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Internal Dissent: East Tennessee's Civil War, 1849-1865

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of History  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Masters of Arts in History

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by  
Meredith Anne Grant  
August 2008

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Keywords: Civil War, East Tennessee, Guerilla Warfare, Agriculture, Slavery

## ABSTRACT

Internal Dissent: East Tennessee's Civil War, 1849 to 1865

by

Meredith Anne Grant

East Tennessee, though historically regarded as a Unionist monolith, was politically and ideologically divided during the Civil War. The entrance of the East Tennessee and Virginia and East Tennessee and Georgia railroads connected the economically isolated region to Virginia and the deep South. This trade network created a southern subculture within East Tennessee. These divisions had deepened and resulted by the Civil War in guerilla warfare throughout the region. East Tennessee's response to the sectional crisis and the Civil War was varied within the region itself. Analyzing railroad records, manuscript collections, census data, and period newspapers demonstrates that three subdivisions existed within East Tennessee ó Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee. These subregions help explain East Tennessee's varied responses to sectional and internal strife. East Tennessee, much like the nation as a whole, was internally divided throughout the Civil War era.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my fiancé Richard for all of his time and patience. I could not have completed this work without you.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

East Tennessee contained both pro-Union and pro-Confederate responses to the sectional crisis preceding the Civil War. An unsigned author of an undated letter, most likely produced in 1861, contended “We are Union men! We have rejoiced in [the Union’s] prosperity, and would moan over its ruin.”<sup>1</sup> J.G.M. Ramsey, a Knox County citizen, wrote a letter during this same period that exclaimed “A Southern Confederacy! I the proud spirit which my Brother gave me I pledge to you my life and honor!”<sup>2</sup> The presence of such diverse secession sentiments poses the question of how one region’s populace could maintain such opposing views. This question is even more contentious when the region has continually been portrayed as a Unionist stronghold. The *Knoxville Register* in October of 1861 reported that “If any portion of the Southern States has been cursed by a deep and ardent attachment to the old Union, certainly East Tennessee is entitled to that disgraceful distinction.”<sup>3</sup> This interpretation by an East Tennessee newspaper, which has been shared by many other historians, has long ignored the existence of the region’s secessionist and later Confederate populations.

East Tennessee historiography discussing the Civil War era has evolved from syntheses arguing that the region was monolithically Unionist to monographs that narrowly focus on the region’s Confederate population and its irregular warfare. While recent historiography has begun to incorporate the region’s secessionist or Confederate

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<sup>1</sup> “To the Union Men in East Tennessee,” n.d., Frederick Heiskell Collection, Accession Number 22, Archives of Appalachia.

<sup>2</sup> J.G.M. Ramsey, Meckleburg, to Col. W.B.A. Ramsey, Nashville, 26 December 1860, Special Collections University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Ramsey Collection.

<sup>3</sup> “Unionism in East Tennessee,” 15 October 1861, *Knoxville Daily Register*.

populations and its internal divisions, it has been unable to integrate the significance of the two opposing populations' relationships. More in-depth studies that focus regionally within East Tennessee could provide interpretations that examine the region's subtle nuances.

Oliver P. Temple's 1899 *East Tennessee and the Civil War* is representative of the literature that portrays East Tennessee as a Unionist territory. The author identified himself as "Southern by birth, education, and residence" but his sectional position during the war was "drawn toward the North by a strong love of the Union, and an ardent desire for its preservation."<sup>4</sup> Temple analyzed East Tennessee's first inhabitants, its participation in the American Revolution, slavery, and its role in the Civil War. Throughout his work Temple focused on Unionists' actions in the war, such as the 1861 Knoxville-Greeneville convention, bridge burnings, and the sufferings inflicted upon the Unionist population. He described Unionists during the war and found that "in East Tennessee, though the outside pressure was tremendous, with daring leaders to cheer and encourage sentiments of loyalty, they stood unmovable and unshaken, amidst the raging storm which surrounded them."<sup>5</sup> Thomas W. Humes, who wrote during the same period as Temple, also portrayed East Tennessee as a monolithically Unionist region. These individuals who wrote at the close of the nineteenth century were reflecting the sentiments of the victorious Unionists and disregarded the secessionist and Confederate influence.

At the close of the twentieth century historians such as Noel C. Fisher, W. Todd Groce, and Sean Michael O'Brien began producing scholarship concerning East

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<sup>4</sup> Oliver P. Temple, *East Tennessee and the Civil War* (np: Fisk University Library Negro Collection, 1899; reprint, Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), vii.

<sup>5</sup> Temple, 554.



Tennessee during the Civil War. These historians primarily focused on the region's Confederate volunteers, the composition of the forces and their motivations, and the guerilla warfare. In both *Mountain Rebels* and "The Social Origins of East Tennessee's Confederate Leadership" Groce argues that East Tennessee's secessionists were often from the "young merchant professional class" that viewed secession and an alliance with the South as economically beneficial.<sup>6</sup> While Groce rightly insists that the East Tennessee and Virginia (ET&VA) and the East Tennessee and Georgia (ET&GA) railroads connected the once isolated East Tennessee to southern markets that aided in the development of a southern subculture, he does not accurately depict the region's nuances. Both Fisher and O'Brien examine the presence of unconventional warfare in East Tennessee. Fisher's *War at Every Door* explores East Tennessee's guerilla warfare and its effect on the Reconstruction government. Fisher argues that the intense level of guerilla warfare among East Tennessee's populace aided in the region's evolution from a divided region to a bastion of Unionism.<sup>7</sup> O'Brien minimally discusses East Tennessee's irregular warfare and the implications that it had on the region. He determines that the conflict within the region was a result of a preexisting class conflict.<sup>8</sup> O'Brien's analysis focuses on how guerilla warfare turned members of communities against one another, creating an excessively hostile environment. Both Fisher's and O'Brien's monographs, while providing a depiction of guerilla warfare in East Tennessee, discuss neither the

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<sup>6</sup> W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860-1870* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 153.

<sup>7</sup> Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics & Guerilla Violence in East Tennessee 1860-1869* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 176-177.

<sup>8</sup> Sean Michael O'Brien, *Mountain Partisans: Guerilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachians, 1861-1865* (Westport, C.T.: Praeger, 1999), 54-55.

importance of East Tennessee's internal divisions before the war nor the guerilla warfare that developed during it.

East Tennessee historiography, while varied in its approaches, has evolved into more directed studies examining the sizable Confederate population and the internal dissent. Scholarship seems to be moving toward more focused studies, which allow for a thorough understanding of the region. The development of more studies focusing on East Tennessee's subregions would allow for better comprehension of the region's complexities.

East Tennesseans' pro-Unionist and secessionist responses to the sectional crisis were fueled by the entrance of the ET&VA and ET&GA railroads during the late 1850s. The railroads provided East Tennessee with an efficient and profitable trading outlet to both Virginia and the deep South, regions that adamantly supported secession. These economically advantageous attachments to Virginia and the deep South created a small southern subculture within East Tennessee. At the outbreak of the Civil War East Tennesseans voiced support for both the Union and the Confederacy, indicating not a monolithic region but one divided. This internal division continued throughout the war with the presence of unconventional war in the region. East Tennessee experienced guerilla warfare and bushwhacking that destroyed morale, further entrenching divisions among the populace. While the region exhibited both Union and Confederate sentiments, there were even further subdivisions within East Tennessee. These subdivisions of Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee do demonstrate that the level of attachment to either the Union or the Confederacy varied within East Tennessee itself. Northeast Tennessee remained primarily Unionist from the entrance of the railroad

until the close of the Civil War. Knox County evolved from a region with the smallest secessionist population into a region that possessed East Tennessee's Confederate Headquarters and maintained a sizeable elite Confederate population. Southeast Tennessee contained the largest secessionist and Confederate populations. The region was characterized by small scale cash crop farming and large numbers of slaves, thus it identified most closely with the Confederacy. East Tennessee was thus not a Unionist region but one that contained sizeable Unionist and Confederate populations, reflective of a region internally divided.

This study examines the counties that the ET&VA and ET&GA passed through. The railroad counties provide an understanding of how the economic impetus of the railroad allowed for the development of a southern subculture within East Tennessee. While the railroad counties are not completely indicative of the complexities associated with East Tennessee's internal divisions, they demonstrate the importance of the ET&VA and the ET&GA. This examination reveals the subdivisions within the region and provides focused analyses of the events and attitudes in Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee.<sup>9</sup> These divisions, while a historical construct, contain counties with similar populaces and reactions to secession and the war. The counties within the subdivisions, however, are not completely uniform because each subdivision maintains aberrations that are not consistent with the general findings. While some inconsistencies are apparent, these divisions provide a better understanding of the complexity of East Tennessee during the Civil War era.

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<sup>9</sup> The subdivisions created within this study only consist of the counties in which the railroad ran through. Northeast Tennessee consisted of the counties of Greene, Jefferson, Washington, Sullivan, Carter, and Grainger. Southeast Tennessee consisted of Roane, McMinn, Monroe, Bradley, and Hamilton.

During the antebellum period much of East Tennessee was without railroad access, thus hampering its ability to participate in the southern market. The ET&VA and the ET&GA provided a transportation link from Richmond, Virginia to Dalton, Georgia. The railroads transformed East Tennessee agriculture from subsistence farming into a small scale cash crop system. The entrance of the ET&VA and the ET&GA signaled the rise of production in cotton, wheat, tobacco, and corn. Each of the three subsections of East Tennessee ó Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee ó responded differently to the increased market access. While Northeast Tennessee changed economically, the change was not at the same pace as Knox County or Southeast Tennessee, yet the region experienced a rise in wheat, corn, and tobacco production. Knox County, the juncture of the ET&VA and the ET&GA, increased output of their wheat, corn, and oat crops. Southeast Tennessee had the most direct access to the deep South with connections at Chattanooga to Memphis and Charleston, and it was the region that was most economically similar to the South. By the 1860s Southeast Tennessee farmers grew large amounts of cotton, tobacco, and wheat. East Tennessee, by the onslaught of the Civil War, had begun to resemble the South and its cash crop system. This development is most likely attributable to the growing financial connections fostered by the railroad.

The increased economic opportunities allowed East Tennesseans to identify more strongly with the South. While a southern subculture existed in East Tennessee, it was not a dominating force; instead, it divided the Unionist and secessionist populaces. The level and intensity of southern identity varied drastically among the three subregions. Northeast Tennessee remained primarily Unionist, with aberrations such as Sullivan and

Washington Counties. This minimal Southern identification was visible in the small slave populations and crop cultivation. Knox County, while largely voting against secession, held the largest numbers of slaves and an elite population that was primarily secessionist. This presence of a large slave population and elite secessionists suggests a southern subculture within the region. Southeast Tennessee, a region with the strongest Southern identity, contained a large slave population and the largest secessionist population. The presence of slaves and secessionists in East Tennessee, a region that primarily voted to remain within the Union, indicates internal sectional divisions. These divisions became amplified during the Civil War and manifested themselves in the guerilla and bushwhacking tactics.

The sectional divisions present during the late antebellum period continued and intensified throughout the Civil War. The constant internal fighting and the presence of opposing forces within the region brought the Civil War's consequence to East Tennessee's home front. East Tennesseans were forced to cope daily with violence and constant scavenging from both the Union and Confederate forces. These hardships eventually served to weaken the population's ideological commitments. Northeast Tennessee, containing East Tennessee's largest Unionist population, was home to constant guerilla warfare that turned neighbors against one another. Knox County, occupied by both Confederate and Union troops during the war, was constantly afflicted by scavenging armies. Knox County's citizens were thus forced to subsist on few resources. Southeast Tennessee, much like Knox County, experienced constant foraging for resources, thus depleting their supplies. The region also experienced several instances of guerilla warfare, yet early in the war it was often the Confederate population harassing

the Unionists. The constant internal fighting and the loss of resources to the Union and Confederate Armies demonstrate that while East Tennessee may not have hosted many formal battles, the home front was subject to the war's consequences.

Recent scholarship has proven that the Civil War can not be analyzed in absolutes, and that instead the war and its consequences are complex and varied regionally. East Tennessee, while regarded as a Unionist region, held substantial secessionist and Confederate populations. The ET&VA and the ET&GA brought East Tennessee trade connections with Virginia and the deep South. The drastic rise in crop production between 1850 and 1860, the period in which the railroad entered the region, suggests that East Tennesseans were participating in the newly acquired trade network. The increased trading potential helped to create a southern subculture within East Tennessee. This Southern identification created divisions within the population throughout the late antebellum period and the Civil War, which was manifested in political rhetoric and unconventional warfare. East Tennessee thus was not monolithically Unionist but a region divided in its allegiances. The three subdivisions of Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee all contained different reactions to the events both prior to and during the Civil War. By analyzing these subdivisions East Tennessee's subtle nuances become apparent and create a clearer interpretation of the causes and motivations surrounding the war in East Tennessee. This analysis determines that East Tennessee was not a Unionist aberration within the South, but one that maintained southern characteristics and had a portion of the population that vehemently supported the Confederacy. East Tennessee was a region internally divided

over sectional discrepancies, a consequence of war throughout both the United States and the Confederacy.

CHAPTER 2  
TRANSFORMING EAST TENNESSEE'S ECONOMY INTO THE SOUTHERN  
CASH CROP SYSTEM

Throughout the nineteenth century Appalachians vigorously advocated for internal improvements in an effort to uplift their economically depressed regions. The East Tennessee and Virginia (ET&VA) and the East Tennessee and Georgia (ET&GA) railroads provided East Tennesseans with an opportunity to participate, through the movement of goods and communication, in the Southern market economy. Knoxville Judge E. Alexander commented on the local support for the future railway, saying:

Since I had occasion to visit most of the counties above this, and feeling myself much interest in the subject, I took occasion frequently to talk of the great importance of the contemplated railroad; and I do not now recollect that I met with a single individual of any profession or avocation who was not warmly and zealously in favour [*sic*] of the project.<sup>10</sup>

This statement alludes to East Tennesseans' overwhelming support for their possible economic gain through railroad connections. Alexander further argued that the ET&VA and the ET&GA would stimulate Southern trade. He described the possible trade links, finding:

The highest interests of the country demanding it, and public opinion being so unanimous, I cannot doubt but a railroad will be made from Knoxville to the Virginia line. I think, therefore, it will be entirely safe to rely upon a connection with Knoxville, and thence by the East Tennessee and Georgia, and the Nashville and Chattanooga roads, you can go south and west, in a short time, doubtless, to the Mississippi.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Judge E. Alexander, Knoxville, to Col. Thos. J. Boyd, Richmond, 4 January 1848, transcript by: Richmond, Samuel Shepard Public Printer, 1849, Accession Number HE 2791 L993 R5 1849, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



By the late antebellum period the ET&VA and the ET&GA were East Tennessee's primary transportation links. These railroads provided a highly efficient and extended trading network to the region. Previously, East Tennessee's geographical barriers the Appalachian mountain range, the region's "succession of ridges and minor valleys," and the Cumberland Plateau all had hampered its ability to obtain internal improvements and inhibited trade.<sup>12</sup> The railroads created a route that linked Richmond, Virginia to Dalton, Georgia and covered over two hundred fifty miles in Tennessee.<sup>13</sup> The ET&VA and ET&GA provided access to the larger Southern market with its connection to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad at Chattanooga.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, the expanded trading network connected these once economically isolated and rural regions of Appalachia to the market economy. The commercial access provided by the ET&VA and ET&GA allowed the region's inhabitants to become economically connected with Virginia and the deep South.

Prior to the railroads East Tennessee had to rely solely upon steamboat and wagon transportation. The region's lack of a railroad caused East Tennessee to lose much of its previous trading partnerships with regions possessing this new technology. A Virginian commented on the loss of trade, finding that "South Carolina and Georgia have quite monopolized that commerce which [East Tennessee] at one time so profitable [*sic*] enjoyed."<sup>15</sup> As early as the 1830s East Tennesseans were "immensely interested in the

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<sup>12</sup> Stanley John Folmsbee, *Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee 1796-1845* (The East Tennessee Historical Society: Knoxville, 1939), 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> Secretary of the Interior, *Statistics of the United States, (Including Morality, Property, &c.,) in 1860; the Eighth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 42.

<sup>14</sup> "The News from East Tennessee," *New York Times*, 7 December 1861.

<sup>15</sup> Author unknown, Washington D.C., to Wm. M. Cocke, Washington City, 20 December 1848, transcript by: Richmond, Samuel Shepard Public Printer, 1849, Accession Number HE2791.L993 R5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

possibilities of obtaining even greater advantages through railroad communication.<sup>16</sup>

The entrance of the ET&VA and ET&GA into the region, and the fact that the tracks remained solely in Virginia and the deep South, caused trade to be reinstated with those Southern markets. Thus, on the eve of the Civil War East Tennessee was becoming increasingly financially linked to the South.

East Tennessee's populace widely supported the entrance of a railway in hopes that it would offer them an efficient means of commercial and personal transportation. Even though the ET&VA and the ET&GA did not offer a direct connection from Richmond to Dalton until 1858, East Tennesseans had begun to make drastic commercial alterations in their local economies. These changes can be seen in the unimproved to improved land ratio, the rise in the cash value of both land and livestock, the increase in agricultural production, and the movement towards small cash crop farming. Each of the three East Tennessee regions, Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee, was economically and geographically diverse. Northeast Tennessee's largely mountainous and rocky landscape made it difficult for much of the region to engage in large-scale cash crop farming. Yet, the region, home to the ET&VA, substantially increased its wheat, corn, and tobacco production in order to profit from the newly available financial opportunities. Knox County, the site of the railroad's connection, began to engage in cash crop farming that increased the crops of wheat, corn, and oats. Lastly, Southeast Tennessee, a much more level landscape than Northeast Tennessee, was the region most fully immersed in the typical Southern cash crop system. Southeast Tennessee grew cotton, tobacco, and wheat in high volumes and had a direct access to the deep South. By the time of the Civil War the railroads had linked the regions

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<sup>16</sup> Folmsbee, 84.

economically to both Virginia and the deep South by creating a lucrative trading connection.<sup>17</sup>

The emergence of railroads and industrialization in Appalachia has encompassed much of Civil War era Appalachia's historiography in the last two decades.

Historiography concerning early Appalachia has focused on the importance of railroads in relation to the region's Southern identity. Many historians have argued that railroads, linked many Appalachian towns to their lowland counterparts both economically and ideologically. Kenneth W. Noe discusses this argument in *Southwest Virginia's Railroad*, finding that the link created by the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad caused Southwest Virginia to identify with Richmond. He contends that "Both Northwest Virginia and Southwest Virginia unloaded their ideology as well as their goods off the train."<sup>18</sup> Noe argues that during the 1850s the railroad created the "modern fruits: a shift towards market agriculture, the growth of industries, towns, and tourism, and a new commitment to slave labor."<sup>19</sup> The railroad was the catalyst for the movement of Southwest Virginia into the market economy, which ultimately created a closer relationship with the Southeast secessionist regions.

The emergence of railroads in Southern Appalachia created an agricultural shift from subsistence farming to cash crops. Noe finds that "the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad had hastened the development of capitalistic, slave based, cash-crop agriculture

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<sup>17</sup>J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 573-574 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 466-467.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994; reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2003), 4.

in Southwest Virginia.<sup>20</sup> Martin Crawford also finds that increased access to efficient transportation methods affected Appalachia's economy. In *Ashe County's Civil War* he argues that the transportation networks allowed Western North Carolinians to extend beyond their borders and receive a variety of cultural and economic experiences. The railroads permitted the importing and exporting of goods, communication, and individuals; thus, Western North Carolinians became attuned to national and Southern affairs.<sup>21</sup>

Few historians have argued that the ET&VA and ET&GA provided East Tennessee with trade connections to the Southern market. Works such as Todd Groce's *Social Origins of East Tennessee Confederate Leadership* and John Fowler's *Mountaineers in Gray* have applied this argument somewhat, but only in conjunction with their wider goal of depicting East Tennessee as a region inhabited by Confederates. Both Groce and Fowler find that the ET&VA's and ET&GA's connections linked the region to the South, yet their works lack the nuances that explain how the railroads accomplished this feat. Groce's analysis explores the importance of the railroads in association with the region's towns. He finds that the railroads provided the towns with a direct access to the Southern market; thus, by the beginning of the Civil War East Tennessee towns were largely secessionist. He argues that "more than half of East Tennessee's volunteer officers lived close to the railroad, which, more than any other internal improvement of the antebellum period, linked the region with markets in both the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Crawford, *Ashe County's Civil War: Community and Society in the Appalachian South* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 10.

Lower South and Virginia.<sup>22</sup> While Groce's argument implies that Appalachian regions strove to become more capitalistic, and that those regions eventually became a base for Confederate support, he fails to produce an understanding of how the region as a whole was connected to the Southern cause. Fowler examines the region in relation to its increased ability to export goods. He briefly highlights the agricultural aspect, arguing that the railroad allowed for the easy shipment of wheat and a greater access to the market system.<sup>23</sup> Fowler's research is centered upon the increased output of wheat, and he lacks a thorough understanding of the other agricultural changes that arose after the entrance of the railroad. These works are a brief highlight of how the railroad created a sizeable secessionist population and how that population engaged in the Civil War. Each author only contributes three pages to his discussion of the ET&VA and the ET&GA, which does not accurately depict the region's economic changes. Neither of the works provides an in-depth analysis of how the railroads economically linked the region to the Virginian and deep South markets.

The ET&VA began construction in Northeastern Tennessee in 1849.<sup>24</sup> Construction started in Strawberry Plains, located just north of Knoxville, and continued northeastward until production shifted southward from Bristol, Virginia due to easier iron access. The railroad was completed on 14 May 1858, finally bridging the gap that had

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<sup>22</sup> W. Todd Groce, "The Social Origins of East Tennessee's Confederate Leadership," in Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson, *The Civil War in Appalachia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 35.

<sup>23</sup> John D. Fowler, *Mountaineers in Gray: The Nineteenth Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment, C.S.A.* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> The Northeast Tennessee counties that the railroad went through were: Sullivan, Carter, Washington, Greene, Grainger, and Jefferson.

been stalling possible trade connections.<sup>25</sup> It greatly affected the region, allowing the previously isolated area to be integrated into the national market economy, most importantly to Southern trade. An example is Northeast Tennessee's drastic increase in improved land and agricultural production. The economic advancement created by the railroad linked the region to Virginia and the deep South.

Discussion over the construction of the ET&VA began in 1830 and continued for nineteen years until the railroad bill was officially passed on 6 March 1849 by an Act of Assembly of Virginia.<sup>26</sup> The Virginia city of Lynchburg exemplified the local support for the railroad, characteristic of the region, because it financed a large portion of its creation. At the urging of the railroad company Lynchburg, with a population of about 7,600, donated half a million dollars for stock in order for the Virginia legislature to pass the railroad bill.<sup>27</sup> While this is not entirely representative of Northeast Tennessee's railroad support, it does indicate the local population's desire to gain a more direct southern transportation route to increase their market connection.

The construction of the railroad created highly advantageous financial ties with Virginia and the deep South. Prior to the construction of the ET&VA Northeast Tennessee's trade was limited by the Appalachian mountain range, which restricted trade to Virginia and limited Northern markets.<sup>28</sup> Such a limited trade route cut off many Northeast Tennesseans commercially from the deep South until the completion of the railroad. Thus, Northeast Tennessee had to rely primarily upon the inadequate road

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<sup>25</sup> The Knox County History Committee and East Tennessee Historical Society, ed. Mary U. Rothrock, *The French Broad-Holston Country* (East Tennessee Historical Society: Knoxville, 1946; reprint, East Tennessee Historical Society: Knoxville, 1972), 109.

<sup>26</sup> *Lynchburg's First Railway: The Virginia & Tennessee* (Unknown Publisher, 1936), 4. Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860-1870* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 2.

systems and steam boat transportation. While the steamboat improved East Tennessee's economic condition by allowing for transportation to and from New Orleans, it did not provide an efficient means of travel. The steamboats and keelboats were not able to quickly move through the streams and river beds' obstructions, thus wagon trains were the chief means of importation and exportation for Northeast Tennessee.<sup>29</sup> By 1848, Virginia and Tennessee anticipated the arrival of the railroad and the benefits it would bring. A speech made in the Virginia House of Delegates asserted that 'no scheme has ever been presented to this general assembly, nor deserving of its patronage, or that promises greater benefits to the state, than that proposed by the bill upon your table of a railroad from Lynchburg to the Tennessee line.'<sup>30</sup> The speech shows that economic motives were always important in regard to the railroad, for it insisted, 'that it will advance the Agricultural, Manufacturing and Commercial interests.'<sup>31</sup> While this speech only represents the Virginian side of the railroad debate, it does demonstrate that economic advancement was the motive for the railroad's construction. A letter from Virginian Thomas Boccock to Tennesseans William Cocke and John Rogers, both of whom were members of Congress, reiterates the financial gain that a direct route through Southwest Virginia to Knoxville would provide. He argued:

It would confer immense local benefit by opening up a business and commercial highway for those interesting regions, Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Tennessee of regions whose resources, though heretofore undeveloped, are beginning to make themselves known, and whose vast

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<sup>29</sup> Stanley John Folmsbee, *Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee 1796-1845* (Knoxville: The East Tennessee Historical Society, 1939), 11-12.

<sup>30</sup> *Speech of Mr. Segar (of Elizabeth City and Warwick) on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Bill*, House of Delegates, [23 and 24 February 1849], printed Richmond: Shepard and Colin, 1849, Accession Number HE2791.L993 R5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

mineral wealth and agricultural capabilities are only equaled by the neglect with which they have heretofore been treated.<sup>32</sup>

Internal improvements were always instrumental in aiding the region's economic advancement. A speech made by Mr. Segar, a railroad advocate, in the Virginia House of Delegates reflects such an analysis in its plea for the construction of a railroad through Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. He believed that these internal improvements were an essential element of human nature whose desire was to further their economic prospects. Segar asserted that

God has implanted in man's bosom those instincts of gain which are as uniform and irresistible in his moral nature, as the laws of the physical world upon his physical constitution. Put him down when you will, in a land which sends off by a speedy and cheap transit to market the products of his labor, and labor he will, and accumulate that surplus which constitutes his own wealth, and becomes a constituent part of the wealth of the community of which he is a member.<sup>33</sup>

This statement illustrates that the region's inhabitants and those who were urging for the entrance of the railroad were aware of the possibility of financial gain. It references the idea that once the populace had access to cheaper transportation they would increase their production rates in an effort to gain larger sums of capital. Segar did not limit the ET&VA to the transportation of agricultural products; he also indicated that coal and iron could be transported from the various mines. In addition, he pointed to the region's ability to begin producing substantial amounts of cotton, which would also connect the mountainous regions to the deep South.<sup>34</sup> The planners of the ET&VA were aware that

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas S. Boccock, Washington D.C., to William M. Coker and the John A. Rogers, Washington, 6 January 1849, transcript by: Richmond, Samuel Shepard Public Printer, 1849, Accession Number HE2791.L993 R5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>33</sup> *Speech of Mr. Segar (of Elizabeth City and Warwick,) on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Bill.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



such a transportation route would create a more direct access to New Orleans, one of the nation's busiest ports. In addition to New Orleans, the ET&VA would provide a connection from all Louisiana, from Texas, from Mississippi, from Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee and a good part of Georgia.<sup>35</sup> The residents of Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee, by 1848, wanted to create a Southern transportation route in order to further their financial well-being.

Northeast Tennessee witnessed a substantial rise in agricultural production between 1850, just prior to the entrance of the railroad, and 1860. While the region had long since been involved in the national market economy with their domination of the livestock trade, the railroad allowed for a more substantial immersion into the Southern market. Thus, with such a vast increase of agricultural production Northeast Tennessee's financial concerns became more firmly rooted in their ability to obtain outside trade partners.

Greene, Jefferson, and Washington counties all had significant increases in their land improvement, while their population remained relatively stable, at most only growing by three thousand. The population increases were minimal, Greene County's population increased by about 6%, Jefferson by 22%, and Washington by 7%.<sup>36</sup> Greene and Jefferson Counties' residents improved around thirty thousand acres of land, while Washington had the highest increase moving from only 33,230 to 113,752 improved acres. This increase of improved land by over 300% in relation to the county's 7% population increase indicates that there was a drastic advancement in the ability and or

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas S. Bocock, Washington D.C., to William M. Coker and the John A. Rogers, Washington, 6 January 1849, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>36</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 573-574 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 466-467.

incentive to produce larger crops. The rise in improved land inevitably meant that there would be a growth in market production, which the railroad would transport south. Wheat, tobacco, and cotton were the three crops that had the highest production increases in Northeast Tennessee. Four out of the six counties, with the exception of Carter and Grainger, had an increase of around 100,000 bushels of wheat, which is on average a 200% increase. Greene County had the largest improvement in its wheat production, which swelled by 159,686 pounds. The cultivation of tobacco also increased with the entrance of the ET&VA. This crop, highly associated with the South, became extremely important to Sullivan County's economy. In 1850 Sullivan produced only about 2,610 pounds of tobacco, which rapidly increased to 105,396 pounds by 1860. An increase of more than 100,000 pounds of tobacco clearly illustrates that Sullivan County was partaking in the market economy. Even though cotton was not a major crop in Northeast Tennessee due to the rocky and mountainous terrain, in the ten years following the entrance of the railroad farmers began to produce cotton on a small scale. In 1850 only Grainger County out of the six Northeastern railroad counties produced cotton, but by 1860 both Jefferson and Sullivan counties contributed to Tennessee's cotton production. Sullivan County had the highest increase, producing 12,000 pounds of ginned cotton in 1860.<sup>37</sup> The increase in both improved land and agricultural production demonstrates that by 1860 Northeast Tennessee had become further enmeshed in the market economy, and the nature of both the goods and the transportation links indicates that it was connected to the South.

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<sup>37</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 584-588 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132-137.

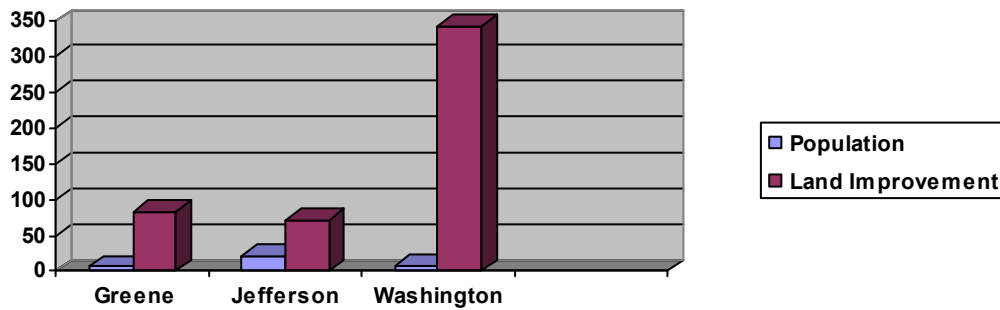


Figure 1. Northeast Tennessee's Percentage Increases in Population Versus Land Improvement Between 1850 - 1860<sup>38</sup>

The economic impact of the ET&VA not only increased the region's agricultural output but also funneled money into an area that lacked a cash economy. The growth of the town of Jonesborough attests to the railroad's ability to initiate financial growth. While the town had always been the economic and legal center of Washington County, the ET&VA and the ET&GA brought additional visitors and money. The railroads used the town of Jonesborough as their legal and financial base. The Jonesborough courthouse was used to mediate the numerous legal disputes that arose from the railroad's violation of land and property rights.<sup>39</sup> One factor that brought cash into the Jonesborough's economy was that the ET&VA company conducted its financial transactions through Jonesborough's banks. Transactions of thousands of dollars were carried out between Jonesborough and New York, providing the region with an increased ability to obtain cash.<sup>40</sup> The railroad not only promoted Washington County's agricultural expansion, but

<sup>38</sup> Sources J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 573-588 and Secretary of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132-137.

<sup>39</sup> East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad Company Railroad Papers, Special Collections at the University of Tennessee

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

it also introduced large sums of money into the region where it had previously not existed.

Northeast Tennessee's agricultural and economic advancements reflect the previously isolated areas transition into a region financially integrated in the national market economy. The increase in agricultural production, particularly that of wheat, tobacco, and cotton, demonstrates that between 1850 and 1860 such advancement required an impetus. The ET&VA provided the region with an efficient access to Virginia and the deep South. The railroad introduced large sums of cash into a region devoid of that fundamental economic factor. The railroad transformed Northeast Tennessee's economic foundation of subsistence farming into the Southern cash crop system.

The ET&VA's and the ET&GA's connection economically linked the city of Knoxville and Knox County to Virginia and the deep South. The road was completed in 1855 and provided a transportation network from Dalton, Georgia to Knoxville.<sup>41</sup> The railroad gave Knox County a direct and efficient connection to not only the northern and southern regions of East Tennessee but also to areas throughout the South. East Tennessee historian, Mary U. Rothrock, argues that the railroad provided "the people of Knox County a much easier outlet for their produce, it stimulated manufacturing in Knoxville and enabled the city to become an important wholesale as well as retail center."<sup>42</sup>

Once completed, the ET&GA became one of the primary methods for freight transportation. In 1854 the office of the Tennessee River M.M. and Transportation

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<sup>41</sup> Folmsbee, 235.

<sup>42</sup> Rothrock, 109.

Company's sales had begun to suffer, leading them to issue a pamphlet entitled *The Cheapest and Best Route: From Charleston, Savannah, or any of the East Cities to Knoxville*. The pamphlet differentiated between its own steamboat transportation and the ET&GA, finding the steamboat's rates to be slightly cheaper. First class goods, including boxes, hats, bonnets, and other measurement goods were considerably cheaper shipped via the steamboat. Yet, second and third class goods, dry goods, saddlery [*sic*], confectionary sugar, coffee, hardware, liquor, casks, butter, and feathers, were only fifteen to eighteen cents higher.<sup>43</sup> In East Tennessee the second and third class goods, which were only relatively more expensive, would be shipped at a higher volume than first class goods. Thus, the elevated prices would not severely affect the region's residents. The pamphlet continued its plea for business, promising that the rates would not be changed for low water or other cause.<sup>44</sup> The mention of rates changing for environmental conditions demonstrates the precarious nature of steamboat transportation. An East Tennessee resident and interest holder in the river transportation company commented to Major Wallace, director of ET&GA, on the region's opinion on river transportation. He found that there was a refusal to invest in the river and that a man should be required by public opinion to be either ashamed or afraid to endeavor to build up river facilities for the transportation of produce and merchandise.<sup>45</sup> While this statement from a financially interested party is clearly biased, it does reveal that much of East Tennessee supported the ET&GA. The resident continued arguing that "We have

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<sup>43</sup> James Williams, *Aggregate Cost of Transportation Between Knoxville, Tenn., and Points on the Southern Railroads, on Merchandise Shipped via Chattanooga*, U.K., Office Tennessee River M.M. and Transportation Co.: Chattanooga, 1854.

<sup>44</sup> James Williams, *Aggregate Cost of Transportation Between Knoxville, Tenn., and Points on the Southern Railroads, on Merchandise Shipped via Chattanooga*, U.K.

<sup>45</sup> James Williams [?], to Major E. Wallace, Chattanooga, 28 December 1853, Campbell Wallace Papers, Accession Number MS1, Special Collections at the University of Tennessee.

always hitherto labored under great disadvantages upon the river.<sup>46</sup> The presence of the word "disadvantages" supports the argument that steamboat transportation was not an efficient means of travel in East Tennessee. The railroad, through a variety of connections, allowed for transportation throughout the deep South, including areas that were once only accessible through steamboat transportation. Virginian Thomas Bocock commented that the railroad

Would be not only the most expeditious route, which is a consideration of great importance in this æra of progress, but it would also be the safest. It would escape, on the one hand, the greater part of the high pressure travel of the Mississippi, with its dangers and delays growing out of its liability to steam boat explosions, running upon snags and hanging on sand bars, and on the other hand it would avoid the storms of the Gulf of Mexico and all the perils of our Southern Atlantic coast.<sup>47</sup>

These statements illustrate that by the mid- 1850s many East Tennesseans viewed the ET&VA and the ET&GA as the primary mode of commercial transportation. The railroads, by 1861, had become one of the leading means of transportation both in freight and passengers. The ET&GA had extremely competitive sales compared to many of Tennessee's other railroads. By the onset of the Civil War the ET&GA's sales had surpassed that of the Western and Atlantic Railroad Company, often doubling its profits.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike Northeast Tennessee, Knox County did not witness a large scale increase in the ratio of unimproved to improved land, yet Knox County had a substantial increase in the cash value of its farms. The cash value of Knox County farms nearly quadrupled

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Thomas S. Bocock, Virginia, to William M. Coker and John A. Rogers, Tennessee, 6 January 1849, transcript by: Richmond, Samuel Shepard Public Printer, 1849, Accession Number HE2791.L993 R5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>48</sup> The Western and Atlantic Railroad Company's and the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad Company's Ledger, The Campbell Wallace Papers 1840-1946, Accession Number MS1, Special Collections at the University of Tennessee.

from \$1,872,886 to \$4,480,870 between 1850 to 1860. Proportionally the cash value of Knox County farms to Tennessee's other two regions was much higher. For example Franklin County, located in Middle Tennessee between Nashville and Chattanooga, had its cash value only increase from \$1,382,501 to \$2,772,390.<sup>49</sup> Such comparisons demonstrate that the increase in Knox County's cash value of farms can not solely be attributed to state-wide inflation. East Tennessee's land prices had inflated, but they had done so because of the railroad. The fact that the ET&VA's and ET&GA's connection coincided with the substantial increase illustrates that the railroads provided the region with a positive economic improvement.

Livestock and agriculture were yet another area in which the railroads gave the region economic advantages. Between the years of 1850 and 1860 Knox County's livestock level either remained stable or slightly decreased, yet much like their cash value of land the value of livestock increased rapidly. In 1850 livestock was valued at \$457,917, but by 1860 it had almost doubled to \$846,253. Again, this is a substantial increase considering that the populations of horses, mules, cows, oxen, other cattle, sheep, and swine had remained relatively stable.<sup>50</sup> Prior to the ET&VA and the ET&GA the region's inhabitants had only a small area in which to sell or barter their livestock, causing them to fetch a depreciated price. The railroad provided Knox County with the ability to export their livestock and partake in the market economy, thus increasing its value.

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<sup>49</sup>J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 585 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132.

<sup>50</sup>J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 585-586 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132-133.

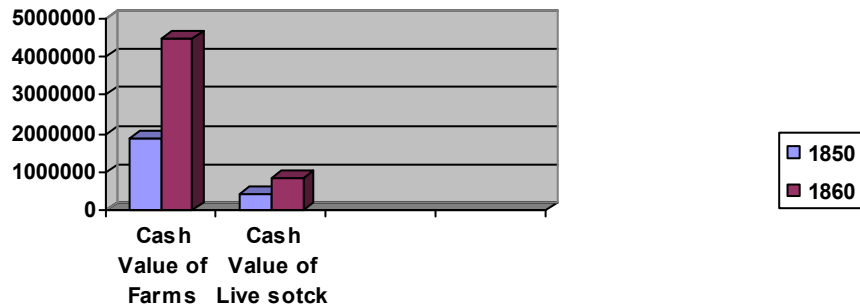


Figure 2. Knox County Cash Value of Land Versus Livestock Between 1850-1860<sup>51</sup>

Knox County's agricultural production shifted considerably between the years of 1850 to 1860, the years in which the railroad entered into the region. In 1850 Knox County had substantial production in the areas of wheat, corn, oats, tobacco, wool, and sweet potatoes. The two most influential were corn, at 861,703 bushels, and oats, at 256,890 bushels. Ten years later Knox County's only leading crops were wheat, Indian corn, and oats. The production of wheat had the largest increase, moving from 39,611 bushels to 138,293 bushels, but the rate of both corn and oats fell. Knox County also had a relatively high level of tobacco production in 1860, reaching 26,441 pounds.<sup>52</sup> The production of tobacco indicates that Knox County was economically identifying with Southern agricultural strategies. The region's shift to fewer and more specific crops indicates the creation of a cash crop system. The wheat crop increase in particular demonstrates that Knox County residents, whose population only grew by about 20%, produced a surplus of wheat for which the ET&VA and ET&GA provided access to Virginia and the deep South markets.

<sup>51</sup> Sources J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 585-589 and Secretary of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132-133.

<sup>52</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 586-587 and Secretary of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-134.



By 1861 the railroad's economic importance was clearly seen in William Parson's Brownlow's newspaper, *Brownlow's Weekly Whig*, which found that the railroad had given the country "incalculable advantages" to [its] commercial interest.<sup>53</sup> The newspaper explained that "the Railroad system has sustained the trade of the country, equalized exchanges and prices, and given new life and activity to all branches of business."<sup>53</sup> While Brownlow was clearly discussing the importance of the railroad in relation to the entire country, it could have been applied to all of East Tennessee, particularly Knox County. The ET&VA and the ET&GA, with their increased ability to move their livestock and crops, firmly entrenched Knox County into the national market economy.<sup>54</sup>

Southeast Tennessee was an important Southern junction for the transportation of goods.<sup>55</sup> The ET&GA and other railroads provided the avenue by which Southerners could move their goods through the otherwise difficult terrain. By the 1850s goods such as cotton, corn, coal, and various other food products, including Louisiana sugar, were common place in the Chattanooga terminals.<sup>56</sup> The presence of such goods illustrated the region's financial connection to the deep South. Many of these crops were not indigenous to the area, thus demonstrating that the ET&GA was moving Southern resources through a supposedly economically isolated region. This indicates that Southeast Tennessee was immersed into the Southern market economy.

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<sup>53</sup> "Railroads and the War," *Brownlow's Weekly Whig* (Knoxville), 28 September 1861.

<sup>54</sup> Rothrock, 112.

<sup>55</sup> The counties comprising Southeast Tennessee were Hamilton, Bradley, McMinn, Monroe, and Roane.

<sup>56</sup> Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *The Chattanooga Country 1540-1951: From Tomahawks to TVA* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1952), 137-138.

Wheat, much as in all other East Tennessee regions, was one of the leading cash crops. Corn was produced at the highest rate throughout the antebellum period, yet it remained relatively stable during the decade in which the ET&GA entered. Unlike corn, wheat production grew dramatically during the decade before the Civil War. Both Monroe and McMinn counties' wheat production grew by over 100,000 pounds between 1850 and 1860. Hamilton County's wheat production increased around 60,000 pounds, or 700%. This is even more remarkable considering the population only grew by 3,183, a 32% increase.<sup>57</sup>

The few historians analyzing the railroads' importance in economically linking East Tennessee to the South have often excluded the regions' cotton and tobacco production. Southeast Tennessee had the highest rate of cotton production in all of East Tennessee during the antebellum years, dwarfing the sudden increase in the Northeastern counties.<sup>58</sup> Yet, in the 1850 census returns two of the five Southeastern Tennessee counties were not producing cotton, and Hamilton County only produced 800 pounds of ginned cotton. Bradley County was the only county with a sizeable production, producing 64,000 pounds of ginned cotton. In the ten-year time span in which the ET&VA and ET&GA were constructed the cotton production in Southeast Tennessee grew dramatically. All of the five counties had some type of production, the smallest being Monroe which produced 2,800 pounds of ginned cotton. The largest increase was seen in McMinn County which prior to 1850 had no recorded production, but grew to

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<sup>57</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 586-587 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-137.

<sup>58</sup> Northeast Tennessee's highest 1860 cotton production was Sullivan County's 12,000 pounds in comparison with Southeast Tennessee's McMinn County's 1860 2,347,200 pounds. In J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 586-587 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-137.

2,347,200 pounds of ginned cotton by 1860.<sup>59</sup> The dramatic increase in the region's cotton production, a crop that was the South's dominant cash resource, demonstrates that East Tennessee was economically mirroring the deep South on a smaller scale. In a brief ten-year period the ET&GA and its connection to the Memphis and Charleston railroad changed not only the region's agricultural productivity but also the crop selection.

Tobacco, another cash crop commonly associated with the South, was produced in large volumes in Southeast Tennessee. Bradley, the only Southeastern county that did not share in the increased tobacco rate, witnessed a decrease of only four pounds in ten years. Roane County had the second highest tobacco production in all of East Tennessee, 80,628 pounds in 1860. Roane, like Sullivan, witnessed an extremely large increase of 65,507 pounds during the decade. McMinn County, yet another example of the elevated tobacco rates, produced 45,454 pounds in 1860. Hamilton County, the Southeast county with the lowest agricultural production, also had a dramatic rise in tobacco cultivation. Between 1850 and 1860 Hamilton County's tobacco cultivation rose from zero to 8,417 pounds. Prior to 1850 and the entrance of the ET&GA Southeast Tennessee's dominant crops were rice, oats, and corn. While corn remained dominant, Southeast Tennessee shifted their production to more Southern based crops such as cotton and tobacco.<sup>60</sup> The movement to make these crops the leading means of surplus production indicates the East Tennessee was not only economically linked to the South but also similar to the South.

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<sup>59</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 587-588 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-137.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

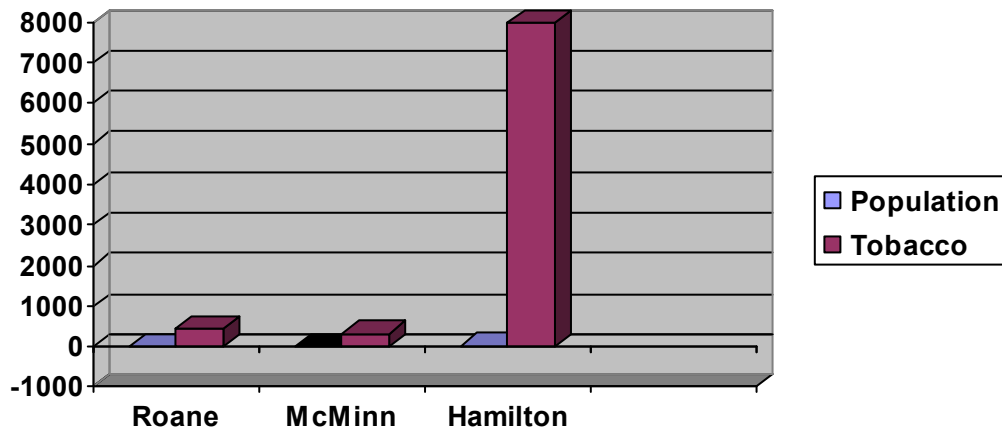


Figure 3. Southeast Tennessee Percentage Increases in Population Versus Tobacco 1850-1860<sup>61</sup>

Rice was one of the dominant crops in Southeast Tennessee in 1850, yet by the close of the antebellum period rice was a minor crop to the region. Bradley County, which had the highest production in 1850, experienced a dramatic drop of 5,741 pounds by 1860. In addition, by 1860 only Hamilton County was producing rice, and it was barely 50 pounds.<sup>62</sup> The decreased production of rice and the increased amount of wheat, cotton, and tobacco indicate that East Tennessee was focusing on cash crops. After the entrance of the ET&GA, Southeast Tennessee had begun to use its land and resources to create large financially lucrative ventures instead of maintaining small diverse subsistence farms.

Southeast Tennessee, like Knoxville, altered its crop selection in the age of the ET&VA and ET&GA. The change in crops demonstrates that the region was beginning

<sup>61</sup> Sources J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 587-588 and Secretary of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-137.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

to resemble Virginia and the deep South economically. The railroads also provided a direct connection to more southern markets that economically linked the two regions. Thus, by the end of the antebellum period the ET&VA and ET&GA had created small cash crop systems and increased the cash value of both farms and livestock.

While much of the literature on East Tennessee has described the region as economically and geographical unified, Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee are inherently distinct. The regions differed in the areas of improved land acreage, cash value of land and livestock, and agricultural production. What did remain consistent throughout the regions was that the ET&VA and the ET&GA allowed them to enter the Southern market economy. These factors illustrate that East Tennessee, while sharing some similarities, was not an economically monolithic region.

Similar economic foundations are apparent throughout the three regions. One of which is the consistent increase in the ratios of unimproved to improved land in all of East Tennessee's counties, with the exception of Carter. Increased wheat production was another factor that was present in all regions. It was a dominant cash crop throughout, offering increased economic opportunities to each of the three regions. These similarities have caused historians to perceive Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee as economically unified.

The three East Tennessee regions were economically diverse in their cash value of land and livestock and their selection and intensity of agricultural production. This diversity demonstrates the varied effects that the ET&VA and the ET&GA had on the region. The railroads provided the region with a number of avenues in which they could economically benefit from the link to the deep South and Virginia.

One of the initial indicators of East Tennessee's integration into the national market economy was Northeast Tennessee's drastic increase in improved acreage. While both Knox County's and Southeast Tennessee's land acreage was improved, it was not done so at the rate of Northeast Tennessee. By 1860 Greene, Washington, and Jefferson counties all exceeded more than one hundred thousand acres of improved land, which indicates that the counties could implement a more commercialized method of farming. East Tennessee's overall increased amount of improved land acreage signifies the region's switch from the isolated subsistence farming to that of commercialized farming for the Southern market.

While Knox County's agricultural production rate did not thrive proportionally to the other two regions of East Tennessee, the cash value of its farms and livestock grew at a much more substantial rate. This can be seen by the fact that the cash value of Knox County's farms quadrupled in the decade between 1850 and 1860. While the cash value of the livestock did not increase at the same rate as the farms, it was still drastically raised. This increase is even more notable in that Knox County's livestock production had begun to fall during the decade.<sup>63</sup> Knox County's substantial increases in both the cash value of its farms and livestock was most likely due to the city of Knoxville and the junction of the ET&VA and the ET&GA. The entrance of the railroads caused land prices to rise and offered a means of commercially exporting livestock, increasing its cash value.

Between 1850 and 1860 East Tennessee's three regions had significant increases in agricultural productions that indicate the economic shift to cash crops. Northeast

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<sup>63</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, 585-586* and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 132-133.

Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee had diverse cash crops with differing rates of production. Northeast Tennessee's crop production was dominated by wheat and tobacco. Yet, it also on a small scale produced cotton. Sullivan County retained the highest tobacco production in all of East Tennessee. Northeast Tennessee reported the highest levels of agricultural production that primarily encompassed corn, wheat, and tobacco. Wheat, corn, and oats were farmed on a large scale in Knox County, yet not at the rate it was in Northeast and Southeast Tennessee. Knox County was devoid of the signature Southern cash crop of cotton, yet it maintained a high level of tobacco. The most significant crop that began to emerge in the region during this period was cotton. Southeast Tennessee had the highest levels of cotton production and in all of East Tennessee and it signifies the region's immersion into Southern economic agricultural strategies. While each of the regions had various means of commercial agricultural production making them three distinct subregions, all of East Tennessee had begun to move towards the Southern cash crop system.

The ET&VA and the ET&GA economically connected the once isolated region into the national market economy by a means of direct commercial access to Virginia and the deep South. With their ability to obtain a prompt means of trade, East Tennesseans began to further expand their agricultural capabilities through improved land and cash crops. While East Tennessee, hampered geographically and financially, would never be able to support the magnitude of the cash crop production present in more Southern regions, by 1850 it was beginning to resemble the Southern economic system. The railroads and their stimulation of a commercialized economy caused East Tennesseans to become economically dependent upon the South. Eventually these economic connections

and similarities would create a sizeable secessionist population in the region that was  
commercially and ideologically connected to Virginia and the deep South.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Noe, 4.



## CHAPTER 3

### EAST TENNESSEE'S SOUTHERN SUBCULTURE

“It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.” Winston Churchill said this of Russia before World War II, but it could just as easily describe East Tennessee during the Civil War. For generations after the conflict local color writers, missionaries, local businessmen, and historians all tried to create an image of East Tennessee during the Civil War to suit their particular agendas, and the result was layers of myth. In the decades after the war many East Tennesseans and outsiders portrayed the region as a bastion of northerness and Unionism in a sea of southern secession. Early historians, such as Oliver P. Temple and Thomas Humes, expressed these themes and wrote works like *The Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee* that described East Tennessee as non-southern and monolithically Unionist. Recently, historians such as Todd Groce have emphasized the presence of Southern culture and Confederates in the region, further muddying the waters. A major reason why East Tennessee has remained an enigma despite historical attention is that it was comprised of three distinct subregions that were different economically, politically, and culturally. Examining it as three subregions demonstrates that East Tennessee was not monolithic and allows for a more accurate analysis of the complexities of the Civil War era in this sector of Southern Appalachia.

The introduction of the railroad in the 1850s affected East Tennessee's three regions differently. The railroad, though, did more than just alter the economies of the different regions. Economic developments—such as the increasing importance of cash crops systems, cotton, and slaves— in some parts of East Tennessee during the 1850s

made these areas more similar to the Deep South, both economically and culturally, than parts of the region untouched by the railroad. Thus by 1860, much of East Tennessee was "Southern," and not a cultural anomaly within the South. The dynamic nature of the region in the Civil War era, with its subregions moving in different economic and cultural directions, created a highly contested political environment. The debate over secession highlighted the differences in the three subregions of East Tennessee, helping to explain the significant number of secessionists in a region that largely voted to remain in the Union.<sup>65</sup>

Culture, let alone Southern culture, is an ambiguous concept that is difficult to define. Immanuel Wallerstein has described culture in general as "institutions and ideas/values that is thought to be long-existing and highly resistant to change." Many historians have attributed to the South a culture based on an intensely religious character, slave workforce, elite class structure, a common racial ideology, and violent nature. Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, in particular, argue that the linkage between the South's intense religious character and slavery made up a distinct aspect of Southern culture. They contend that "slavery laid the foundation for a remarkably broad regional culture, manifested in an increasingly coherent and religiously grounded view that united the slaveholders on fundamental values and linked them, if precariously, to

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<sup>65</sup>The term culture is often vague, yet I rely upon Immanuel Wallerstein's definition for the purposes of this argument. Wallerstein argues that "culture refers to particular cultural behavior with regard to the arts, the manners of everyday life, etc., and is usually the property of some members of the people." He extends his definition of culture by equating the term to that of tradition, finding that culture is "institutions and ideas/values that is thought to be long-existing and highly resistant to change." Traditionally the South relied upon cash crops and slaves as an economic foundation. In addition, strict class divisions were prevalent throughout the South, causing the elite to rule its political organization. Immanuel Wallerstein, "What can one mean by Southern Culture?" in Numan V. Bartley, ed., *The Evolution of Southern Culture* (Athens: The University of Georgia, 1988), 2-3.

the nonslaveholders.<sup>66</sup> Eugene Genovese insists that “slavery gave the South a social system and a civilization with a distinct class structure, political community, economy, ideology, and set of psychological patterns.”<sup>67</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust likewise finds that proslavery arguments were designed to create unity within the white community and produced a common racial ideology that assumed the inferiority of African Americans.<sup>68</sup> The common theme among these historians, and many others, is the central role slavery played in creating antebellum Southern culture.<sup>69</sup>

Using the definition above, it is clear that while East Tennessee was not fully immersed into Southern culture, parts of the region, however, were increasingly exhibiting cultural characteristics attributed to the South and thus behaved differently during the Civil War. Northeast Tennessee, with the smallest number of slaves and least economic connections to the Deep South, had the highest numbers of Unionists, though it was not monolithically Unionist. Knox County, with the largest number of slaves, had few individuals voting in favor of secession but contained large numbers of elite secessionists. Southeast Tennessee, with large numbers of slaves and the largest secessionist population, was most closely tied to Southern culture. Analyzing the three subregions demonstrates that, much like the nation, East Tennessee was divided by the Civil War.

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<sup>66</sup> Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, “The Religious Ideals of Southern Slave Society,” in Bartley, 15.

<sup>67</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: unknown publisher, 1965), 3, quoted in Robert E. Shalhope, “Race, Class, Slavery, and the Antebellum Southern Mind,” *The Journal of Southern History* 37 (November 1971), 558.

<sup>68</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 9-14.

<sup>69</sup> The distinct Southern characteristics which were prevalent in East Tennessee were the plantation system, an aristocracy, and a well developed racial ideology.

East Tennessee's subregions demonstrate that East Tennessee was divided yet exhibited on small levels Southern cultural patterns. The presence of the poem "Cotton" by R.B. Rhett Jr., in the scrapbook of East Tennessean Harry Oscar Land illustrates the region's identification with the South. This poem describes the importance of cotton to the Southern economic system and the value that Southerners attributed to it. Rhett wrote:

I burgeon'd glad, with branches widely spread  
And flaunting blossoms, orange, white, and red;  
Then heavy: hung with fruits great bolls of green,  
Soft curls of silk, laid open to the sight,  
Reveal'd my virgin treasures, pure and white;  
Great fields of glossy green, all starr'd with eyes  
Thick as the Heavenly History, in autumn skies!  
Crown'd the whole world with wealth unknown before:  
Realms gladly struggled for my virgin charm,  
And beauty, fondly clasped me to her arms!<sup>70</sup>

Land, a Chattanooga resident and Confederate sympathizer, clearly recognized the significance of cotton to the Southern system and the inclusion of the poem in his scrapbook demonstrates that Land identified with the South.<sup>71</sup>

East Tennessee was not a remote Appalachian region devoid of the South's signature cash crops and culture. While East Tennessee may not have economically or agriculturally produced as much as other Southern regions, it did produce cash crops, use slaves, and on a small scale vote in favor of secession. *The Nashville Union and American* speculated on East Tennessee's place within the Confederacy, arguing that

It is not in the nature of man that East Tennessee, surrounded on three sides by Confederate territory, and having the great railroad communications that link the Southwest with Virginia and the Carolinas,

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<sup>70</sup> R.B. Rhett Jr., "Cotton," *Charleston Mercury* (n.d.), in Harry Oscar Land Scrapbook, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>71</sup> R.B. Rhett Jr., "Cotton," *Charleston Mercury* (n.d.), in Harry Oscar Land Scrapbook, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

can maintain a peaceful neutrality or hold a non-belligerent status, if its own citizens permit it to be handed over to Lincoln's government.<sup>72</sup>

While this Middle Tennessee newspaper was not completely indicative of East Tennessee, it did offer a valid understanding of why the region contained a secessionist population and the consequences associated with them.

Railroads were extremely important to East Tennessee; they provided access to both Virginia and the deep South helping to create regional and political instability. East Tennessee's three subregions - Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee - all reacted with varied sectional intensities. A majority of Northeast Tennessee's railroad counties voted against secession, except for Sullivan and Washington counties which in large part voted for dissolution. Only about thirty percent of Knox County's population voted in favor of secession, yet the region held some of the most outspoken secessionists and Confederate volunteers at the beginning of the war. Southeast Tennessee had the largest proportion of citizens voting for secession.<sup>73</sup> What remained consistent throughout the three subregions was that secessionists were present in varying degrees, thus disproving the prevalent idea that East Tennessee was monolithically Unionist.<sup>74</sup>

Historians have continually described East Tennessee as a separate region from both Middle and West Tennessee and the South as a whole. Humes argued that "East Tennessee was entirely removed from thoroughly loyal [Confederate] States."<sup>75</sup> Yet, the

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<sup>72</sup> "Shall East Tennessee be a Battle Ground?", *The Nashville Union and American*, 29 June 1861.

<sup>73</sup> Anne H. Hopkins and William Lyons, *Studies in Tennessee Politics: Tennessee Votes: 1799-1976* (Knoxville: The Bureau of Public Administration, The University of Tennessee, 1978), 43.

<sup>74</sup> For the purposes of this chapter's argument I have defined secessionists as individuals who voted in favor of secession in the 1860 vote to separate from the Union and Unionists as an individual who voted against secession in the 1860 vote. These strict definitions will become more complicated and ambiguous once the Civil War begins.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas William Humes, *The Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee* (Knoxville: Ogden Brothers &

ET&VA and the ET&GA helped to cultivate a nominally Southern culture into one that became largely Southern. Many historians have labeled the region as a Unionist stronghold disregarding that the subregions were bitterly divided in their loyalties. This historiographical trend began with nineteenth century historians such as Oliver P. Temple and Thomas Humes and has persisted. It can be seen as late as Durwood Dunn's 1979 *An Abolitionist in the Appalachian South* that argues that "East Tennessee's sense of separateness was defined by geography and by a fear of being continually displaced, economically and politically, by the faster-growing and more prosperous middle section of the state."<sup>76</sup>

The emphasis on East Tennessee's Unionist population was well publicized during the war years, which influenced the public's and historians' view. The *New York Times* in 1862 stressed that Tennessee was the only Confederate state in which Unionists remained in national affairs. The article also stated that "Tennessee, it will be remembered, was *tricked* out of the Union in a more shameful manner than any other State."<sup>77</sup> The newspaper's usage of the word "tricked" created an image that the state was deceived and forced into secession by other more vehemently secessionist regions. That this extremely popular newspaper argued that the state was "tricked out of the Union" most likely aided the monolithic interpretation of East Tennessee as a Unionist stronghold.

The economic institution of slavery is another topic that has only marginally been discussed in relation to East Tennessee. Dunn compares East Tennessee's small slave

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Company, 1888; reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1974), 6.

<sup>76</sup> Durwood Dunn, *An Abolitionist in the Appalachian South: Ezekiel Birdseye on Slavery, Capitalism, and Separate Statehood in East Tennessee, 1841-1846* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 24.

<sup>77</sup> "Unionism in East Tennessee," *New York Times* (New York), 22 January 1862.

population to the rest of the South, arguing that slavery was "unprofitable" [and] harmed slaveowners economically as well as morally.<sup>78</sup> While Dunn is correct in his argument that slavery was never an extremely profitable institution for East Tennessee, he does not acknowledge the presence of racism in a region supposedly "separate" from the South. Many of East Tennessee's subregions did not vote for secession in large numbers but contained racist attitudes. East Tennessee's racism was displayed by William "Parson" Brownlow, a staunch Unionist and racist. He argued that "when removed from slavery, people of African descent naturally became barbaric, and thus slavery was needed to ensure the safety of the white population."<sup>79</sup>

Few works have been published that discuss the considerable sectional division in East Tennessee during the late antebellum period and the Civil War. Eric Russell Lacy's *Vanquished Volunteers*, one of the earliest works that discusses the presence of East Tennessee Confederates, argues that antebellum East Tennessee was bitterly divided. Lacy attributes this political instability to the region's slave population, political allegiances, strong Unionist leaders, and economics.<sup>80</sup> Lacy provides an initial understanding of East Tennessee's sectional climate during the prewar years yet does not provide a complete analysis of its sectional factors. A recent historiographical trend has highlighted the region's sizeable Confederate populations. Historians such as Noel C. Fisher, John D. Fowler, and W. Todd Groce argue that East Tennessee was divided in its loyalties and home to large secessionist populations. Both Fisher and Fowler focus

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<sup>78</sup>Dunn, 44.

<sup>79</sup> Kyle N. Osborn, "Bondage or Barbarism: Parson Brownlow and the Rhetoric of Racism in East Tennessee, 1845-1867" (East Tennessee State University: Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2007), abstract.

<sup>80</sup> Eric Russell Lacy, *Vanquished Volunteers: East Tennessee Sectionalism from Statehood to Secession* (Johnson City: East Tennessee State University Press: 1965), 186-189.

primarily on the war years, particularly the home front and battlefields, failing to provide an adequate understanding of the region's motivations. Groce's *Mountain Rebels* provides a regional analysis, both socially and economically, indicating some general comparisons between individual wealth and secessionists. Groce tends to emphasize the Confederate population, while not commenting on the importance of the relationship between secessionists and Unionists. Only recent historiography has begun to accurately interpret the region, yet the scholarship still lacks analysis on the subtle nuances that define East Tennessee.

Two themes, secessionists and slavery, remained constant in East Tennessee during the turbulent period preceding the Civil War. East Tennesseans' political choices often reflected the region's deep class divisions. East Tennessee's wealthier citizens, particularly those in Knox County and Southeast Tennessee, tended to be secessionists and the lower classes Unionists. East Tennessee Unionists often believed that the Confederacy would be a nation ruled by the elite at the expense of the yeomanry. Slavery was present throughout the region and increased continually during the decade in which the railroad was developed. The region's sizeable secessionist population and the presence of slavery reveal that East Tennessee was culturally connected to the South.

Despite these similarities, significant differences among the three regions demonstrate that East Tennessee was not one cohesive ideological region. While each of the three regions had sizeable secessionist populations, the rate and intensity of secessionism varied. In addition, while slavery was present in each of the three regions the average number of slaves also varied along with its effect on secession. The



differences in the region's responses to secession, slavery, and the diversity of cash crops demonstrate that East Tennessee was not economically or culturally unified.

East Tennessee had pockets of extreme Unionism and secessionism, which differed among the three subregions. Northeast Tennessee most exemplified this characteristic, with Sullivan County having the highest secessionist vote in East Tennessee and Carter County the lowest. In addition, the region averaged the smallest numbers of slaves. Knox County was also home to much sectional discord among its residents. Popular and extremely vocal Unionists, such as William "Parson" Brownlow, Andrew Johnson, and Thos. A. H. Nelson, actively advocated remaining in the Union. Once Tennessee seceded they promoted East Tennessee's removal from the Confederacy. Southeast Tennessee had the highest average percentage in favor of secession, which corresponded to its cash crop structure and elevated slave population.<sup>81</sup> Southeast Tennessee identified most closely with the South.

Northeast Tennessee's reputation as a Unionist stronghold both prior to and after the Civil War derived out of the longstanding idea that Northeast Tennessee has an inherent patriotism from the Revolutionary War. J. Rueben Sheeler's "Background Factors of East Tennessee" contends that the "settlers of East Tennessee are descendants of men who fought valiantly for colonial independence."<sup>82</sup> Despite this image, a *New York Times* letter to the editor in early May of 1861 argued that there was only a small population of patriotic Unionists ready to fight secession. *The Nashville Union and*

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<sup>81</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853; reprint, New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 573-574 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 466-467, and Anne H. Hopkins and William Lyons, *Studies in Tennessee Politics: Tennessee Votes: 1799-1976* (Knoxville: Bureau of Public Administrators, The University of Tennessee, 1978), 43.

<sup>82</sup> J. Reuben Sheeler, "Background Factors of East Tennessee," *The Journal of Negro History* 29 (April 1944), accessed at JSTOR, 168.

*American* also discussed the supposed Unionist stronghold in Northeast Tennessee and asked, "Where are Tennessee's patriotic orators, that they are not making the mountain tops and the glens of East Tennessee ring with their fervent appeals to the descendants of those who won the glorious victory of King's Mountain and fought with Johnson in all his battles?"<sup>83</sup> King's Mountain, a battle fought in South Carolina during the southern campaign of the Revolutionary War, involved about one-thousand East Tennessee, North Carolina, and Southwest Virginia patriot volunteers. These men marched over the mountains and defeated the British. East Tennesseans have often used this battle to demonstrate their revolutionary spirit, courage, and patriotic fervor for the Union.<sup>84</sup>

Slaves, while not vital to Northeast Tennessee's agricultural economy, were present during the decade prior to the Civil War. The numbers of slaves in Sullivan, Washington, Carter, and Grainger counties remained relatively stable between 1850 and 1860, but both Greene's and Jefferson's increased significantly. Jefferson County had the largest increase with a growth of over four hundred slaves in ten years, a thirty percent increase.<sup>85</sup> Grainger County's slave population remained relatively stable during the decade; in 1850 it was 1,035 and in 1860 it was 1,065. Yet, the free white population declined by about fifteen hundred.<sup>86</sup> Such a large decrease over the period caused the slave population to comprise around ten percent of its population, making them a sizeable minority. The existence of slaves in the region, a workforce that was vital to the South, indicates that the region was even at a small level, culturally connected with the South.

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<sup>83</sup> "East Tennessee," *Nashville Union and American* (Nashville), 14 May 1861.

<sup>84</sup> Fisher, 7.

<sup>85</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, 573-573* and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 467-468.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Northeast Tennessee, primarily Unionist, did not have a direct correlation between a county's number of slaves in 1860 and their support for secession. The counties with the highest number of slaves, Jefferson and Greene County, had the smallest percentage of their population voting for secession, with the exception of Carter County which had both the lowest slave population and secessionist vote.<sup>87</sup> Ultimately, Northeast Tennessee contained the region's smallest slave population which reflects the idea that the region was predominately Unionist and only limitedly connected with the South.

The region's predisposition towards the Union was visible in its voting pattern in the 1860 Presidential election. Frederick S. Heiskell, a native of Winchester, Virginia who married a Jonesborough resident and then moved to Rogersville in the years before the war, had strong ties with Northeast Tennessee.<sup>88</sup> He established the *Knoxville Register* in 1816, allowing him to remain active in East Tennessee politics.<sup>89</sup> Heiskell pleaded with Tennessee Senator John Bell, an 1860 Presidential candidate, to convince other men to come to some sort of reconciliation. He argued that "You can certainly think of something to suggest to other grand men— some plan that will induce the people to house respect, that will stay the torrent of Southern fanaticism."<sup>90</sup> Bell, the presidential candidate for the Constitutional Union Party, had opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the LeCompton Constitution and advocated for the South to remain in

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<sup>87</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 573-574 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 466-467, and Hopkins and Lyons, 43.

<sup>88</sup> Biographical Information on Frederick Heiskell, Frederick S. Heiskell Collection, Accession 22, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

<sup>89</sup> *Knoxville Daily Chronicle* (Knoxville), 22 February 1876, in Frederick S. Heiskell Collection, Accession 22, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

<sup>90</sup> Frederick S. Heiskell, to Senator John Bell, 17 November 1860, Frederick S. Heiskell Collection, Accession 22, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.

the Union by compromising.<sup>91</sup> Bell won a large percentage of the votes in the railroad counties. Only Sullivan and Greene had less than a fifty percent vote in favor of Bell. Carter, Jefferson, and Grainger overwhelmingly supported Bell, all voting over 60% for him. In the 1860 presidential election Jefferson County voted 69.4% in favor of Bell, which was only surpassed by Knox County's 71.9%.<sup>92</sup> Northeast Tennessee's desire to remain in the Union was reflected in their large Unionist populations.

Despite this apparent staunchly Unionist vote, Northeast Tennessee had pockets of extreme secessionism and Unionism. Washington and Sullivan counties, for example had significant secessionist populations, respectively 41.4% and 71.7%.<sup>93</sup> A meeting in Washington County called for secessionist loyalty, finding that

We are for Tennessee taking her stand now and forever with her sister States of the South, believing that her every interest, political, social, commercial and otherwise imperatively demand her to assume that position, in order that she may in common with the seceded States, resist all encroachments upon those interests.<sup>94</sup>

The reference to the South's influence on Tennessee's commerce suggests that economic reasons were influential in determining the secessionist vote. This reference from an East Tennessee county with one of the smallest numbers of slaves and cotton production suggests that the East Tennessee railroad counties were increasingly reliant on the deep South for trade.

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<sup>91</sup> Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics and Guerilla Violence in East Tennessee, 1860-1869* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 22-23 and W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 34.

<sup>92</sup> Hopkins and Lyons, 43.

<sup>93</sup> Hopkins and Lyons, 43.

<sup>94</sup> "Meeting at Washington County: Jonesboro, May 6, 1861," *Nashville Union and American* (Nashville), 11 May 1861.

While Northeast Tennessee was primarily Unionist its small secessionist population was vocal in its sectional ideology. A call to a pro-Confederate meeting on 1 May 1861 alluded to the idea that there were secessionists in Greene County. The newspaper ad requests “the friends of their homes and their firesides” to come en masse “to attend a meeting that we may unite as one man in Greene county, to resist the coercive war policy of Lincoln.”<sup>95</sup> The secessionists who created this article felt that the pro-Confederate population should band together in an effort to secede from the Union. While this article does not prove that the secessionist population was derived from the economic advancement offered by the railroad, it does illustrate that Northeast Tennessee contained secessionists and was divided. Greenville’s secessionists argued that “Tennesseans will never be subjugated! No, never! never!!”<sup>96</sup>

Northeast Tennessee held East Tennessee’s smallest numbers of secessionists, as three out of the six railroad counties had at most a 30% vote in favor of secession, yet both Sullivan and Washington had sizeable secessionist populations.<sup>97</sup> Sullivan County voted over 70% and Washington County 40% in favor of secession.<sup>98</sup> Sullivan’s and Washington’s large support for the Confederacy does not support the widespread historiographical theme that Northeast Tennessee was monolithically Unionist, influenced by its extremely patriotic past. This supposed Unionist region held sizeable slave populations that reflected Southern cultural characteristics. Throughout the antebellum years Northeast Tennesseans were conscious of the financially lucrative trade

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<sup>95</sup> “Anti-Coercion, Anti-Abolitionist, Anti-Subjugation, Anti-Lincoln Meeting and States Rights Convention at Greenville” *Greenville Democrat* (Greenville) in *Nashville Union and American* (Nashville), 27 April 1861.

<sup>96</sup> “Anti-Coercion, Anti-Abolitionist, Anti-Subjugation, Anti-Lincoln Meeting and States Rights Convention at Greenville.”

<sup>97</sup> Hopkins and Lyons, 42.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

present between the region and the deep South and their need to maintain it. This sentiment is visible at the onslaught of the war when the *Nashville Union and American* argued that East Tennessee Unionists caused other East Tennesseans to “refuse to assist with their sympathies, their purse and their arms.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, the entrance of the ET&VA and the ET&GA strengthened these connections and linked sections of Northeast Tennessee to the South.

Knox County initially did not vote in favor of separating from the Union, but by the outbreak of the Civil War it was increasingly pro-Confederate.<sup>100</sup> *The Knoxville Daily Register* reported on Tennessee’s secession and the community’s ideological conclusions from both its recent political and military strife. The pro-Confederate newspaper found that the “war has been fairly inaugurated by the invasion of Virginia, and our volunteers are eager to share the honor of defending that glorious old Commonwealth from the polluting tread of the barbarous Northern foe, who only through her heart can strike at the liberty of Tennessee.”<sup>101</sup> Its descriptive language, such as identifying the Confederacy as the “glorious old Commonwealth” and the Union as a “barbarous” foe, demonstrates how the secessionist population identified with the Confederacy and portrayed the Union in a negative light.

It is evident that many of the county’s secessionists were from a wealthier background, and were most likely profiting from the newly acquired trade and communication connections to the South. J.G. M. Ramsey, an affluent Knoxville citizen, in a letter to his brother expressed the county’s pro-secession ideology, finding that “Our Christmas passed over with little incident except some strong secession sentiments

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<sup>99</sup> “Andrew Johnson and Thos. A.H. Nelson,” *Nashville Union and American*, 4 May 1861.

<sup>100</sup> Hopkins and Lyons, 43.

<sup>101</sup> “The East Tennessee Volunteers,” *The Knoxville Daily Register*, 29 May 1861.

offered yesterday among our friends in town.<sup>102</sup> Ramsey's discussion of secession as early as December 1860 reveals a pro-Confederate attitude; in conclusion he vowed "A Southern Confederacy! I pledge to you my life and honor!"<sup>103</sup>

Ramsey argued in December of 1860 that "My disunion sentiments like a contagion are extending all around me [*sic*] it will soon be epidemic" [yet they] dismiss the common people."<sup>104</sup> Ramsey found that secession in Knoxville predominated among the upper class. Margaret Crozier Ramsey, a self-pronounced secessionist, also endorsed the concept that secessionists were among the upper class. She remarked that her family was of considerable stature in the area. Reflecting upon the pre-war and early war years, she found "that those who visited us so often eat at our table flattered and fawned the most were the first to injure- together with the still lower class that had been fed and clothed by our bounty ó O for the grace to forgive them."<sup>105</sup> She argued that the lower class was "the first to injure them" which alludes to the fact that East Tennessee's lower classes were Unionists.<sup>106</sup>

Henry Lenoir, another prosperous Knox County citizen, fully supported East Tennessee in its decision to withdraw from the Union. His actions during the prewar period demonstrated the link between the county's demographics and its secessionist vote. Lenoir left the University of Virginia upon Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops. He asserted that the "die is cast my school days are over" while the Confederate States

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<sup>102</sup> J.G.M. Ramsey, Meckleburg, to Col. W.B.A. Ramsey, Nashville, 26 December 1860, Special Collections University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Ramsey Collection.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> J.G.M. Ramsey, Meckleburg, to Col. W.B.A. Ramsey, Nashville, 26 December 1860, Special Collections University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Ramsey Collection.

<sup>105</sup> Diary of Margaret B. Crozier Ramsey, 29 May 1865, Special Collections at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

strive to maintain the position they have assumed I expect to back them.<sup>107</sup> Lenoir discussed Johnson's and Nelson's targeting of the region's small scale farmers. Johnson and Nelson advocated throughout Knox County and East Tennessee for resistance to secession and allegiance to the Union. They were regarded by many Southern sympathizers as traitors. *The Nashville Union and American* reported on their activities, finding that "had not Judas betrayed his Savior and Benedict Arnold his country, we could not have believed in such debasement of human nature."<sup>108</sup> Lenoir remarked on Johnson's and Nelson's Unionist campaigns in Knox County saying,

If Johnson and Nelson go around here speaking much more they will make some of our backwoods yeomanry think that the Southern Confederacy is about to try to divorce; them, take away all liberties and elect a king to rule over them and grind them into powder, and that their only hope of deliverance is in the bosom of Abraham and under the sheltering wing of Black Republican cohorts. Nelson tells them to die before they will go with the Southern Confederacy, and some of them say they will die.<sup>109</sup>

In this statement Lenoir argued that the Unionists promoted the concept that the Confederacy would benefit the wealthy at the expense of the subsistence farmer. It also reinforces the idea that Knox County's wealthier citizens were those who supported the South.

Knox County supported the Southern system of slavery by integrating the institution into its society. The county had the highest number of slaves, 2,370, in all of East Tennessee in 1860.<sup>110</sup> Knoxville's support of the institution during the turbulent antebellum period demonstrates the region's cultural connection with the South. While

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<sup>107</sup> Henry Lenoir, Charlottesville, VA, to Lizzie Key, Chattanooga, TN, 15 April 1861, David McKendree Key Papers, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>108</sup> Andrew Johnson and Thos. A. H. Nelson, *Nashville Union and American*, 4 May 1861.

<sup>109</sup> Henry Lenoir, Loudon, to Lizzie Key, Chattanooga, TN, 6 May 1861, David McKendree Key Papers, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>110</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 586-587 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, 133-137.



the region's increased numbers of slaves did not correspond with Knox County's low percentage of citizens voting for secession, it does demonstrate that the region shared fundamental principles with the Confederacy's foundation maintain relatively few, but socially and culturally influential, slave owners.

Knox County differed from the other regions of East Tennessee in that while a large majority of its citizens did not vote for secession, a small portion of the population held distinctly Southern traits such as slavery and an elite ruling class. Many manuscript sources reveal that Knox County had a strong secessionist population among the upper class. Once Tennessee seceded, Knox County became a center of military activity and numerous civilians enlisted in the Confederate Armies. According to a local paper, by the end of May 1861 Knoxville was home to about eighteen to twenty companies.<sup>111</sup> *The Knoxville Daily Register* applauded its county's overwhelming support for the Confederacy and congratulated "the volunteers of our mountain district upon their near prospect of sharing in the glory."<sup>112</sup>

Southeast Tennessee had the largest overall secessionist population during the late antebellum period. Over forty percent of Monroe's, McMinn's, and Hamilton's populations voted in favor of secession.<sup>113</sup> David McKendree Key, a Chattanooga resident, remarked on Tennessee's secession, stating that "From the news we have [at Camp Gunning] there is no doubt but the State has gone out by a large majority" the vote in Middle Tennessee is almost a unit and the Secession vote in East Tennessee is

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<sup>111</sup> "The East Tennessee Volunteers," *The Knoxville Daily Register*, 29 May 1861.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Hopkins and Lyons, 43

larger than expected.<sup>114</sup> Key's statement finds that East Tennessee had secessionists among its populace contradicts the prevalent historical idea that East Tennessee was strictly Unionist. It also begins to reveal how Southeast Tennessee's elite viewed the sectional occurrences prior to the Civil War. While Key does not represent all of Southeast Tennessee, he does partially represent the region's elite and their attitude towards secession. He felt that East Tennessee was 'in the South, and long live the South.'<sup>115</sup>

Slavery predominated in Southeast Tennessee, which reflects the region's immersion into Southern culture. A high correlation existed between the increase of slaves between 1850 and 1860 and the 1860 vote for secession in Southeast Tennessee. The railroad counties that had the highest increase of slaves were the same counties that voted for secession at the highest rate; this was evident in Monroe, McMinn, and Hamilton counties. In the ten-year time span between 1850 and 1860 McMinn's slave population rose by 341, Monroe's 412, and Hamilton's by a staggering 747. Hamilton County's increase in slaves was significant because the slave population grew by over 211% in comparison to the overall population growth of 32%. Southeast Tennessee's slaves on average composed over 10% of its population, which is a sizeable minority. Northeast Tennessee's slave population only consisted of 6.67%. The elevated slave population further demonstrates the region's similarities to Southern culture. With the exception of Roane and Bradley counties each of the counties voted in excess of forty

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<sup>114</sup> David McKendree Key, Camp Gunning, to Lizzie Key, Chattanooga, TN, 15 April 1861, David McKendree Key Papers, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

percent in favor of secession.<sup>116</sup> Southeast Tennessee's increased number of slaves reveals the region's strong Southern identity.

Ultimately, by the outbreak of the Civil War Southeast Tennessee was the region with the strongest support for the Confederacy. This can be seen in a report from Hamilton County on its participation in the Home Guard and Confederate volunteers. Hamilton Countians argued "We are all on fire over here, and are determined to do good service for the protection of Southern soil."<sup>117</sup> Southeast Tennessee's strong secessionist population is most likely attributed to their close proximity to the deep South through its rail connections at Chattanooga. Southeast Tennessee was also more entrenched in the Southern economic system through its large production of cotton and number of slaves. Overall, Southeast Tennessee was the least politically divided at the outbreak of the Civil War.

East Tennessee has often been labeled as the "Switzerland of America" for both its mountainous terrain and its supposed unwavering loyalty to the Union while located within the South. Colonel Felix A. Reeve of the U.S. Volunteers discussed East Tennessee's political loyalties, arguing that the

Brave, patriotic, and free-spirited people of East Tennessee are not unlike the noble and unconquerable race of men who reside on the declivities and in the valleys of the Swiss Alpine and Jura ranges, and who have so long maintained their independence and autonomy as a federal republic in the midst of the changing empires of Europe!<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> J.D.B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, 573-574 and *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 466-467, and Hopkins and Lyons, 43.

<sup>117</sup> "Hamilton County," *Nashville Union and American*, 2 May 1861.

<sup>118</sup> East Tennessee in the War of Rebellion, delivered at the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, District of Columbia, [3 December 1902], in Felix A. Reeve, *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. Commandery of the District of Columbia. War Papers. East Tennessee in the War of Rebellion*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975), 4

This statement ignores the sizeable numbers of secessionists who were present throughout East Tennessee. The region's Southern traits, such as their agricultural choices, participation in slavery, and sometimes strong secessionists vote have been ignored.

The late antebellum years demonstrated that East Tennessee was not a monolithic Unionist territory but a region politically divided through its connections economically and culturally to Virginia and the deep South. During the 1850s the ET&VA and the ET&GA connected the once isolated Appalachian region to the South. The financial connections offered by the railroad helped its citizens to identify with Southern culture, which was reflected in the 1860 presidency vote. Much of East Tennessee supported Bell with his platform to remain in the Union on the contingency that the Union acknowledged certain Southern rights. East Tennesseans' overwhelming support for Bell indicates that much of the region on some level identified with Southern needs while still hoping to stay in the Union. By the 1860 vote for separation parts of East Tennessee had strong secessionist populations. Slavery was another Southern cultural characteristic that was prevalent throughout East Tennessee. Overall, East Tennessee not only economically resembled the South with its implementation of small scale cash crops systems, but also with its large secessionists vote, slavery, and later military support for the Confederacy.

Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee all had varied responses to the sectional crises during the late antebellum period. Northeast Tennessee was the most widely divided region in its sectional loyalties, with counties such as the overwhelmingly secessionist Sullivan County and the intensely Unionist Carter County.

Sullivan County's close proximity to Virginia, the fact that it had the highest cotton and tobacco production in Northeast Tennessee, the region's highest slave population, and its overwhelming support for the 1860 Democratic candidate Breckinridge demonstrates Sullivan County's close connection with the South. Carter County did not participate in the Southern cash crop system or produce crops such as tobacco or cotton, it had the lowest improved to unimproved land ratio, and Northeast Tennessee's smallest slave population. Knox County, unlike Northeast or Southeast Tennessee, voted largely against secession and was home to prominent Unionists leaders. Knox County's stance on secession reflected class divisions, with its wealthier citizens primarily being secessionists. These class divisions are reflective of the South's planter elite and yeoman class. On the eve of the Civil War Knox County was a recruitment center for the Confederate military and produced large numbers of Knox County Confederate volunteers. Southeast Tennessee had East Tennessee's largest numbers of secessionists and cash crop systems and a substantial slave population. It, similar to Knox County, had many of its secessionists belonging to the elite class. The ET&VA and the ET&GA provided Southeast Tennessee, in its close proximity to the deep South and Middle Tennessee, trade connections that enhanced its Southern characteristics. Ultimately, these three regions greatly differed in their sectional loyalties and the degree in which they supported them. East Tennessee thus should not be regarded as a monolithic region but instead one bitterly divided.

At the outbreak of the Civil War portions of East Tennessee were attuned to Southern economic and cultural practices, such as cash crops, slavery, and class divisions. The region was home to both strong secessionists and Unionists populations

which would create bitter political divisions among its inhabitants. The intensity of those loyalties would differ among the three regions and evolve throughout the war. East Tennessee's connection with Southern culture was strengthened by the ET&VA and the ET&GA that provided for the initial economic connection for such a political division to be created.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF CIVIL WAR IN EAST TENNESSEE

The railroads helped to create a Southern subculture in sections of East Tennessee during the late antebellum period, helping to divide the allegiances of East Tennesseans by the time of the Civil War. East Tennessee's internal divisions resulted from its large population of both Union and Confederate civilians and the guerilla violence. These divisions were manifested in the three distinct subregions of Northeast Tennessee, Knox County, and Southeast Tennessee. The war's hardships caused the more pro-Confederate regions, Knox County and Southeast Tennessee, to lose their enthusiasm for the Confederacy.<sup>119</sup> Throughout the war Northeast Tennessee remained heavily Unionist and was home to many instances of guerilla activity. Knox County retained East Tennessee's Confederate Headquarters and a number of prominent Unionists and Confederates, thus reflecting internal division. Southeast Tennessee maintained the largest Confederate population throughout the war, yet as the war destroyed the home front it also diminished Confederate loyalties. East Tennessee's political conflicts intensified during the war, demonstrating that far from being a Unionist monolith, East Tennessee, like the nation as a whole, was divided.

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<sup>119</sup> Gary Gallagher's *Confederate War* explores the question of the continuity of Confederate nationalism. While this study finds that portions of East Tennessee's Confederate nationalism were destroyed by the region's unconventional warfare, Gallagher argues that Confederate nationalism persisted throughout the war. Gallagher contends that while Confederates became war weary they remained firmly nationalistic throughout the war. Gallagher determines that "although class tension, unhappiness with intrusive government policies, desertion, and war weariness all form part of the Confederate mosaic, they must be set against the larger picture of thousands of soldiers persevering against mounting odds, civilians enduring great human and material hardship in pursuit of independence, and southern white society maintaining remarkable resiliency until the last stage of the war." Gary Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 4.

The Civil War in East Tennessee is often discussed in the context of conventional warfare and unconventional warfare, bushwhacking and partisan activities. Both types of war actively weakened the morale of East Tennessee's home front. The battles of Knoxville, Lookout Mountain, and Chickamauga brought the war and its consequences to the front door of many sections of East Tennessee. One consequence of the conventional war was the need for both armies to obtain resources, often food. Knox County and Southeast Tennessee in particular reported the constant food scavenging and its effect on the population. Both the Union and Confederate Armies' acquisition of supplies depleted those of East Tennessee, creating a highly resentful population. East Tennesseans confronted unconventional war more often than they did formal battles and traveling armies. The region was inhabited by both Union and Confederate bushwhackers, creating constant violent skirmishes and a fear of retribution for one's political loyalties. Prominent citizens also engaged in a form of unconventional warfare, most notably Knoxville's William "Parson" Brownlow, who persecuted known Confederates. After the 1863 Union occupation of Knoxville Brownlow condemned Confederates to prison or beatings. East Tennessee's constant interaction with both conventional and unconventional war weakened the community's allegiances; yet, at the conclusion of the war both Union and Confederate sentiments were evident. Several historians have examined these themes pertaining to both East Tennessee and other similar Appalachian regions. These works have provided a better understanding of the region's sectional complexities.

Only the social implications of the major battles in East Tennessee will be examined, for there have been countless traditional accounts discussing them. In the past



few decades historians have begun to produce indepth examinations of East Tennessee's guerilla warfare and its impact on the home front. The unconventional war in East Tennessee further deepened the already present sectional divisions. W. Todd Groce focuses primarily upon the Confederate population and its participation in both the conventional and unconventional war. Groce determines that "the social chaos and dislocation resembled a mountain feud on a grand scale, continuing the violence and uprooting hundreds of families already torn apart by the war."<sup>120</sup> His work incorporates guerilla activity, desertion rates, and Confederate persecution, yet he rarely discusses particular instances of irregular warfare. Noel Fisher devotes an entire monograph to East Tennessee's unconventional war. He argues that "the second dimension of the Civil War [unconventional warfare] was seemingly less honorable and more brutal" yet it was equally important in determining the loyalties of thousands of communities, the fate of the Union, and the shape of postwar Southern politics and society.<sup>121</sup> Fisher finds that opposing political interests were the impetus for a majority of East Tennessee's violence, particularly bushwhacking.<sup>122</sup> He concludes, "The guerilla war was an ideological conflict, and the political motives, though sometimes blurred and smudged, were always visible."<sup>123</sup> Sean Michael O'Brien likewise discusses East Tennessee's irregular warfare but argues that these disputes were a class conflict and thus aggravated the already

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<sup>120</sup> W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860-1870* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), xv.

<sup>121</sup> Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics & Guerilla Violence in East Tennessee 1860-1869* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

present sectional divisions.<sup>124</sup> His thesis can be observed in the conflicts often initiated by Knoxville's elite.

In the last ten years there has been an upsurge in literature discussing the local conditions of the Appalachian home front. Ralph Mann's essay "Ezekiel Counts's Sand Lick Company" argues that Appalachian soldiers' enrollment or desertion rates were affected largely by local conditions. He follows Virginia's Sand Lick Company throughout the war and draws conclusions from its soldiers' wartime experiences; it also identifies the importance of family in determining soldiers' length of service. Mann finds that "a threat to home would cause mass desertion rates."<sup>125</sup> Crawford's *Ashe County's Civil War* focuses solely on community studies and the wartime factors that affected the region's inhabitants. Crawford argues that "the experiences of Ashe men and women were shaped as much by their membership in the wider American society, by its values, its institutions, and its shared crises, as by local factors."<sup>126</sup> Another factor was that males were needed at home in order to ensure the family's survival, and thus they felt an obligation to support their family.<sup>127</sup> Crawford uses Ashe County as a microcosm for Western North Carolina but understands that "too great an emphasis on localism warps our understanding of the larger dynamics of mid-nineteenth century America."<sup>128</sup> O'Brien's *Mountain Partisans* explores the extralegal violence occurring throughout Appalachia. He contends that "each mountain community was different, yet in many

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<sup>124</sup> Sean Michael O'Brien, *Mountain Partisans: Guerilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachians, 1861-1865* (Westport, C.T.: Praeger, 1999), 55.

<sup>125</sup> Ralph Mann, "Ezekiel Counts's Sand Lick Company: Civil War and Localism in the Mountain South," in Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson, *The Civil War in Appalachia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 80.

<sup>126</sup> Martin Crawford, *Ashe County's Civil War: Community and Society in the Appalachian South*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001,) xi.

<sup>127</sup> John C. Inscoe and Gordon B. McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2000), 113-114.

<sup>128</sup> Crawford, xi.

ways the same<sup>129</sup> whether Unionist, secessionist, or neutralist they tried to protect their families and possessions from predators and to cope with adversity as best they could until an end of hostilities.<sup>129</sup> While Appalachia was not home to many conventional conflicts, guerilla activities vastly devastated the land and resources while simultaneously altering sectional loyalties.

Northeast Tennessee's participation in the Civil War revealed the sectional discrepancies among its populace. Throughout the war Northeast Tennessee experienced a wide range of extralegal violence, including both guerilla warfare and bushwhacking. In the early phase of the war multiple Northeast Tennesseans participated in bridge burnings schemes. These bridge burnings were strategically designed and targeted vital Confederate railways. While the bridges were military targets, the large numbers of Unionist participants indicates the overwhelming and intense level of Union support in the region. Both Carter and Johnson Counties were inhabited by large numbers of bushwhackers, inflicting violence upon the communities' Confederate populations. These guerilla activities illustrate the bitter divisions throughout Northeast Tennessee's population.

During the Civil War Northeast Tennessee's railroad counties witnessed high volumes of guerilla warfare, including Elizabethton's William Blount Carter's infamous bridge burning scheme. East Tennessee's politically disunited population was the impetus of the common regional violence. East Tennessee's internecine strife entered into almost all areas of life, and its effects were corrosive<sup>130</sup> the Unionist-secessionist conflict destroyed family, friendships, and institutions.<sup>130</sup> Margaret Virginia Fulkerson

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<sup>129</sup> O'Brien, 81.

<sup>130</sup> Fisher, 85.

Toole commented on the conflict between Confederate troops and Unionists irregulars, and found "that I heard the other day that Gen. Bragg was coming to [Tennessee] with an army, but intended leaving all [East Tennessee] troops belonging to his command in [Mississippi] & said they had friends with the renegade [East] Tennesseans and would not be willing to fight."<sup>131</sup> She believed that General Bragg's "fears are groundless and feel so disappointed that our boys cannot come back."<sup>132</sup> Toole's statements suggest that Unionists were actively rebelling. Sectional opposition so early in the war indicates the severe divisions in Northeast Tennessee.

The bridge burning scheme of 1861 also demonstrates Northeast Tennessee's deep sectional discord. On Brownlow's recommendation Carter County's Unionist Presbyterian minister William Blount Carter moved forward with plans to burn East Tennessee's railroad bridges vital to the Army of Northern Virginia. This action was an active protest by local Unionists against the war. Both President Abraham Lincoln and General George B. McClellan recognized Northeast Tennessee's large Unionist population and supported this scheme, providing it with a thousand dollars. The original plan was for several groups of East Tennessee Unionists to "burn, on the same night, nine wooden bridges between Bristol, Virginia, and Stevenson, Alabama, thus blocking 250 miles of railway."<sup>133</sup> The Unionists acted on 8 November 1861 and burned "two bridges between Knoxville and Bristol, one between Knoxville and Chattanooga, two south of Chattanooga, and two over Chickamauga Creek near Chattanooga."<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Margaret Virginia Fulkerson Toole, to Susan Heiskell McCampbell, 30 July 1862, Frederick S. Heiskell Collection, Accession 22, Box 2, Archives of Appalachia.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Digby Gordon Seymour, *Divided Loyalties: Fort Sanders and the Civil War in East Tennessee* (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1982), 32.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

Northeast Tennessee's communities contained substantial numbers of both Unionists and Confederates. A dispatch found that Carter County's Elizabethton was home to over 500 Unionists who supported Carter's bridge burning scheme. R.O.L. Owen, president of the East Tennessee and Virginia railroad, found that "there is no doubt but that re-enforcements are every moment reaching them from Watauga County, North Carolina, and Johnson, Carter, and Washington Counties, Tennessee."<sup>135</sup> Owen's mention of possible violent Unionist bridge burning attempts further indicates that the region was marked by sectional hostilities.

The bridge burners' actions greatly alarmed the Confederates and generated a harsh retributive policy and attitude against Unionists. General S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General of the Confederate Army, commented that after the bridge burnings the "whole [of East Tennessee] is now in a state of rebellion."<sup>136</sup> He summed up the events when he said, "My fears expressed to you" have been realized by the destruction of no less than five railroad bridges "two on the East Tennessee and Virginia road, one of the East Tennessee and Georgia road and two on the Western and Atlantic road."<sup>137</sup> Cooper continued discussing the destruction of other bridges in East Tennessee and determined that smothering the attempts on one of East Tennessee's most vital resources would be difficult. He stated, "A mild or conciliating policy will do no good; they must be punished; and some of the leaders ought to be punished to the extent of the law. Nothing

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<sup>135</sup> Hon. J.P. Benjamin, Secretary of War, to R.O.L. Owen, President of East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad Company, 11 November 1861, ed. James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Source Book*, Tennessee Historical Commission, <http://tennesseecivilwarsourcebook.com>.

<sup>136</sup> General S. Cooper, Knoxville, to W. B. Wood, 11 November 1861, ed. James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Source Book*, Tennessee Historical Commission, <http://tennesseecivilwarsourcebook.com>.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

short of this will give quiet, to the country.ö<sup>138</sup> Two of the bridge burners, Henry Fry and Jacob Henelier, were hanged at Greenville on 30 November 1861.<sup>139</sup> Cooper recognized the severity of this attack and that if the Unionists destroyed such a vital East Tennessee link severe retributive policies would follow.

Bridge burning was not the only guerilla activity present in Northeastern Tennessee, for a great deal of bushwhacking also occurred in its communities. Johnson and Carter Counties experienced large numbers of irregular conflicts. The *Knoxville Register* reported that the ñnews from Johnson and Carter is quite gloomy. These counties are seriously infected with disloyalty and bushwhackers.ö<sup>140</sup> In March a violent encounter occurred between a group of bushwhackers and several Confederate soldiers from Colonel Folkø North Carolina Calvary in Carter County near the Watauga River. Several participants from both the Union and Confederate Armies were wounded or killed. A number of captures were also made and all but one was hung.<sup>141</sup> Fisher compares the tactics of East Tennessee bushwhacking to the Vietnam War and the popularity of guerilla tactics. He argues that the ñConfederate bushwhackersí used Confederate territory as a sanctuary in the same way that the Viet Cong employed Laotian bases.ö<sup>142</sup> Carter and Johnson Counties are located in the extreme northeast corner of the state, and thus located on the Tennessee and North Carolina state line. This close proximity to both the railroad and Western North Carolina caused the region to have an exceptionally high rate of guerilla activity.

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Memphis Avalanche* (Memphis) in *New York Times* (New York), 6 December 1861.

<sup>140</sup> *Knoxville Register* (Knoxville), 23 February 1863, ed. James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Source Book*, Tennessee Historical Commission, <http://tennesseecivilwarsourcebook.com>.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Fisher, 83.

The rise in Northeast Tennessee's violence caused the region's Confederate citizens to petition the government for federal protection against the violent and numerous Unionist bushwhackers in 1864. The petition originated from Johnson County Tennessee. While not a county in which the railroad ran, it pled for assistance on the basis that "our county is infested with several bands of bushwhackers, murders, and deserters, who are committing depredations upon the lives and the property of Southern citizens to such an alarming extent that a great many of them had to leave their homes."<sup>143</sup> This plea suggests that Northeast Tennessee's secessionist population was a significant enough minority to require aid from the Confederate government. This also indicates that there was a portion of the area's population tied to the deep South, most likely economically and ideologically. The petition made a heartfelt plea for protection, and offered the knowledge that the Confederates "after giving all our sons, or fathers, our brothers, and sympathies to the cause of Southern independence and after all to be thus driven to such extremes as this; to be robbed and murdered by wicked men, it is more than we are willing to bear."<sup>144</sup>

Margaret B. Crozier Ramsey's diary reflected the ongoing political strife that persisted throughout the war. Ramsey, a native to Knoxville, had been exiled to Western North Carolina and eventually made her way back into Tennessee briefly settling in the Sullivan County community of Bristol. Her early 1865 diary entry reflected her fears that she will be attacked for her pro-Confederate sentiments, for she worried that Bristol was

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<sup>143</sup> General J. C. Breckinridge, Commander of the Department of East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, 1 November 1864, James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook*, Tennessee Historical Commission, <http://tennesseecivilwarsourcebook.com>.

<sup>144</sup> Confederate citizens of Johnson and Washington Counties, to General J.C. Breckinridge, 1 November 1864, ed. James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Source Book*, Tennessee Historical Commission, <http://tennesseecivilwarsourcebook.com>.

liable at any time to have a raid from the enemy.ö Ramsey was adamant in her belief that the sectional strife would continue, thus she advocated for her and her family to move into the interior of Virginia that in her mind was the interior of the Confederacy.ö<sup>145</sup> Her comment on the possibility of a Unionist raid also demonstrates that there was still considerable sectional violence. If Sullivan County was the monolithic Unionist stronghold it has been described as, it should have been without such sectional activity in the final stages of the war.

Northeast Tennessee's internal sectional conflict was illustrated in the persistent military and guerilla violence of both the Unionist and Confederate populations. The interpretation of Northeast Tennessee as a monolithic Unionist territory devoid of sectional strife has been a common misconception throughout East Tennessee historiography. The entrance of the ET&VA created a region that was politically and culturally connected to the deep South. Prior to and during the Civil War Northeast Tennessee was politically diverse and a home to large scale violence. This violence, endemic to regions such as Carter and Johnson Counties, demonstrated that the region was a complex haven of sectional discrepancies. These individuals aggressively targeted one another in an effort to provide retribution for differing political views. While Northeast Tennessee was predominately Unionist and supported a large number of Unionist bushwhackers, it did contain sizeable Confederate populations.

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<sup>145</sup> Diary of Margaret B. Crozier Ramsey 1864-1865, Ramsey Collection, Accession Number MS 6 293, Special Collections the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.



Knox County's home front suffered both deprivations and extralegal activity throughout the Civil War. The Confederate Headquarters of the Department of East Tennessee, located in Knoxville, brought Confederate leadership to an area politically divided. This leadership sought to alleviate the problems associated with the region's large numbers of Unionists. Throughout this period Unionists often used guerilla activities to agitate the Confederate Government and populace. The acquisition of resources by both the Confederate and Union Armies diminished the populace's war support. The Federal's 1863 occupation of Knoxville heightened the guerilla activities and the retributive violence. Knox County's violence and the constant foraging demonstrate that the populace was not monolithic in their political associations but instead bitterly divided.

Knoxville housed the Confederate Headquarters of the Department of East Tennessee, thus much of East Tennessee's Confederate activity was centered in Knox County. The occupation of Knoxville by Confederate officials created a wave of retributive actions. Surrounding Confederates often destroyed or seized Unionists property while enacting violence upon their counterparts. The Department of East Tennessee recognized the sizeable Unionist population and the escalating tensions between Knox County's inhabitants; therefore, they offered a peace proclamation to those Unionists who would remain under Confederate rule. The department issued a proclamation that stated, "Many people from this section of the county may regret the separations of Tennessee from the old Union that separation is a fixed fact, and so long as [Unionists] remain within the limits of the State they must yield obedience to its law."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> "Proclamation to the People of East Tennessee," Headquarters Department of East Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 30 September 1862, "Confederate Effort to win the Hearts and Minds of East

The Department of East Tennessee tried to persuade the Unionists by pointing to the Union's effort to destroy the Confederacy and Southern culture. It claimed that Lincoln "not only declares his purpose to emancipate our slaves, but commands his officers, civil, military, and naval, to recognize and maintain their freedom."<sup>147</sup> The proclamation's language demonstrates the Confederate government's desire to use propaganda to gain Confederate support. The department negatively portrayed Lincoln as a destroyer of Southern institutions. It referenced the Federal Army's actions, finding that Lincoln's "Army and Navy have invaded and laid waste to our country; robbed and burned our houses; stolen and carried off our property."<sup>148</sup> The department also discussed Union soldiers' attacks on women and reported that "at least of his general officers has authorized and invited his soldiers to the commission of such acts for brutal violence on hapless women as to expose him to the contempt and detestation of the civilized world."<sup>149</sup> Ultimately, this proclamation reveals the irregular activity in Knox County that continued throughout the war. It also demonstrates the Confederate government's desire to create a loyal Confederate faction within Knoxville. It stated that "let East Tennessee no longer hesitate, but spring to arms, rally to our standard, and emulate on future battlefields the noble example of our gallant and heroic soldiers at Manassas and Shiloh, Chickahominy and Malvern Hill, Sharpsburg, and Harper's Ferry."<sup>150</sup>

The Confederate government's East Tennessee headquarters often encroached upon the lives of Knox County's citizens. As early as August of 1862 Knoxville's *Daily*

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Tennessee Unionists," James B. Jones Jr., *Tennessee Civil War Sourcebook*, Tennessee Historical Commission.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> "Proclamation to the People of East Tennessee."

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

*Register* subtly suggested that its readers donate food supplies to the Confederate Army. The newspaper implied that the Union Army would take the region because of Southern soldiers' inadequate diet. The *Daily Register* asked the reader why "must our commissariat look to obtain supplies of meat when no other part of the county can furnish anything like an adequate supply."<sup>151</sup> The article referenced Knoxville's abundance of hogs and argued that by supplying the Confederate Army with hogs that a force of three or five thousand men would then be able to protect this vast hog crop, hold the railroads, the salt works and lead mines in perfect security.<sup>152</sup> The Confederacy's supply demands upon Knoxville will increase throughout the war and bring the war to the home front. By late 1863 the Union Army had taken Knoxville and several of its former Confederate citizens were relieved because while under the Confederate government "business had nearly ground to stop, and food and clothing shortages had been severely felt."<sup>153</sup>

Margaret B. Crozier Ramsey's diary described the devastation of Knoxville. Ramsey recounted her experience, finding that "vandalism desolated our beautiful country." She continued discussing the destruction and asserted that the "old mansion where we dispensed hospitality with a liberal hand is in ashes" the shade trees where our children played so happily, now stand all black and charred, not by thunder bolts, but by ruthless hands of men."<sup>154</sup> The destruction of Ramsey's home indicates the level of devastation enacted upon Knox County by Unionist occupation. Upon enemy occupation

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<sup>151</sup> "Can we Subsist our Army?," *Daily Register*, 14 August 1862, New York.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> William Bruce Wheeler, *Knoxville, Tennessee: A Mountain City in the New South*, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005, 5.

<sup>154</sup> Diary of Margaret Crozier Ramsey, 29 May 1865, MS-322 1864-1865, Special Collections at the University of Tennessee.

Ramsey, whose family were avid Confederate supporters, fled to North Carolina. She compared her experience during this time to the Israelites and found that “It is any wonder that we sit solitary, like the children of Israel when in captivity ó By the rivers of Babylon we sat, yea, wept, we hanged our harps on the willows.”<sup>155</sup> Her experiences were representative of the many Knox County’s citizens who were forced to flee their homes. Many of these individuals suffered immensely under reoccupation preferring to leave the area instead of suffering retributive actions.

Rueben G. Clark, a Confederate captain in the 59<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry, discussed his experience in Knoxville after the occupation. His diary reported “Parson Brownlow’s and other Unionists’ targeting of Confederates in Knox County.” Clark was one of Brownlow’s victims in 1864; he was falsely accused of murder and sent to the Knoxville jail. Clark described East Tennessee’s social climate during this period and reported, “the bitter feelings between the East Tennesseans ó who were about equally divided between the north and the south ó was more intense than it was between any other sections.”<sup>156</sup> He recounted Unionists’ acts of violence such as horse whipping, beatings, and shootings in a retaliatory effort. Once federal control resumed in East Tennessee “Brownlow began calling for treason trials against former Rebels.”<sup>157</sup> Clark contended that “these lawless acts of oppression drove many of the best citizens out of the country, and today East Tennessee Confederates are scattered over every state in the Union.”<sup>158</sup> Clark described the situation in Knoxville as “too hot for all Confederates, and the fact was painfully evident that the Brownlow party were bent upon maltreating,

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Willene B. Clark, *Valleys of the Shadow: The Memoir of Captain Reuben G. Clark, Company I, 59<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 54.

<sup>157</sup> Groce, 139.

<sup>158</sup> Clark, 61.

robbing and driving the Confederates and their sympathizers out of the country— some of the courts even sanctioned their nefarious schemes.<sup>159</sup> Brownlow ultimately created a hostile environment in which he evoked retaliatory measures in an effort to cleanse the population of what he viewed as traitors. Clark's memoirs also reveal the degree to which violence was incorporated into everyday life. Once Union power was reclaimed in East Tennessee, Unionists began to exert control through Confederate retaliation. Knox County at the conclusion of the war remained divided in its allegiances, yet the area, a supposed monolithic region, was politically divided.

Ramsey's diary exuded a degree of longing for her past and a loss of the economic stability that the Ramsey family once held. Ramsey, representative of Knoxville's elite, commented that "Our beautiful home all come up before me— the large and stately trees— the grand rivers the deep and quite French Broad Rivers— and the grand old bluff so lofty— the green fields with growing grain etc— All these I was once the mistress of... Now I am the poor governess."<sup>160</sup> Mention of her reduced economic status suggests the war's consequences on Knox County's elite population.

Thomas Hodge Hightown, enlisted in Knoxville in 1862, described his experience in the Army of the West under General Beauregard and commented that "I am proud that I gave three and a-half years of my life fighting for Southern rights."<sup>161</sup> Comments such as Hightown's indicate a lasting attachment to the Confederate Army. Sentiments, such as Ramsey's, existed among the elites who were Knox County's staunchest Confederates. Throughout the war Knox County transitioned from a region inhabited by the

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>160</sup> Diary of Margaret Crozier Ramsey, 29 May 1865.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas Hodge Hightown, N.B. Forrest Camp United Confederate Volunteers, Volume 8 Historical Statement, HIST C Fu Accession 172, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

Confederate Headquarters of East Tennessee, which allowed a strong Confederate sentiment to be exuded by both the government and a sector of the population, to the reoccupation of 1863 when "Parson" Brownlow enacted terror upon Knox County's Confederates. Throughout this period Knox County was faced with inadequate resources and guerilla activities, thus bringing the war to the home front.

At the onset of the war Southeast Tennessee exhibited strong Confederate tendencies. Such adamant loyalty patterns were evident in the wide-spread Confederate sentiment expressed throughout the region. Andrew Johnson's speech in the small town of Athens, located in McMinn County, in early May of 1861 raised hostility towards the remaining Unionists. The newspaper concluded that

Great was the feeling of indignation of an injured people, whose trust had been betrayed. [Andrew Johnson's] ears were constantly greeted with exclamations "an emissary of Lincoln" and "agent of the devil" and "a traitor to your country, and like epithets." He saw he had ventured too far, and trembled for the consequences.<sup>162</sup>

Stricken by the Civil War's consequences the enthusiasm for the Confederacy lessened. Incidents such as prolonged guerilla activity and both the Federal's and Confederate's acquisition of resources helped to subdue the once popular revolt. After the Civil War Southeast Tennessee continued to be divided, individuals exhibited both joy and sorrow for the Confederacy's loss. Li B. Abernathy, a Hamilton County resident, reminisced post-Reconstruction that "War is horrible. Paths of Glory, lead but to the grave."<sup>163</sup> This statement is reflective of the loss of Confederate nationalism that was prevalent in more pro-Confederate areas. Yet, at the close of the war Myra Inman, a Bradley County native, remarked on the Confederacy's fate finding, "These days are sad and lonely to

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<sup>162</sup> "Andrew Johnson at Athens," *Nashville Union and American*, 8 May 1861.

<sup>163</sup> Li B. Abernathy, N.D., *Nathan Bedford Forrest Camp United Confederate Volunteers, Volume 8 Historical Statement*, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

me. Not until my friends returned did I fully realize that my long cherished schemes were thwarted, my brightest, fondest, dearest hopes and wishes blasted forever ó the independence of the South.<sup>164</sup> This statement reveals Inman's continued attachment to the Confederacy. She continued commenting on the large scale loss of life and questioned "why God permitted such a sad calamity to befall our South."<sup>165</sup> Inman lamented "Air Castles, which my imagination has erected for the last four years, are crushed and only their memories live to remind me of their existence."<sup>166</sup> Inman's sentiment is reflective of the division in Southeast Tennessee's population. At the close of the war Southeast Tennessee did not maintain a monolithic political identity, but its citizens were forced to reconcile their long political differences.

Southeast Tennessee was also home to sectional discord among its Confederate and Unionist inhabitants. Inman's diary recalled guerilla activity in Southeast Tennessee and found that her mother was boarding "two families who have fled from guerillas who are committing depredations in the country."<sup>167</sup> *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel* reported on the region's internal strife discussing the violence that Confederates enacted upon their Union neighbors. The newspaper referenced the continued seizure and destruction of Union property. It determined that ardent Confederates had driven much of the Union population from Tennessee and labeled them as traitors to the Confederacy. The newspaper documented that if the Unionists were to return than "they would be looked upon and treated as Tories ó loathed and despised ó forsaken even by the cowardly wretches" those of them that have left property behind have forfeited it to their

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<sup>164</sup> William R. Snell, editor, *Myra Inman: A Diary of the Civil War in East Tennessee*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 309.

<sup>165</sup> Snell, 309.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

government, and their families will be bereft of it.<sup>168</sup> The newspaper represented the animosity present between the two groups. The newspapers argued “Let [the Unionists] receive the fury of the whirlwind! They have no one and are entitled to none in the Southern Confederacy. They deserted her in infancy when she needed help the cowardly scoundrels shrank from the lass and went over to the enemy.”<sup>169</sup> Throughout the war Southeast Tennessee was home to much guerilla and irregular warfare. The populace was thus not shielded from the war but confronted its debilitating effects.

The Confederate government’s acquisition of supplies occurred throughout Southeast Tennessee. As in Knoxville, the local Chattanooga newspaper advertised for food supplies to be given to local armies. While at this point in the war the Confederate government was offering monetary remunerations for their services, this became less frequent as the war continued and the need for supplies intensified. The Confederate Army reported that “our armies need all the Hogs and Cattle you own latten, and liberal prices will be paid for pork, Hogs, Beeves, and Corn.”<sup>170</sup> The Confederate Army published its intentions for the methods of acquisition declaring the J.F. Cummings had “been assigned to the purchase of hogs, beeves, corn, &c., in East Tennessee, and will appoint a sufficient number of agents to assist me, and divide their territory, and will in due time publish their names.”<sup>171</sup> Mary Inman discussed the acquisition of resources by both the Union and Confederate Armies. She referred to a female neighbor who in 1864 claimed that the Union Army had taken all of her corn. Inman recalled that the “Rebels were gentlemen by the side of the Yankees and that [the Yankees] took 13 wagon loads

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<sup>168</sup> “In a Nice Fix!,” *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, 9 August 1862.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> “To the Farmers of East Tennessee,” *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, 6 November 1862.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*



of corn and said after she bemeaned them the Yankees took all the rest.<sup>172</sup> Inman reported that

Sherman's men took from her 21 bed quilts, 4 head of horses, 8 milk cows, 18 hogs, 100 chickens and turkeys, every knife and fork, broke the locks in all the doors, 1 bag of salt, flour all, meal all, took all of the jewelry, watch, all of Cleo's gloves, handkerchiefs, stockings and some of her underclothing, and knocked Mrs. Watkins down because she tried to get her shawl from him.<sup>173</sup>

One month later she recalled additional foraging by Union soldiers, the two regiments of Yanksí stole some of Mrs. Watkins's corn, four pigs, three or four chickens, two hams of meat and burnt a great many rails.<sup>174</sup> Another hardship for Southeast Tennessee was the destruction of railroad bridges that could transport supplies into the region. Without the benefit of these means of transportation goods became extremely scarce and prices soared. *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel* commented on the consequences of the bridge burnings determining that they sent up the price of sugar from seventy-five cents to a dollar and a quarter pound.<sup>175</sup> The lack of the transportation link created an inability to transport supplies to the Confederate Armies and the surrounding populace.<sup>176</sup> Events such as these brought the realities of war to East Tennessee's communities. Inman's discussion of such events reveals the conditions at which average citizens were placed under and suggests the hardships endured.

Confederate soldier, David McKendree Key, after the war called for peace among the ex-Confederate states and the Union. An unsigned letter by Key expressed a desire for reconciliation among the North and South. He found that "No bitterness should

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<sup>172</sup> Snell, 289-290.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 290.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 300.

<sup>175</sup> "The East Tennessee Campaign - Its Importance and Situation," *The Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, 21 January 1863.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*.

remain on account of the War. It was produced by sectional causes and opinions and was inevitable whether slavery was right or wrong is not now material it is a settled issue and settled forever against slavery.<sup>177</sup> Key became very active in the Reconstruction government and participated in the 1870 Constitutional Convention of Tennessee. He was chancellor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chancery Division of Tennessee, filled Andrew Johnson's Senate position upon Johnson's death and remained until 1877, and under President Hayes assumed the Post Master General position.<sup>178</sup> Key took the Iron Clad Oath on 15 June 1865 and received a pardon by President Johnson.<sup>179</sup> Key's desire for reconciliation and active participation in the Reconstruction government suggests a loss of Confederate sentiment. While Key's participation in the Reconstruction government could indicate a submersion of Confederate tendencies, his close association with President Johnson and remarks in personal correspondence indicates that he was accepting unification.

Southeast Tennessee was home to much sectional strife throughout the war. The region experienced Confederate plundering and sequestering of supplies that helped to weaken Confederate morale, yet by the close of the war individuals such as Inman still evoked strong Confederate sentiments. Reactions such as these demonstrate that the region's loyalty patterns and reaction to the war are diverse and at varied intensities.

At the conclusion of the war East Tennessee's plantations, new industrial enterprises, and communities which were growing up where the railroads had been

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<sup>177</sup> Unsigned undated letter most likely written by Key after the war, David McKendree Key Papers, HIST C Acc 64, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>178</sup> "David McKendree Key," *Gilmore's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (Chattanooga, TN: n.p, n.d), David McKendree Key Papers, HIST C Accession 64, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

<sup>179</sup> Iron Clad Oath, 15 June 1865, David McKendree Key Papers, HIST C Accession 64, Chattanooga Bicentennial Library.

[were] laid to waste by the scorching flames of war.<sup>180</sup> Neighbor had been turned against neighbor over economic differences. Guerilla warfare raged throughout East Tennessee and created an internal Civil War. Confederate J.M. Thornburg pleaded to the citizens of East Tennessee in July of 1863, and asked them "to use every effort in your power to prevent the present civil war, from becoming still more fearful and bloody in East Tennessee than it has yet been in any other portion of the country."<sup>181</sup> Thornburg's plea was made in vain, for during the Civil War East Tennessee was ravaged by both conventional and unconventional warfare. Northeast Tennessee, a primarily Unionist region, was home to many guerilla activities throughout the war. The region's large Unionists population engaged in activities such as bridge burning and bushwhacking in an effort to reclaim the area and slowly instill fear into the remaining Confederates. The continual occurrence of guerilla activities indicates both the existence of two political factions and the violence endemic to Northeast Tennessee's home front. Knox County also experienced large amounts of guerilla activity during the war, yet Knox County's violence was often a direct result of the current government. As the county changed from a Confederate to a Union occupied region the level violence increased and the participants switched roles. These conflicts represented the level of ideological commitment to the respective causes. During the Civil War Southeast Tennessee was characterized by the constant intrusion of both conventional and unconventional warfare. Confederates often enacted guerilla activities onto Unionists in an effort to coerce them out of the region. During this time resources were sequestered at high rates creating food shortages. After the war Southeast Tennesseans maintained varied interpretations of the

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<sup>180</sup> *Lynchburg's First Railway: The Virginia and Tennessee* (Unknown Publisher, 1936) at the Virginia Tech Special Collections.

<sup>181</sup> "A Threat from an East Tennessee Rebel," *Daily Southern Chronicle*, 17 July 1863.

war and their role in it. The existence of negative recollections suggests war weariness within the population.

The ET&VA and ET&GA connected East Tennessee both economically and culturally to both Virginia and the deep South. This connection created sectional divisions among the populace that was pronounced throughout the late antebellum and Civil War periods. These political conflicts, present among both Unionists and Confederates, culminated in the guerilla activity present throughout the regions. The Civil War affected each of East Tennessee's three regions differently, demonstrating the need to analyze the three regions separately in an effort to understand the war's complexities. The divisions among East Tennessee's populace illustrate that East Tennessee can not be simply identified as a Unionist or Confederate region, but a region much like other areas of the United States that experienced social divisions that evolved into a violent internal war.

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