in the 1970s and 1980s only began to find expression in Mississippi Civil War historiography decades later. Still, the 1960s era was an important turning point in the state's Civil War study, broadening and expanding the knowledge of the wartime struggles of all

²⁶ Percy L. Rainwater, *Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1938); William Barney, *Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004); John K. Bettersworth, *Confederate Mississippi: The People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943); John K. Bettersworth and James W. Silver, *Mississippi in the Confederacy*, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961).

Mississippians, not, as in the past, just the influential men who oversaw it.²⁷

New Military History

By the 1990s when the Civil War saw an upsurge in popularity mainly due to memory and media aspects (anniversaries, Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, the movie *Gettysburg*) rather than historiographical publishing, a new manner of exploring history began to take hold among Civil War historians as well. No longer were the studies simply military in nature with a few social studies thrown in at various times; now, in a school of thought dubbed the "New Military History," historians began to incorporate into their military studies such aspects as economic, political, and social effects, most significantly the inclusion of civilian and common soldier views of the fighting. In addition, numerous studies detached from tactical military analysis began to appear with regularity. While this took place across the board in Civil War history, it also had a profound effect on Mississippi Civil War historiography.²⁸

Military studies now began to be tinged heavily with contextual politics and economics, but more so with the common soldier's views as well as those of the civilians affected by the military operations. In fact, a renewed emphasis on publishing common soldiers' letters and diaries developed, examples being Robert G. Evans's *The 16th Mississippi Infantry: Civil War Letters and Reminiscences* and Michael B. Ballard and Thomas D. Cockrell's *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt*. Prime examples of more socialized military studies include Michael B. Ballard's *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi*, Buck T. Foster's *Sherman's Mississippi Campaign*, and Timothy B. Smith's *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation*. Pure military studies also began to give way to specific aspects of military operations, such as the geographical explanation of Vicksburg in Warren E. Grabau's *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign* and the engineering-focused *Engineering Victory: The*

²⁷ Timothy B. Smith, "Altogether Fitting and Proper": *Civil War Battlefield Preservation in History, Memory, and Policy, 1861-2015* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 217-218.

²⁸ Ken Burns, *The Civil War* (Arlington, VA: PBS, 1990); Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 1 (June 1989): 34-58.

Union Siege of Vicksburg by Justin Solonick. The war's memory also became a topic among historians with books and articles dedicated to examination of the establishment of Vicksburg National Military Park.²⁹

Yet much of Mississippi's Civil War historiography since the 1990s has focused on non-battlefield aspects. A large portion of that Mississippi-focused study has come through the medium of the *Journal of Mississippi History*, which rarely if ever publishes pure military studies any longer, and when it does the articles are deemed valuable because of the common soldier-level aspects. Notable exceptions include two recent editions of the *Journal* that focused on the war in Mississippi, edited by Michael B. Ballard, and Ulysses S. Grant in Mississippi, edited by John F. Marszalek. Even in these, however, much social history emerged instead of pure battle history.³⁰

Rather, numerous articles have appeared in the pages of the journal on all aspects of social topics from Native Americans in the war to women on the home front to Unionism. By far, however, the major area of examination in recent issues of the *Journal* has been focused on the state's slave population and the effect the war had on them as well as the effect they had on the war. A survey of recent titles such as Ben E. Bailey's "Music in Slave Era Mississippi," Nik Ribianszky's "She Appeared to be Mistress of Her Own Actions, Free From the Control of Anyone': Property-Holding Free Women of Color in Natchez, Mississippi, 1779-1865," and David Slay's "Abraham Lincoln and the United States Colored Troops of Mississippi" illustrate well the broadening horizons of the *Journal* in recent years. The *Journal* has likewise published numerous

²⁹ Robert G. Evans, ed., *The 16th Mississippi Infantry: Civil War Letters and Reminiscences* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002); Michael B. Ballard and Thomas D. Cockrell, eds., *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001); Michael B. Ballard, *Vicksburg: The Campaign that Opened the Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Buck T. Foster's *Sherman's Mississippi Campaign* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Timothy B. Smith, *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012); Warren E. Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000); Justin S. Solonick, *Engineering Victory: The Union Siege of Vicksburg* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015); Terrence J. Winschel, *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* (Mason City, IA: Savas Publishing Company, 1999); Terrence J. Winschel, *Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign, Vol. 2* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2006).

³⁰ Michael B. Ballard, ed., "Special Civil War Issue," 75, no. 4 (Winter 2013). John F. Marszalek, ed., "Special Grant In Mississippi Issue," 80, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 2018).

other social articles such as Giselle Roberts's "Our Cause': Southern Women and Confederate Nationalism in Mississippi and Louisiana," James Taylor Carson's "Greenwood LeFlore: Southern Creole, Choctaw Chief," Rebecca M. Dresser's "Kate and John Minor: Confederate Unionists of Natchez," and Leslie Smithers's "Profit and Corruption in Civil War Natchez: A Case History of Union Occupation Government." Occasionally, national journals and magazines have published Mississippi Civil War social topics as well, as in the case of Michael Shannon Mallard's "I Had No Comfort to Give the People': Opposition to the Confederacy in Civil War Mississippi" in *North and South Magazine*.

That said, there have also been quite a few books that have examined the war's social effects. The home front volume in the Mississippi Historical Society's "Mississippi Heritage Series" by Timothy B. Smith, *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front* (as opposed to the military volume by Michael B. Ballard, *The Civil War in Mississippi: Major Campaigns and Battles*), seeks to put much more emphasis on long-neglected topics such as women in the state, African Americans, as well as the common poor Whites enduring the conflict. Similarly, Jaret Ruminski's *The Limits of Loyalty: Ordinary People in Civil War Mississippi* also examines the state's home front, while Bradley R. Clappitt's *Occupied Vicksburg* offers a home front examination amid an occupied city. Timothy B. Smith's *The Mississippi Secession Convention: Delegates and Deliberations in Politics and War, 1861-1865* firmly places the slavery issue at the forefront of secession and war while Christopher J. Olsen's *Political Culture and Secession in Mississippi: Masculinity, Honor, and the Antiparty Tradition, 1830-1860* delves into the reasons for secession as well in a more gender-related study. Victoria Bynum's *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War*, also made into a film, examines the common people of the state amid that rebellious phenomenon in south central Mississippi, and Shelby Harriel's *Behind the Rifle: Women Soldiers in Civil War Mississippi* has focused much attention on women soldiers from and in the state.

It is clear that a new trend in Mississippi Civil War publication has developed, in both books and articles, the field becoming much more comprehensive with the inclusion of more than just military operations. Readers for the first time since the war are getting a much more complete view of the war in Mississippi.

Conclusion

Obviously, much has changed in America since the Civil War, and none so much as in Mississippi where in 1861 slaves worked the state's plantations and women were relegated to second-class status. Today, women and African Americans hold some of the highest offices in the state (and certainly in Mississippi's historical activities) and can be found amid almost every political, economic, and social action in Mississippi. So it has been with the state's Civil War historiography, and the deeper memory of the war as well. The emergence of the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University, the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, and the panels devoted to Civil War history in Mississippi at the annual Mississippi Book Festival all attest to the change that has taken place. But specifically in terms of the historiography of the written word, what began as a narrow but deep production of books and articles focused primarily on military actions and the "great men" conducting them has gradually grown wider and more comprehensive through the century and a half since the war, giving readers, researchers, and historians a much broader view of the rich role the state of Mississippi played in the Civil War.