

FREE MEN OF COLOR IN GREY

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A NUMBER OF WRITERS have studied the use of blacks as soldiers by the Union and Confederate governments during the American Civil War. Most of these works have focused on the Union army since it employed large numbers of black soldiers during the conflict. When the authors do cover the Confederate side, they usually limit their coverage to the free blacks of New Orleans who formed a regiment of "Native Guards" for the Louisiana militia and to efforts late in the war to employ slaves as soldiers.¹ Various Southern states enacted legislation accepting free blacks as laborers or in other noncombat roles, but until early 1865, the official policy of the Confederate government prohibited blacks from serving as armed soldiers.²

Scholars who have investigated the role of blacks in the Confederate armies usually have described only the body servants who occasionally picked up a weapon during a battle, though several writers have discussed the largely unsubstantiated cases of slaves serving in other combat situations.³ Two studies which look closely at blacks who aided the Confederate war effort fail to document satisfactorily the enlistment of free blacks as combat soldiers. One of these books exhibits a strong Confederate bias but cannot substantiate its assertion that "many of these [free blacks] were

¹ George W. Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1888); Joseph T. Wilson, *The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1890); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1955); Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956); James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965).

² Williams, *History of the Negro Troops*, 82; Mary Frances Berry, *Military Necessity and Civil Rights Policy: Black Citizenship and the Constitution, 1861-1868* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977), 116n. 12; *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1880-1901), ser. 4, 1:1095, 1111, 2:941; General S. Cooper to Major General Dabney H. Maury, Sept. 28, 1863, Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-65, chap. 1, vol. 38, p. 458, Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, National Archives.

³ Charles H. Wesley, "The Employment of Negroes as Soldiers in the Confederate Army," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (1919): 243; J. K. Obatala, "The Unlikely Story of Blacks Who Were Loyal to Dixie," *Smithsonian* 9 (1979): 94-101.

in active full participation."⁴ In dealing with "the question as to whether or not any Negroes ever fought in the Confederate ranks," Professor Bell I. Wiley found no firm evidence to say that they did. He concluded, "If persons with Negro blood served in Confederate ranks as full-fledged soldiers, the per cent of Negro blood was sufficiently low for them to pass as whites."⁵

Contrary to Professor Wiley's contention, a number of Louisiana free blacks did serve as soldiers, and their white comrades in arms did know them to be "free men of color." Some fifteen hundred or more New Orleans free blacks made up the First Regiment Louisiana Native Guards. Free blacks in several country parishes of the state organized themselves into military companies. Professor John D. Winters has estimated that nearly three thousand free blacks had volunteered for militia duty by early 1862.⁶ With this many men in militia service, it seemed reasonable that a few individuals could have seen combat duty. In researching this theory, I documented fifteen free blacks who volunteered for and served in regular Confederate units as privates. Twelve of these men enlisted in Louisiana volunteer regiments, two in a home guard or reserve unit, and one in a Texas cavalry unit. Three of the first twelve fought in several battles, and two of the three received wounds. This manuscript will summarize the military service of these fifteen men and speculate briefly on their reasons for wanting to fight for the Confederacy.

The three most prominent examples of free blacks who volunteered for Confederate military service all came from St. Landry Parish.⁷ The three were Charles F. Lutz, Jean Baptiste Pierre-Auguste, and Lufroy Pierre-Auguste. Charles F. Lutz, born in June 1842, was the son of Frederick Guillaume Lutz and Caroline Marx (or Manse), a mulatto woman. Charles Lutz joined Captain James C. Pratt's Opelousas Guards company, which became Company F, Eighth Louisiana Infantry Regiment, on June 23, 1861. This regiment went to Virginia and formed part of a brigade commanded by Brigadier General Richard Taylor. The Eighth Louisiana fought in the battles of Winchester, Cross Keys, Port Republic, the Seven Days, Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, and Fredericksburg. In the battle of Second Fredericksburg, or Marye's Heights, on May 3, 1863, Lutz fell into

⁴ H. C. Blackerby, *Blacks in Blue and Gray: Afro-American Service in the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Portals Press, 1979), 6; Robert E. Greene, *Black Defenders of America, 1775-1973* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), 53-102. Greene discusses sixty-six blacks who had applied for Confederate pensions after the war, but none of the men served as infantrymen.

⁵ Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (1938; rpt. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1974), 160-61.

⁶ John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1963), 21.

⁷ I owe a special debt of gratitude to Mrs. Jan Tate who assisted me in locating historical and genealogical information which identified these three men and two others who I will discuss later.

enemy hands with more than one hundred of his comrades. He remained in Federal prisons for about two weeks before being exchanged to rejoin his unit. At the Battle of Gettysburg, on July 2, 1863, Lutz received a severe wound in his left forearm and again became a prisoner.

After holding him in a prison hospital in New York, Federal authorities exchanged Lutz on September 16, 1863, at City Point, Virginia. He went home on furlough after his release. While at Opelousas, Lutz became involved in some kind of difficulty in May or June 1864. As a result of this mysterious event, Lutz lost his right arm. He claimed in a pension application after the war that he was shot in the arm but did not elaborate on the nature of the affair. Lutz went to Texas to live with his brother in Polk County. On May 9, 1865, he received a discharge at the General Hospital at Houston on the basis of a surgeon's certificate of disability. Lutz married after the war and later moved to Westlake in Calcasieu Parish. After two attempts, Lutz finally received a Confederate pension from the state of Louisiana in 1900. Of the men discussed here, Lutz was probably the only one who passed for and enlisted as white. The federal census of 1880 and 1900 list him as such.⁸

Jean Baptiste Pierre-Auguste was born in St. Landry Parish in May 1842. He was possibly the son of Ursin and Caroline Pierre-Auguste, both free persons of color. Jean Baptiste joined Captain James W. Bryan's company at Lake Charles in early 1862. He may have been living in Calcasieu Parish when the war began. Bryan's unit became Company I, Twenty-ninth Louisiana Infantry Regiment, on April 15, 1862. The regiment went to Vicksburg, Mississippi. There the unit participated in various campaigns in defense of the city, particularly the Battle of Chickasaw Bluffs, December 28-29, 1862. The Twenty-ninth Louisiana was part of the Confederate garrison besieged at Vicksburg between May 19 and July 4, 1863. The men fought back two major Union assaults on their trenches. Jean Baptiste received a slight wound to his thigh during one of these actions. Following the surrender of the Confederate garrison, he went home on parole.

The men of the Twenty-ninth Louisiana returned to duty in the summer of 1864 near Alexandria. From that time until the end of the war, the regiment did little except routine garrison duty. In February and March 1865, Jean Baptiste was detailed as a cook for his company's officers, possibly a duty he received because he was a free black. A clothing-issue book kept by Captain Bryan shows Jean Baptiste in service as late as May 12, 1865. The Twenty-ninth Louisiana disbanded near Mansfield about May 19, and the men went to their homes without official paroles. Jean Baptiste was married at least twice. The 1900 census for Calcasieu Parish lists him as a

⁸ Population Schedules, Eight Census of the United States, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, 1860, National Archives; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Volunteer Organizations from Louisiana, Microcopy 320, Roll 194, National Archives, hereafter cited as C.S.R.; Application file of Charles F. Lutz, Confederate Pension Files, Louisiana State Archives and Records Service; Population Schedules, Tenth and Twelfth Censuses, Calcasieu Parish, 1880 and 1900.

single parent, but he stated he had a wife and four children when he applied for a Confederate pension in 1912. The State Board of Pension Commissioners originally rejected his application because he had no official parole. Several of his former comrades sent in affidavits attesting to his service until the end of the war, and he received his pension in 1915.⁹

Lufroy Pierre-Auguste was born in St. Landry Parish about 1830. He was the son of Pierre Pierre-Auguste and Gabriele Tessier, free persons of color. The 1860 census shows that Lufroy worked as a stockherder for Francois P. Pitre, Jr. Lufroy left his farm and joined Captain Daniel Gober's Big Cane rifles, which became Company K, Sixteenth Louisiana Infantry Regiment. The first two muster rolls of this company list him as a free man of color—the only such instance found in researching these men. None of the men discussed in this manuscript, except for Lutz and possibly Gabriel Grappe, pretended they were white. The other men in their units undoubtedly knew them as free blacks.

The Sixteenth Louisiana fought in the battles of Shiloh, Farmington, and Perrysville. On December 8, 1862, while in camp at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Lufroy received a discharge from Confederate service. The reason given for his discharge was that he was a "colored man." Apparently superior authorities had finally discovered that he was black and ordered his separation from the army. Lufroy went home, but he did become involved in one other incident before war's end. On May 13, 1865, he surprised two Jayhawkers near Opelousas. These men made up part of a band of outlaws, deserters, and draft dodgers who resisted Confederate authority. The two Jayhawkers fired at him, and he returned fire, hitting one of the men. Lufroy married in 1869, but no further information on his life after the war has come to light so far.¹⁰

Two free men of color—Evariste Guillory, Sr., and Evariste Guillory, Jr.—saw some service as home guards. Both father and son were free mulattoes living on Bayou Mallet west of Opelousas when the war began. They joined Captain M. McDavitt's Company I, Second Louisiana Reserve Corps. No information exists on when they enlisted in this unit, but the regiment did not form until July 1864. The Reserve Corps consisted primarily of men who were over or under draft age or who were in some manner ineligible for regular service, such as discharged or disabled former soldiers. The men of the Reserve Corps saw practically no fighting

9 Population Schedules, Seventh Census, 1850, St. Landry Parish; C.S.R. Roll 355; Notebook, J. W. Bryan Papers, Louisiana Adjutant General's Library, Jackson Barracks, Chalmette; Return of Company I, Twenty-ninth Louisiana Infantry, March 1865, Bryan Papers; Clothing Issue Book, Company I, Twenty-ninth Louisiana Infantry, 1865-65, Bryan Papers; Population Schedules, Twelfth Census, 1900, Calcasieu Parish; Application File of Jean Baptiste-Auguste, Louisiana Confederate Pension Files.

10 Population Schedules, Eighth Census, 1860, St. Landry Parish; Rev. Donald J. Hebert, *Southwest Louisiana Records*, 31 vols. (Ceceilia, La., privately published, 1974-83), 9:14; *ibid.*, 3:691; C.S.R., Roll 273; *Opelousas Courier*, May 20, 1865; Population Schedules, Tenth Census, 1880, St. Landry Parish.

with the enemy, but Confederate authorities called them out to chase Jayhawkers and deserters when needed for such service. They sometimes acted as drovers gathering cattle for the army in the field. Both of the Guillorys surrendered to Federal authorities and received their paroles at Washington, Louisiana, on June 17, 1865.¹¹

Jacques Esclavon, a forty-year-old free mulatto farmer of Calcasieu Parish, saw service in a Texas military unit late in the war. Jean Esclavon and Adelaide de la Fosse, free mulattoes, possibly were his parents. On September 11, 1864, he enlisted in Company A, Ragsdale's Battalion Texas Cavalry. This unit had moved into southwestern Louisiana to perform guard and picket duty around the Calcasieu and Mementau rivers and had enlisted several dozen Louisianians. It is possible that the Texans did not know that Esclavon was black, but existing battalion records showing his assignment to menial duties such as teamster and company cook may indicate they knew his status. Official records show Esclavon in service until at least March 1865. He may have remained on duty until his command broke up and dispersed to their homes at the end of the war.¹²

The remaining free men of color who wore the grey all came from the area of Campti, and did not, with one exception, join a military unit until relatively late in the war. There appear to have been more men enlisted than the nine mentioned here, but other names have not yet been discovered. An authority on this area of northwestern Louisiana has observed that these free blacks "lived as white, in almost all respects. There was hardly an aspect of Campti life or society (male, that is)" in which they "were not freely accepted. Almost all of the old Campti families (white) were their relatives and freely acknowledged it."¹³ Thus, it is not hard to understand why they entered easily a predominantly white military company.

Gabriel Grappe became the first of these north Louisiana free blacks to enlist. On April 6, 1862, at Monroe, Grappe joined Captain Thomas W. Fuller's Bossier Cavalry company. Gabirel, born in 1825, was the son of Jacques Grappe and Marie Rose de la Cerda. Jacques Grappe was "half-Negro, one-eighth Chitimachas Indian and three-eighths French." Rose de la Cerda was of Spanish ancestry and probably had no black ancestors. The 1860 census shows Gabriel Grappe was a wagoner, but when he enlisted he gave his occupation as farmer. From Monroe, Fuller's company went to Tennessee and fought in skirmishes both there and in northern Mississippi. Grappe appears on a muster roll for January and February 1863 as being absent sick at Okalona, Mississippi, and makes no

¹¹ Population Schedules, Eighth Census, 1860, St. Landry Parish; *Opelousas Courier*, July 9, 1864; C.S.R., Roll 114.

¹² Population Schedules, Eighth Census, 1860, Calcasieu Parish; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Volunteer Organizations from Texas, Microcopy 323, Roll 210; Hebert, *Southwest Louisiana Records* 3:686.

¹³ Elizabeth Shown Mills to author, Nov. 8, 1981. Mrs. Mills provided historical and genealogical information helping to establish the identities of these nine men.

further appearance in official records until October 1, 1864. On that date a Confederate officer in Natchitoches wrote that Grappe had joined Captain R. B. Love's Company H, Sixth Louisiana Cavalry Regiment. It is possible that Grappe received a discharge from Fuller's company and later enlisted in Love's, or he may have transferred from one company to the other shortly after the formation of the Sixth Louisiana Cavalry (the Bossier Cavalry now serving as Company C of the regiment). The regiment saw no combat duty in late 1864 or early 1865 but served on courier and guard duty. Grappe surrendered and received his parole at Natchitoches on June 15, 1865.¹⁴

The eight remaining free men of color from the Campti area served in Company H, Sixth Louisiana Cavalry, with Gabriel Grappe. One man was Gabriel's brother McGhee (or Margil), born in 1835 and by occupation a carpenter.¹⁵ Two of the men were a father and son—Jesse (or Jessy) and William Gardner. William was the son of Jesse and Jane Laury and was born February 24, 1840.¹⁶ Two others—Joseph G. and Alphonse Perot—were brothers born in 1843 and 1838, respectively. They were sons of Valery Perot and Marie Felonize Condet, and both men operated farms.¹⁷ Sylvester Perez was, as his name indicates, of partial Spanish ancestry. He married his first cousin, also a free person of color, Trinidad Armandine Simon, whose ancestors came to Campti from the Opelousas area.¹⁸ Ambroise Lebrun was a descendent of Paul Etienne Le Brun *dit* Dagobert, a Frenchman who with Suzette Grappe, a sister of Jacques, fathered a number of mulatto children.¹⁹ Little information has come to light on John Adams, the last of the Campti group. Born in 1842, he made his living as a shoemaker. A descriptive list gives his complexion as quadroon.²⁰

The service of these men first came to my attention through a letter written by Lieutenant J. Alphonse Prudhomme, the Confederate enroll-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; C.S.R., Roll 22; Succession Book 25, Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches Parish; Population Schedules, Eighth Census, 1860, Natchitoches Parish; C.S.R., Roll 22; Lieutenant J. Alphonse Prudhomme to Lieutenant [?] Goodwill, Oct. 1, 1864, Letter Book, July 12, 1864-May 15, 1865, 51, J. A. Prudhomme Papers, Louisiana Adjutant General's Library.

¹⁵ Population Schedules, Eighth Census, 1860, Natchitoches Parish; Mills to author, Nov. 8, 1981.

¹⁶ Records of Baptisms, 1851-73, Church of the Nativity, Campti, La., no. 1862-4 and no. 1863-15; Mills to author, Nov. 8, 1981.

¹⁷ Records of Baptisms, 1851-73, Church of the Nativity, no. 1864-1; Joseph Galion Perot to Marie Terencine Lamather, Records of Burials and Marriages, 1851-1905, *ibid.*, unnumbered page; Succession Book 21, Clerk of Court, Natchitoches, Succession of Marie Felonize Condet; Enrollment Book, Natchitoches Parish, La., 1864-65, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Manuscripts Department, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Library.

¹⁸ Records of Burials and Marriages, 1851-1905; Church of the Nativity, 268; Mills to author, Nov. 8, 1981.

¹⁹ Mills to author, Nov. 8, 1981.

²⁰ Enrollment Book, LHA Collection.

ing, or conscript, officer in Natchitoches. On October 1, 1864, Prudhomme wrote to his superiors in Shreveport that he had discovered the Perot brothers and McGhee Grappe in possession of passes from one of their lieutenants. The three privates told Prudhomme that the other five men had joined Captain Love's company also. Prudhomme reported that he had enrolled the Perots and Grappe under the provisions of an order calling for conscription of free men of color as laborers. He also said he intended to send the men to Alexandria to work on fortifications there. Prudhomme then asked for instructions.²¹

While awaiting a reply, Prudhomme allowed Grappe to go home for clothes. Under this pretext, Grappe sought assistance from a family friend. On October 7, P. A. Morse, an influential citizen of Bossier Parish, wrote to the commander of the Louisiana conscript district and had Grappe take the letter to Shreveport. Morse stated that he knew well the Grappe family and recounted some of their family background. He asked for orders permitting the Grappe brothers to stay in Captain Love's company because they wished to remain in it and because Prudhomme had enrolled them illegally. Morse pointed out that although their father was a free man of color, the Grappe's mother "was a Mexican white woman." Colonel Edmund G. Randolph responded quickly to Morse's letter. The next day, he ordered McGhee Grappe back to Natchitoches and advised Prudhomme to send him back to his regiment. Grappe continued to serve with his unit until he surrendered and received his parole.²²

The Perot brothers did not fare as well as McGhee Grappe. Prudhomme sent Alphonse on October 7 to Alexandria to serve as a laborer. Joseph received orders to appear before a medical examining board no later than October 16 to determine if his health would permit him to do heavy labor. No further information on him has come to light and his ultimate fate is unknown. Prudhomme finally caught John Adams, enrolled him on December 30, and sent him on the same day to work on the Alexandria fortifications.²³ No other official records exist to show what happened to Jesse and William Gardner, Sylvester Perez, or Ambroise Lebrun. If any of them remained in Captain Love's company after the controversy of October 1864, none received a parole at the end of the war. Prudhomme's record book showing enrollments of free blacks contains no entries after December 1864. He may have eventually enrolled these last four men as laborers or at least forced them out of active service in Love's company.

Unfortunately, none of the men discussed here left any letters, diaries, or memoirs yet discovered either to elaborate on their wartime activities or

²¹ Prudhomme to Goodwill, Oct. 1, 1864, Prudhomme Letter Book, 51.

²² Enrollment Book, LHA Collection; P. A. Morse to Col. Edmund G. Randolph, Oct. 7, 1864, Prudhomme Papers; Endorsement by Randolph, Oct. 8, 1864, on Morse to Randolph, Oct. 7, 1864, *ibid.*; unnumbered order, Conscript District of Louisiana, Oct. 8, 1864, *ibid.*; C.S.R., Roll 22.

²³ Enrollment Book, LHA Collection.

explain why they chose to enlist as volunteers in Confederate units. This leaves us to speculate on their motivation in risking their lives for a cause many people would not expect them to espouse. They undoubtedly followed a stronger urging of the same impulses which led thousands of their fellow free blacks to form militia units. In assessing the actions of New Orleans free blacks, David C. Rankin and Mary F. Berry emphasize the historical state-patriotism these men felt as well as their long tradition of service in the militia.²⁴ General studies of the roles played by free blacks elsewhere in the South, whether in labor or militia units, center on their state loyalty. As Benjamin Quarles noted, "these Negro volunteers placed the cause of their respective commonwealth above every other public duty."²⁵

Gary Mills's study of the free blacks in the Natchitoches area also speaks of state loyalty but adds, "Most . . . realized that a Union victory would mean the complete destruction of their economy, the basis of their livelihood, and their special status as *gens de couleur libre*." Claude Oubre has written that St. Landry Parish's free blacks "knew where their loyalties lay" when the war started because they stood to lose "the status they enjoyed as a free people." These writings fall in line with the statewide study done by H. E. Sterkx, who observed that "many well-to-do colored freemen prized their distinctive economic positions so strongly that they deplored any prospect that would endanger it. . . . Equally feared by this group of colored planters was the prospect of a general emancipation, which would submerge them in the great black mass of Negroes."²⁶

Another factor, related to this view of their place in society, comes into play when considering the Campti free blacks (except Gabriel Grappe) and the Guillorys of St. Landry Parish. These men found themselves faced with a choice in the late summer or early fall of 1864—they could enlist in combat units or wait for conscription as laborers. A Natchitoches free black wrote from one labor camp, "We are in a way slaves." He described the squalor of the camp and told his wife, "The negroes [slaves] are treated better than we are. We are obliged to do the hardest kind of work and the negro looks on."²⁷ To avoid the degrading conditions and work of the labor

²⁴ David C. Rankin, "The Forgotten Free People: Free People of Color in New Orleans, 1850-1870" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1976), 166-67; Mary F. Berry, "Negro Troops in Blue and Gray: The Louisiana Native Guards, 1861-1863," *Louisiana History* 8 (1967): 172. See also Obatala, "The Unlikely Story," *passim*, and Roland C. McConnell, *Negro Troops in Antebellum Louisiana: A History of the Battalion of Free Men of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1968), *passim*.

²⁵ Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 38; see also McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 24.

²⁶ Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977), 230, 244; Claude Oubre, "St. Landry's Gens de Couleur Libre: The Impact of War and Reconstruction," in Vaughan B. Baker and Jean T. Kremer, *Louisiana Tapestry: The Ethnic Weave of St. Landry Parish* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 1982), 82; H. E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana* (Rutherford, N. J.: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1972), 213.

²⁷ Alexander S. Dupre to wife, Sept. 29, Oct. 2, 1864, Melrose Collection, Archives Division, Northwestern State University Library, Natchitoches.

camps, where they would find the same treatment given the slaves around them, these men chose an action that would emphasize their distinctiveness from other blacks.

Several historians have questioned the sincerity of the free men of color who formed Confederate militia units. They say that those men did so out of fear or under pressure from whites. They also point accurately to the fact that the Native Guards regiment disbanded when New Orleans fell into Union hand and that most of the men later joined the Union army.²⁸ These historians may indeed be correct in appraising the majority of the free blacks involved. Yet fear or coercion does not seem to have motivated the men discussed in this manuscript to join regular Confederate units. As stated, Confederate law prohibited any blacks from serving in combat units. If coercion forced these men to enlist, why didn't many more free blacks face the same pressure? We should not doubt the sincerity of these fifteen men, especially the ones from St. Landry Parish. A study of that area states, "The Opelousas *Patriot* was the most virulently anti-free Negro journal in the whole of Louisiana." Many residents of the parish advocated the expulsion of mulattoes from the state, and in fact, some eighty-one free persons of color left St. Landry for Haiti in 1860.²⁹

The actions of these free blacks seem to argue for what may be to some an unpopular conclusion. By volunteering for combat duty in regular Confederate service, these men took what can be seen as the final step of their acceptance or acculturation into the local white societies where they lived. Their decision reinforces what Gary Mills and others have written about the social and economic interactions of certain segments of Louisiana's antebellum population. In areas of Natchitoches, St. Landry, Calcasieu, and possibly other parishes, many whites and free blacks must have enjoyed a freedom of association that has received relatively little attention by social scientists. The actions of these free men of color in volunteering for—and of their white comrades in accepting them into—military units should lead us to take a closer look at race relations in Louisiana's pre-Civil war period.

In summary, state or local patriotism and the desire to protect their standing which kept them above blacks in slavery would seem to have motivated all of the men discussed here to join the Confederate army. There is no evidence that anyone forced them to take that step. Rather it seems that they followed the dictates of their consciences and made a bold move many whites shunned.

²⁸ Rankin, "The Forgotten People," 168; Wilson, *The Black Phalanx*, 483-84; Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 38-39; McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, 24.

²⁹ Geraldine Mary McTigue, "Forms of Radical Interaction in Louisiana, 1860-1880" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1975), 173, 174.