

“A House Falleth”: The Civil War Mixed Loyalties of the Garland Family

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Abstract

The Civil War was a conflict that pitted father against son and brother against brother. Specifically, the family ties between James Longstreet and John Garland illustrate the complexities of the decision to fight for either side. The factors that motivated these men can give valuable insights into the reasons for the Civil War, and understanding these perspectives in a divided world can help Americans avoid a similar conflict today.

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The world is a complicated place. New inventions, new ideas — everything progresses forward at a frightening rate. With efficiency comes simplicity, which streamlines the process of history-telling into a conclusion of how one sees it now. This oversimplification is how a people begin tearing down statues of the very man who worked so hard to rid the country of slavery.¹ In addition to knowing what happened, historians must consider why people made the choices they did. This comes from a combination of issues including culture, geography, economics, morality, and personal life. The factors that motivated soldiers such as James Longstreet can give valuable insights into the reasons for the Civil War, and understanding these perspectives in a divided world can help Americans avoid a similar conflict today.

Many Confederate officers were born in the North, including John Pemberton, Samuel Cooper, and Bushrod Johnson.² This seems to be a confusing choice to make, since most soldiers fought to defend their home state or way of life. The choice to fight for the South also came at a great cost. Southern-born generals often mistrusted Northern born officers. Pemberton was criticized immensely, not only for his role in losing Vicksburg, but for his northern heritage. Many of these Northern-born officers did not receive the same respect and positions as their Southern comrades. For Pemberton though, home was not found in Pennsylvania, because he married into a Southern family. Influences such as marriage, career, and politics resulted in strong reasons to fight for the South.

¹ Lois Beckett, “San Francisco Protesters Topple Statues of Ulysses Grant and Other Slave Owners,” *The Guardian*, June 20, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/20/san-francisco-statues-ulysses-s-grant-junipero-serra-francis-scott-key>.

² Evan Andrews, “6 Generals Who Fought Against their Home State in the Civil War,” *History.com*, August 22, 2018.

Officers born in the South also populated the Union Army. David Farragut, George Thomas, and John Garland are among the men whose service in the war support this fact. The Northern mistrust of these men did not stop them from concerning their position. John Garland served extensively in the U.S. Army before the Civil War, and he had the same rank as Albert Sydney Johnston, who would go on to command in the Confederate Army.³

One general in particular was born in the South and fought for it but switched allegiances to the North after the Civil War. James Longstreet's memoir may be clouded by his post-war perspective, but it also gives a compelling argument for why he and others chose to fight for the Confederacy. Writings about Longstreet have varying levels of validity as well, because Longstreet's legacy is tied to his often-perceived failures at Gettysburg.⁴ It could be that Longstreet's military shortcomings caused him to side with the North after the Civil War, but it is also possible that he sincerely supported the North and was then blamed unfairly for his actions. Knowing when criticisms arose and recognizing the biases of the authors are important aspects to deepen the discussion. With the difficulty of looking back into the mind of a nineteenth century man, researchers may never fully know Longstreet's motivations. Only a close study of primary and secondary sources can arrive close to the truth.

There are multiple examples that being born in a particular region was not the only factor that determined loyalties in the Civil War. The war split families and friendships, not just the nation. Though for some the decision was as easy as protecting their home, others had to go

³ John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 39.

⁴ James Robertson, *After the Civil War: The Heroes, Villains, Soldiers, and Civilians Who Changed America* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2015), 60.

against everything they had known to do what they believed was right. These decisions are important because they reveal truths about the American experience. Whether they won or lost, the men born in both North and South represent ideals that have shaped what America has become, and what it will be in the future. If people want to understand issues such as states' rights, justice, and the role of government, they would be wise to learn from the people of the past. It turns out that those individuals' thoughts were not so different from those of the present. Specifically, the family ties between James Longstreet and John Garland illustrate the difficulty of the decision to leave comfort and fight for one's family and homeland. The motivations of these men were much more complex than a simple blue or gray. As Jesus said in Luke 11:17, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth." Understanding the divisions of the Garland family in light of common soldier motivations can clarify why such rifts formed between Americans then and help prevent those differences from dividing America today.

Connections

The Garland Family

The first step in knowing motivations comes from knowing the people themselves. The Garland family was deeply connected to players on both sides in the Civil War. Thus, the conversation begins with a man named John Garland. The Garland family immigrated from Wales in the late 18th century.⁵ Born in Virginia on November 15, 1793, John Garland grew to have a long and distinguished career in the United States Army. In 1842, Lieutenant Colonel

⁵ Ruth Hairston Early, *Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches: Embracing the History of Campbell County, Virginia* (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Company, 1927), 414.

Garland was in charge of the 4th United States Infantry stationed at Jefferson Barracks. It was there that he met a young Ulysses S. Grant.

Garland's life continued to interweave with Grant's in the Mexican-American War.⁶ A colonel at the time, Garland gave Grant the assignment of assistant quartermaster, a role the younger man protested.⁷ He wrote to Colonel Garland, "I respectfully protest against being assigned to a duty which removes me from sharing in the dangers and honors of service with my company at the front."⁸ Grant did not want to leave his fellow soldiers to fight battles while he managed supplies in the background. However, Garland rejected Grant's request, citing his qualifications for the position. Grant did his job well, and Garland rewarded him by recommending him for promotion after the war for his admirable duty.⁹

When tensions rose in America in the late 1850s and 1860, John Garland stayed loyal to the Union, despite being from Virginia and his close ties with James Longstreet, who would soon become a prominent Confederate general. His services to the North were short lived, however, as he died on June 5, 1861 in New York City while still on active duty. His legacy lived on, as Fort Garland in Colorado was named after him.¹⁰ Because of John Garland's early passing, scholars

⁶ Ulysses S. Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition*, ed. John F. Marszalek (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 68-75.

⁷ Ron Chernow, *Grant* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 46.

⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant Digital Edition, Vol. 1*, ed. John Marszalek (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2018), 106.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 375.

¹⁰ "The Story of Fort Garland," Colorado Museum Trail, <https://www.museumtrail.org/the-story-of-fort-garland>.

are left to guess at his continued loyalty to the Union. Since Garland himself was not present, one can turn to his family.

John was one of four brothers, along with James Garland, Samuel M. Garland, and Maurice H. Garland. All four were successful businessmen in their fields. James Garland was a politician, serving from Virginia in the House of Representatives.¹¹ He studied law, ran a legal office, and served as a judge in Lynchburg, Virginia from 1841 to 1882. Samuel was the senior partner in the Slaughter and Garland law firm, and Maurice was a member of that firm. Maurice's son, Samuel Garland Jr., would become a lasting character in history through his legal and military exploits.

Samuel Garland Jr. lost his father, Maurice H. Garland, as a young adult, but he still graduated third in his class from Virginia Military Institute.¹² Samuel followed in his family's legal footsteps. Both Samuel's father and his uncle worked in law, and he was a great grandnephew of President James Madison. After studying law at the University of Virginia, Samuel returned to Lynchburg to practice in the family business and married in 1856.¹³ His military experience began as the organizer of the Lynchburg Home Guard, serving as its first captain. When war broke out, Samuel Jr.'s choice was different from that of John Garland. Samuel stood with his men and joined the Confederate forces. It worked out well for Garland, as he was made a colonel and given command of the 11th Virginia Infantry. He was later promoted

¹¹ "James Garland," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/G000067>.

¹² "Samuel Garland Jr.," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/people/samuel-garland-jr.htm>.

¹³ Charles Minor Blackford, *Annals of the Lynchburg Home Guard* (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. Rohr, 1891), 149.

to brigadier general, commanding men from North Carolina. However, he was mortally wounded at the Battle of Fox Gap on September 14, 1862.¹⁴ His military career was admired by many, and he was honored by the Lynchburg community at his funeral. Since both John Garland and his nephew Samuel Jr. died early in the war, historians are again left to wonder what might have been. Without post-war experiences, the Garland family must be evaluated by their responses in the pre-war era.

The Garland family had a fair amount of influence in the Lynchburg area leading up to the 1860 presidential election. James Garland, the politician, spoke in favor of Samuel Douglas of the Democratic Party, and Samuel Garland Jr. spoke for John Breckenridge.¹⁵ After Lincoln was elected, the town had a meeting to discuss their response on January 22, 1861. Samuel Garland stood against instant secession, but the majority of voters supported it. James Garland led another meeting for conservative citizens, with the goal of “preserving the Union if consistent with the honor of the State.”¹⁶ This went by the wayside after the April 12 attack on Fort Sumter. Samuel M. Garland was chosen for the Virginia Secession Commission that met during 1861. He voted for secession early on, which is an important insight into influence on Samuel Jr.’s leanings.¹⁷ These political findings shed light on the Garland family’s Southern sympathies. John Garland’s military service did not seem to make an impact on his family’s decisions, so their actions seem to fall under the general Southern cause.

¹⁴ John Lipscomb Johnson, *The University Memorial: Biographical Sketches of Alumni of the University of Virginia who Fell in the Confederate War* (Baltimore, MD: Turnbull Brothers, 1871), 264.

¹⁵ W. Asbury Christian, *Lynchburg and Its People* (Lynchburg, VA: J.P. Bell, 1900), 187.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁷ David Loyd Pulliam, *The Constitutional Conventions of Virginia from the Foundation of the Commonwealth to the Present Time* (Richmond, VA: J. T. West, 1901), 106.

James Longstreet

Longstreet's connection to the Garland family has important implications as to why he, John Garland, and others decided to support the causes they did. James Longstreet was born in the South Carolina and served a large role in the Confederacy, but after the war he was an active figure in the Republican Party. Correspondence between James Longstreet, John Garland, their spouses, and any other relatives can give valuable perspective as to why each person chose the side they did. Both Longstreet and John Garland also had familial and professional connections to Ulysses S. Grant, the prominent Civil War general and later U.S. President. These links reveal information influenced each party to make the decisions they did. Correlation and causation are two different things, so one must distinguish between actual cause-and-effect and a simple relation.

Second Lieutenant James Longstreet's first military assignment was to the Fourth Infantry Jefferson Barracks, about ten miles south of St. Louis.¹⁸ He arrived there in fall of 1842 and was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Garland. While there, Longstreet befriended multiple officers who would later serve for the North during the Civil War. The most notable was Brevet Second Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant. The two had met at West Point and became good friends. Breaking up the monotony of drills and training, the two men fell in love with two women during 1844. Grant met his roommate's sister, Julia Dent, a distant relative to Longstreet through his mother, Mary Ann Dent.¹⁹ Longstreet acquainted himself with Colonel Garland's daughter, Maria Louisa Garland. The Mexican-American War took both men away

¹⁸ Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

from their love interests, but their eventual return from battle soon led to two weddings.

Longstreet traveled to Lynchburg, Virginia to wed Miss Garland on March 8, 1848. The wedding took place in the neighborhood actually known as “Garland Hill.”²⁰ Grant joined the married ranks on August 22 of that year, and Longstreet attended his wedding. Longstreet showed his respect for his father-in-law through his first child, naming him John Garland Longstreet.²¹

Called Garland for short, he served as a courier for his father. General Robert E. Lee mentions him in a post-war letter to Longstreet encouraging him to write memoirs while he lived in New Orleans.²² In his response, Longstreet asked Lee to “give [Garland] a few words of kindly advice and encouragement.”²³ The full extent and implications of these relationships are not clear, but the web of connections brings many interactions into the personal life that are not often noticed. These family relations, while not definitive, serve as important considerations when judging final decisions in war and peace.

Such is the case with George Deas, who was the son-in-law of John Garland and brother-in-law of James Longstreet. He began service in the US Army in 1833, but he resigned February 25, 1861, becoming an officer in the Confederate Army on March 7, 1861.²⁴ Again, not much is known about Deas, but his decision may have been influenced by family ties. Although John

²⁰ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 46.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America* (New York: Smithmark Publishers, 1994), 655.

²³ *Ibid.*, 657.

²⁴ Eicher and Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 204.

Garland led the way in serving his nation, it turns out that the rest of the Garland family was more loyal to the South than at first glance.

Longstreet's loyalties may have also been to the South, but this did not stop Grant from remembering him favorably in his memoirs. Grant reflected on their connection: "I had known both Bragg and Longstreet before the war, the latter very well. We had been three years at West Point together, and, after my graduation, for a time in the same regiment. Then we served together in the Mexican War."²⁵ Not only were the two in contact, but Grant lauded Longstreet for his service, claiming, "He was brave, honest, intelligent, a very capable soldier, subordinate to his superiors, just and kind to his subordinates, but jealous of his own rights, which he had the courage to maintain."²⁶ Longstreet returned the favor in his writings: "At the Battle of Molino del Rey, I had occasion to notice [Grant's] superb courage and coolness under fire."²⁷ At Grant's passing, Longstreet said he "was the truest as well as the bravest man that ever lived."²⁸ This mutual respect is interesting to see, since each fought prominently on opposite sides of the Civil War.

Longstreet's story continues after his travels for marriage in 1848. He spent less than a year on duty in Pennsylvania before transferring to San Antonio, Texas. Stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso put him again under the command of now Brigadier General John Garland. In 1854, Longstreet's third son, William Dent Longstreet, passed away during a military trip to the East

²⁵ Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, 450.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 451.

²⁷ "Longstreet's Reminiscences," *The New York Times*, July 24, 1885.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Coast.²⁹ October of 1859 brought Longstreet to Albuquerque, New Mexico, but moving close to his in-laws was temporary, as Mrs. Harriet Garland became ill in 1860.³⁰ John Garland took his wife back east to New York, but she would pass away on August 30. General Garland was not far from the grave himself, as he died within the year, on June 5, 1861. The extent to which these deaths affected Longstreet is unknown, but some aspects stand out for consideration. Both the Longstreet family and the Garland family were from the South: Longstreet from South Carolina and the Garlands from Virginia. It is also important to note that John Garland was not present in Albuquerque when the Civil War broke out. This left James Longstreet alone when he was suddenly faced with the pressure of deciding his loyalties.

News reached Albuquerque that Abraham Lincoln had won the Presidential election in November 1860, and Longstreet began evaluating his situation. He reached out to the governor of Alabama, the state from which he left for West Point and his mother's current residence. In his February 15, 1861 letter to Governor Andrew B. Moore, Longstreet said, "I desire, therefore, to tender through you my services to her, should she need a soldier who has seen hard service."³¹ Longstreet waited to resign his commission, wanting to complete a paymaster assignment before leaving the service. With that completed and his family ready for travel, Longstreet submitted his resignation on May 9, 1861.³²

²⁹ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

³² *Ibid.*, 53.

Some of Longstreet's military peers tried to convince him to reconsider his decision, specifically after the attack on Fort Sumter. Captain Alfred Gibbs, who would fight against Longstreet in the Siege of Suffolk in 1863, had an insightful exchange with the conflicted Southerner.³³ Longstreet remembers: "I asked him what course he would pursue if his State [New York] should pass ordinances of secession and call him to its defence [*sic*]. He confessed that he would obey the call."³⁴ Longstreet was not only born in the South, but he also married into a Southern family. Without any loose ends and with a resolute mind, Longstreet departed for the Confederate capital. His decision may seem foolhardy with the benefits of hindsight and moral clarity, but to Longstreet, it was a deeply family matter. With personal complexities established, one can begin to extrapolate individual choices out to regional generalities.

Motivations

Cultural Motivations

Needless to say, there was much animosity between North and South during and after the war. An 1865 Atlanta newspaper claimed Northerners were "a swindling race."³⁵ After the war, the Lost Cause mentality set in as well, inspiring sayings like, "After all, if Christ had his Gethsemane, Lee endured Appomattox."³⁶ James Robertson claims that Lee opposed slavery and secession, and if that is so, it is important to consider the implications of a man's divided

³³ J. R. Bowen, *Regimental History of the First New York Dragoons* (Self-pub., 1900), 69.

³⁴ Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 29.

³⁵ Thomas Lawrence Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

conscience.³⁷ Lee only lived until 1870, so not only was he not able to see Reconstruction through, but he did not have enough time to fully confirm or refute the claims put on him posthumously.³⁸ The existence of cultural norms does not exempt historical figures from personal responsibility, but they are important considerations.

After the war, former Confederates had to toe the line between pride and practicality. In the case of Wade Hampton, a South Carolinian plantation owner turned Confederate general, he “accepted Confederate defeat, but he never conceded that the southern cause was wrong.”³⁹ Francis Nicholls was the defender of Lynchburg, Virginia in 1864, successfully tricking and repelling Union attacks.⁴⁰ Though he fought for the South, he took a reconciliatory path after the war, became the Governor of Louisiana in 1877, and did well in his post-war position.⁴¹

The justification often proposed for Longstreet is, “He had fought on the Southern side for the sole and sufficient reason that he was a Southerner. If he had been Northern-born, he would have fought just as ardently on the Northern side.”⁴² These arguments have a point, noting that circumstances influenced decisions. One is more prone to support slavery when they were born around it, taught that the institution was permissible, and faced financial ruin at the prospect of losing it. From a moral perspective, there is no excuse for choosing to subjugate a group of

³⁷ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴² Hamilton James Eckenrode, and Conrad Bryan *James Longstreet: Lee's War Horse* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 371.

people. At least understanding how Southerners like Longstreet attempted to justify their actions can help the modern audience realize how easy it can be to fall prey to such logic. Observing the moral failures of the past should inspire humility, not pride, in the pursuit of not repeating their mistakes.

In cases like Longstreet's, it can be simple to at least corroborate evidence to support an argument for or against his innocence. It is more difficult to decipher motives for the general soldier population. Most records that exist today are from middle to high class families because they had better education and means to preserve letters and diaries.⁴³ A disproportionate number of these historical accounts also come from soldiers who were wounded or killed in battle. There are possibilities that more soldiers who fought kept records, or because families were more likely to keep letters from those men who were engaged in battle.⁴⁴ Regardless, historians do have access to many perspectives on the war. One reason for this is the high literacy rate on both sides: over 80 percent of Southern servicemen and over 90 percent of white Northerners could record and send letters.⁴⁵ Later generations can then use these letters to reconstruct events. Historians scrutinize the accuracy of these accounts, because there is risk in relying on prideful words that could easily be written insincerely. However, the letters do give insight into soldiers' thoughts and fears, and letters are the best available way to learn from their past.

⁴³ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ix.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Comparisons to other wars can be a helpful tool to understand the Civil War soldier's mind. Some would say that soldiers in Vietnam often fought for survival, to get out alive.⁴⁶ Part of that may have been due to incentives for survival, such as tours of service, but Civil War soldiers also had a similar concept. In fact, some men took advantage of any excuse to stay off the front lines. This included feigning sickness, getting conveniently separated in combat, or even helping a wounded friend. For American soldiers in the 19th century, there likely was a deeper motivation for pressing onward into battle. After all, the percentage of casualties in the Civil War were much higher than Vietnam, so decided to persevere in the fight took courage.

The answer to the problem of motivation may be best summarized by Civil War veteran John William De Forest. He phrased it this way: "The man who does not dread to die or to be mutilated is a lunatic. The man who, dreading these things, still faces them for the sake of duty and honor is a hero."⁴⁷ The complaining found in letters and records did not necessarily mean that soldiers wanted to leave the fight, because at least some of those with documented fears reenlisted.⁴⁸ Evidently, there was something greater than just completing a required job. Abraham Lincoln cited "patriotism, political bias, ambition, personal courage, love of adventure, want of employment, and convenience" as reasons to consider when deciding to join the fight.⁴⁹ In regard to the impact of moral crusades, James McPherson claims that "Religious fanaticism

⁴⁶ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 4.

⁴⁷ John William De Forest, *A Volunteer's Adventures: A Union Captain's Record of the Civil War*, ed. James Croushore (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1946), 124.

⁴⁸ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 9.

⁴⁹ Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. 6*, ed. Roy Blaser (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 446.

and ethnic hatred played almost no role.”⁵⁰ Even so, McPherson admitted, “Not all, of course, but a large number of those men in blue and gray were intensely aware of the issues at stake and passionately concerned about them.”⁵¹ So the motivations for the common soldier were vast and many, but they caused a resolve that disregarded self-preservation, which is a noble act. Even if the motivations were faulty or flat out wrong, the soldiers’ courage should at least be respected.

Geographical Motivations

With internal motivations in mind, it is helpful to understand the geographical variance in the United States to comprehend the reasoning for fighting for the South. Longstreet was born in South Carolina, which was the first state to secede from the Union for a reason. Confederate loyalists developed a strong national identity, much of which came from their geographical and cultural distinctives as the South.⁵² Because of geographical blessings, the Deep South was amazingly dependent on agriculture. The southern climate is tropical/subtropical, with “a long growing season, ample rainfall, and warm weather patterns.”⁵³

In the Mississippi floodplain, for instance, soils were rich, transportation was convenient, and the situation was well suited for plantations with vast crops and thus slaves. These self-ruling family units led to the South developing a strong “local autonomy.”⁵⁴ This meant Southerners

⁵⁰ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 6.

⁵¹ James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For: 1861-1865*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 4.

⁵² Gary W. Gallagher, *Becoming Confederates: Paths to a New National Loyalty* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 10.

⁵³ Theodore Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 76.

⁵⁴ Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 10.

wanted less involvement from the state and national government. One historical geographer went as far as to claim, “A plantation economy and pro-secession political persuasion went hand in hand.”⁵⁵ Thus one must probe into what moved an independently operating agricultural society to war.

Soil depletion was a major geographical factor in the conflict over slavery. Because the cash crops of the South—tobacco, rice, and cotton—depleted the soil, crop rotation was necessary to continue using the current land. When the soil struggled even with rotation, many slaveowners saw expansion to the West as the only way to continue raising profits.⁵⁶ The Mexican War and annexation of Texas increased the size of the U.S. by 25 percent, working towards America’s manifest destiny and setting the stage for internal conflict in the coming years.⁵⁷

In areas where the land was less fertile, farmers found new ways of living off the land, albeit in smaller units. Though the middle states were not as proficient in cash crops such as cotton, they produced corn, wheat, and livestock more than the Deep South.⁵⁸ Before the war, this was a disadvantage, leading states such as Kentucky, which was once part of Virginia, to have more small farms like in the North than large plantations that characterized the South. However, after Union occupation of the border states, one third of the slave state grain and

⁵⁵ Warren Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer’s View of the Vicksburg Campaign* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), xv.

⁵⁶ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 89.

⁵⁷ James M. McPherson, *The War That Forged a Nation: Why the Civil War Still Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 15.

⁵⁸ Brian D. McKnight, *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 2.

livestock was not available to the Confederacy.⁵⁹ Southerners tried to plant corn, but it was neither as easy nor as profitable due to the geographic soil difference. For the South, the war over slavery became a fight for a way of life.

Southern groups may have had motivations for seceding, but individuals still had to make a choice to fight against their country. James Longstreet's father was a planter in South Carolina, and Longstreet ended up siding with the South. As referenced, Longstreet's conversation with Captain Gibbs reveals that some Northerners would have obeyed the call if their state had seceded.⁶⁰ While some men may have joined the fight for one cause or another, state loyalties seem to have played a crucial role. Drafts were used on both sides, but most of the armed forces in the Civil War were volunteer based.⁶¹ Nearly 90 percent of military-aged men in Confederate Virginia served in the army.⁶² Since the decision for many hinged on what the state decided, that is the final consideration for study.

Though many of the founding fathers were from New England, Virginians often served as mediators between radical North and moderate South. Richard Henry Lee, a Virginian, was the first to move to vote on the Declaration of Independence. George Washington led the country as the first American president. Yet despite this patriotism, most of the fiercest fighting took place in Virginia. Virginia may not have been the first state to join the Confederacy, but she was possibly the most important.

⁵⁹ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 99.

⁶⁰ Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 15.

⁶¹ Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought*, 2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.

Virginia had many functions as a frontier between North and South, so much so that a third of the state would break away and form West Virginia during the Civil War. So, it is a valid question to ask why Virginia seceded in the first place. One can point to the state's roots from Jamestown, which relied on agriculture and tobacco for survival. The climate and soil could not sustain the large plantations such as in South Carolina or Mississippi, but Virginia was certainly developed by farmers. This agrarian society continued through the Revolutionary War era. So even though individuals may have chosen to side with Virginia because it was their home state, states as a whole often made the choice to secede because of geographical issues. In the words of Warren Grabau, "The inhabitant of the plains and the cliff-dweller do not think alike."⁶³

Of course, geography also played a large part in wartime strategy. The South could defend cities like Vicksburg, Mississippi, due to its cliffs and swamps.⁶⁴ However, military strategy is a topic outside the scope of this specific study, so suffice it to say that geography had a larger impact on the Civil War than some may first think. The warmer climate even allowed for year-round training, so the majority of Southerners were better horsemen than northerners.⁶⁵ These various factors are another way in which geography shaped the destiny of the South.

On a final note in this geographical focus, researchers have to be careful not to flirt with geographical determinism. Not all southerners identified with the South, and they certainly did not all join in revolution against the United States.⁶⁶ Just because South Carolina influenced

⁶³ Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, xv.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁶⁵ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 93.

⁶⁶ Gallagher, *Becoming Confederates*, 10.

Longstreet does not mean that Virginia had the same effect on John Garland. Neither did all northerners believe that slavery was the reason for the war or even morally wrong. The best that historians and geographers can do is draw patterns to better understand the motivations of individual people in unique circumstances. It is only then that people can learn from the past and draw helpful conclusions for today.

The “Lost Cause” of the South was motivated by many natural factors. Jack Temple Kirby claims that the Civil War was the “beginning of the end of southern rural life as it had been known for two centuries.”⁶⁷ The abolition of slavery may seem a political issue to the untrained eye, but the Southern way of life had been built on it for decades. To be clear, the decision for slavery was not by any means forced by geography. But the planter society that relied on slavery grew from the very ground that gave America its start. As the northern half of the United States moved into the Age of Steam, the South was left fighting for the twilight of the Age of Muscle and Sail. With this knowledge, historians and geographers can better understand the struggle Americans went through.

Consequences

Personal Reconciliation

The end of the Civil War left many questions for Confederate leaders as to what the future held. Since the Garlands had faded from the scene, James Longstreet takes focus in this area. His response was formed by the actions of his old friend. General Ulysses S. Grant went to great lengths to reconcile Confederate leaders under his terms of surrender. Grant obtained a

⁶⁷ Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 7.

pardon for George Pickett, the commander known for his charge at Gettysburg.⁶⁸ Grant then personally paroled John Singleton Mosby, one of the last Confederates to surrender, in the summer of 1865.⁶⁹ Mosby spent his first several post-war years mostly avoiding politics, citing Northern antagonism as reason enough to keep to himself.⁷⁰ When Horace Greeley threatened Grant's reelection bid for the presidency in 1872 though, Mosby took action. First as an advisor, then as a debater and spokesperson, Mosby supported Grant as the man who would treat the South fairly in peace like he had in surrender.⁷¹ Grant helped Robert E. Lee and other former officers transition peacefully to society. His extended hand did much to heal the wounds the country was under from the war.

James Longstreet may be the most prominent example of Grant's efforts. After Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Longstreet was one of three officers, along with John Gordon and William Pendleton, in charge of the formal surrender details. When Longstreet arrived in the village, he embraced Grant.⁷² The reuniting of old friends is a good picture of what reconciliation from the war could mean to men at the time. Their relationship did not stop at Appomattox.

On April 13, 1865, Longstreet arrived back to Lynchburg, Virginia where his wife and two sons welcomed him.⁷³ He met with Grant in Washington, and by December of 1865, he and

⁶⁸ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 94.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁰ Kevin H. Siepel, *Rebel: The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 167.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁷² Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 403.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 407.

his family moved to New Orleans.⁷⁴ He opened a cotton brokerage firm and did his best to start over. Longstreet's restart also applied politically. In a March 18, 1867 editorial for a New Orleans newspaper, he commented, "We are a conquered people" and need to "comply" to Northern demands.⁷⁵ This obviously created pushback from Southerners who were not ready to give up the cause. In a June 3, 1867 letter, Longstreet maintained that the South should accept the results of the war and submit to reconstruction in order to rebuild in the best way.⁷⁶ He took the position that "My politics is to save the little that is left of us, and to go to work to improve that little as best we may." His motives are not merely formed by conjecture; Longstreet himself wrote:

It is all important that we should exercise such influence over that vote, as to prevent its being injurious to us, and we can only do that as Republicans. As there is no principle or issue now that should keep us from the Republican party, it seems to me that our duty to ourselves and to all of our friends requires that our party South should seek an alliance with the Republican party.... If the whites won't do this, the thing will be done by the blacks, and we shall be set aside, if not expatriated. It then seems plain to me that we should do the work ourselves, and have it white instead of black and have our best men in public office.⁷⁷

Longstreet's motives are clearly worded in this exert. It certainly seems he was not purehearted in his desire for free government. Rather, he wanted to forward his own political objectives, which do seem quite discriminatory. Longstreet seems to fall into a category of post-war Southern sympathizers who compromised for personal and even societal gain. However,

⁷⁴ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 409.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 410.

⁷⁶ Eckenrode and Bryan, *James Longstreet*, 373.

⁷⁷ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 411.

Longstreet's best efforts to promote Southern ideals were not enough to save him from the Southern mob mentality.

Political Union

Political pragmatism did not go over well in a South still healing from the war. Longstreet himself was opposed to Republicans, but his reconciliatory positions were disliked, and as a result he moved back to Lynchburg and traveled often. Longstreet's fortunes changed when he endorsed Grant for the Presidency in 1868.⁷⁸ Switching to the Republican Party, Longstreet served as Ulysses S. Grant's campaign manager during his presidential campaign. Along with his support from the South, Longstreet may have even been in Washington for Grant's inauguration. While his motives may still have been based in pragmatism as he previously expressed, Longstreet nonetheless chose to make the best of his situation. Grant quickly repaid the favor, nominating Longstreet for surveyor of customs in New Orleans only six days after becoming president.⁷⁹ Grant called him "That rare southern general who had preached cooperation with Reconstruction and been traduced as a scalawag for his outspoken courage."⁸⁰ As reward for his sacrifice, Longstreet was given the position from 1869-1873.

Longstreet made an extensive, if somewhat inconsistent, career in public service as the U.S. Minister to the Ottoman Empire under President Rutherford B. Hayes and his successor, President James A. Garfield. President Hayes gave him a position as minister to Hong Kong, and

⁷⁸ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 413.

⁷⁹ Eckenrode and Bryan, *James Longstreet*, 374.

⁸⁰ Chernow, *Grant*, 638.

with Grant's personal help he became an attorney for Southern Pacific Railroad.⁸¹ Longstreet also served as the supervisor of internal revenue, a postmaster, a U.S. Marshal, and a railroad commissioner.⁸² Longstreet took the side of African American Federal troops in a riot in New Orleans on September 14, 1874. This was an ultimate insult to former Confederates, since in a way former slaves were fighting back for freedom, and former slave owners were being stopped by the man who once led them in battle. This only further distanced Longstreet from Southern sympathies.⁸³ His choices can be contrasted with the actions from other Confederate generals such as Nathaniel Bedford Forrest, who became the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan after the war. Longstreet could have secretly held Republican convictions all along, or perhaps he had a change of heart to join the winning side. His letters before, during, and after the war help to clarify his position and motivations for fighting with the South in the first place. Longstreet "accepted defeat without bitterness" rekindled his friendship with Grant, was appointed surveyor of customs in New Orleans, and overall worked alongside Reconstruction.⁸⁴

To other Confederates, Longstreet chose to reconcile with the victors: Jeffry Wert termed it the "unpardonable sin."⁸⁵ Abandoning the Confederate cause meant giving up an entire way of life, and that price was too high for many Southerners. One man said of Longstreet, "He seems to have had a subconscious idea that the North was right because it won the war."⁸⁶ This put him in

⁸¹ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 84.

⁸² Eckenrode and Bryan, *James Longstreet*, 375.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 78.

⁸⁵ Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 413.

⁸⁶ Eckenrode and Bryan, *James Longstreet*, 371.

direct odds with men such as Jubal Early, a strong defender of the Confederate cause after the war.⁸⁷ Early devoted his post-war life in Lynchburg, Virginia to defending the Lost Cause, and he blamed Longstreet as the third of three reasons the South lost the entire war.⁸⁸ Southerners used this turncoat activity as an excuse to blame Longstreet for the loss at Gettysburg. Since he disagreed with General Robert E Lee, Longstreet was the scapegoat for Lee's climatic loss. Southerners only further perceived Longstreet as a turncoat after the war.⁸⁹

Longstreet grew bitter because of the abandonment of his honor. This frustrated him to the point of writing his memoirs to defend his actions during the war. Longstreet did not spend much time defending his motives, but rather his military tactics. This is not as helpful for historians looking at Lost Cause arguments, and to complicate matters, Longstreet's house burned down, with many of his early letters along with it. Evidence does hint that Longstreet's memoirs are somewhat unreliable due to a combination of losing his source material in the fire, poor memory, and poor editors.⁹⁰ Longstreet may have had more to share or more to learn, but the saying proved true that time waits for no man, and he passed away on January 2, 1904. His second wife took on the responsibility of preserving his legacy, promoting and defending her late husband's decisions and actions. Life moved on for Americans, North and South. The victory won by a conflict that killed so many would have to be weighed in the following decades.

⁸⁷ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 59.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁸⁹ Connelly and Bellows, *God and General Longstreet*, 34.

⁹⁰ Robertson, *After the Civil War*, 80.

Conclusion

The Civil War motivations of John Garland, Samuel Garland Jr., James Longstreet, and countless more reveal the depth of the human heart. Connections to friends, wives, officers, and states are only a few of the factors that impacted their ultimate decisions. For the Garlands, loss in the war was followed by community influence in a pro-South city. For Longstreet, military and political success was ironically accompanied by disdain by those he fought to preserve. Doing the right thing in one's own eyes is often an ideal that becomes a muddied mess when introduced to the world of decisions. If it is true that the victors write the history, then the losing side will always be guilty.

It is not the intent of this research to prove any one person's innocence or guilt, whether political or moral. Each generation will have to revisit that responsibility with humility and care. It is with that mind that this evidence will be useful. The men who made decisions decades and centuries ago did so without the benefit of modern perspectives. The so-called guilt of these men cannot be determined by current standards, unless the whole of history can be cast aside in favor of a bright new future. One will quickly find that the present utopia they crave is full of sinful people, to which another scholarly cleanse is due, and so the cycle continues. May this research suggest an alternative, that one can criticize actions without condemning the person. The historian can see the past for what it is — a series of messy, conflicted decisions that, right or wrong, led humankind to where it is today. It is a good thing to seek truth, but justice without mercy becomes an iron fist that no one can withstand. A person can learn from another's mistakes without forgetting their humanity. Just maybe, people can find that out before they tear down their own future along with the past.

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