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"We are scattered, starved, hunted, half-naked, but we are not conquered": Masculinity, Race and Resistance in Bleeding Kansas

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Honors Thesis

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Abstract

This project uses the dual lenses of race and gender to put the perspectives of white men fighting in Bleeding Kansas in conversation with the often silenced voices of African Americans and American Indians. Black abolitionists and soldiers in the territory articulated the conflict as central to the future of the free black community. American Indians participated in this conflict while resisting white conquest of Kansas. With these perspectives, this project argues that conceptions of masculinity, intricately tied to race, played a central role in fueling the border violence and determining the way it is remembered.

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Introduction

For the good majority of men and women adopting new identities as Kansans in the 1850s, their investment in determining the fate of slavery shaped their choice to migrate to the Kansas Territory. This influx of new citizens undermined the success of popular sovereignty, which depended on a consensus among populations regardless of political divisions. The new citizens of Kansas, however, adopted their new home according to their polarized beliefs. After a series of fraudulent elections, Kansas became more divided than ever, leading to Bleeding Kansas, the border war to decide whether Kansas would be admitted as a slave or free state.

The very name, Bleeding Kansas, speaks to the severity of the violence enacted through this conflict. The gruesome and wholly "uncivilized" nature of this guerilla warfare touched on the concerns of Americans across the nation fearing Civil War. For instance, on May 24, 1856, after proslavery forces burned antislavery headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas to the ground in an event known as the first sacking of Lawrence, radical abolitionist and free-state military leader John Brown, along with a small group of antislavery renegades, sought retributive justice, brutally massacring five proslavery settlers in a town just north of Pottawatomie Creek.[1]

The brutal, unorganized, and cyclically retributive nature of this violent episode is characteristic of the events of Bleeding Kansas. However, it also embodies the contradictions of border warfare and violence, for even though Brown targeted these men in retaliation, they had not taken part in that assault, nor had they ever owned slaves.[2] If this conflict was indeed about slavery, why are the only participants in the conflict white? And if it was not about slavery at all,

[1] For discussion of John Brown and the "massacre" at Pottawatomie Creek, see Robert E. McGlone, *John Brown's War against Slavery* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 29-48.
[2] Ibid., 11-13.

as some historians suggest, and if most of the men fighting agreed on the future of Kansas as a white supremacist state, what were they fighting about?

Ultimately, the outcome of Bleeding Kansas shaped the future of white settlement in this territory, and the dimensions of that conflict carried overt racial and gendered dynamics. As northern and southern white men emigrated to Kansas after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, they participated in a long history of conquest in the American West, divesting American Indians of their ancestral and adopted lands, despite rights guaranteed through past treaties.[3] They naturalized this process of conquest by adopting what they understood as "Indian" identities, tropes of "Indianness" that reinforced the "savage" and violent images propagated since the era of "discovery." Anti-slavery "free state" men, in particular, understood the conflict between free state and proslavery forces as a competition between the highly gendered "noble" (northern) and "ignoble" (southern) savages, men who took on the "'wild' characteristics of the Kansas territory in order to decide the fate of slavery.[4] By understanding their place in Kansas as "native," through baptismal violence in a "wild" and "western" place, they evoked these two hyper-masculine stereotypes to justify their claims to the land as well as their claims to a moral or ideological stance on slavery. White males used these popular tropes of "Indianness" to write

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[3] For discussion of the long history of conquest in the American West, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 33-73, 144; and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987), 55-77.

[4] For discussion of these two dominant tropes of "savagery," see Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 8-9. 13-16, 20-21; and Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 42-74.

American Indians out of this conflict, ultimately ensuring the removal of the majority of American Indians from the eastern half of the state.[5]

While white northern and southern men adopted tropes of "Indianness" in order to stake claim to the new territory of Kansas, American Indians resisted this act of conquest through both traditional and nontraditional means. While these white men defined themselves through their own ideas of what "Indians" should be, or in particular how "savage warrior" males are portrayed in popular myths of the West, American Indians asserted their own identities in direct opposition to these notions. While some American Indians resisted through certain ancestral practices, organizing dances and other traditional means of protest to resist the divestment of their lands in eastern Kansas, others, particularly certain American Indian men, asserted their identities as "civilized" or "cultured" male figures, using law degrees and other political connections to lobby congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to support their treaty obligations.[6] They protested the imposition of this conflict on their own political and cultural affairs; for instance, in the case of the Wyandot, they protested the infusion of proslavery men and their slaves into their territory, taking a strong stance against slavery.[7] This particular form of resistance provides an interesting contrast to the way white men emigrating to the region decided to "play Indian." In many ways, the extralegal atmosphere of Bleeding Kansas provided an excellent ground for American Indians to assert their own identities in contrast to the

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[5] When discussing American Indian history in Kansas, historians often focus on the "final" move of emigrant tribes in eastern Kansas to "Indian Territory," or what is now Oklahoma. See Robert E. Smith, "The Final removal of the Wyandot Indians" Westport historical quarterly, v. 8, no. 1 (1972): 11-12.

[6] An anonymous author shows how the Prairie Band of Pottawatomie used both "traditional" methods of resistance as well as "nontraditional" methods, primarily through legal avenues, to protest conquest in Kansas. Anonymous, "The Prairie Pottawatomie: Resistance to Allotment," in *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*, ed. Rita Napier (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 97, 106.

[7] Franklin George. Adams, "Wyandotts," Date Unknown. Indian History Collection, doc. 590, box 7, fol. Wyandotte, Kansas Memory. Kansas Historical Society Online Collection., (Topeka, KS: Date accessed 30 March 2012) *http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/219786*

performance of the overwhelmingly dominant tropes of Indianness in the same place and time. This meeting of real and imagined American Indian images and perspectives complicates the narrative of Bleeding Kansas erases American Indians from the conflict, asserting instead the presence and importance of both groups in the outcome and memory of this conflict.

As white men adopted "native" identities in their conquest of Kansas, they emphasized their position in the debate over slavery while simultaneously silencing the voices of African Americans in the conflict, obscuring the way Bleeding Kansas operated both as a site of conquest and a project of white supremacy. White men on both sides of the conflict invoked the moral, political, economic, religious, and social debates over slavery, claiming superiority to the other based on these differences. However, most of these men minimized the presence and situation of slaves in the region, dismissing the issue as "theoretical" rather than a reality. They further suppressed African American voices in this conflict by prohibiting free blacks from settling in the Kansas territory newly "freed" through Federal statute in the Kansas-Nebraska Act.[8] Meanwhile, African American abolitionists and other members of the free black community saw Bleeding Kansas as a space where black men could earn the freedom of their brethren as well as their own manhood, fighting against white supremacy. With the influence of this rhetorical emphasis on a "call to manhood" from the black intellectual community (the actuality of which had been denied to them in Bleeding Kansas), black soldiers enlisted in large numbers to resist slavery and racism in the Civil War. Black soldiers, fighting in the Missouri-Kansas border region, expressed their masculinity and freedom through a hyper-masculine soldier identity.[9]

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[8] For discussion of the legal measures taken against free black emigration to the Kansas territory, see Tekla Ali Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act: From Reformer to Revolutionary," in *The Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1854,* ed. John R. Wunder and Joann M. Ross (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 122.

[9] For discussion of black manhood and enlistment in the Union Army, see John David Smith, *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 138, 141-

African Americans were silenced, but alsoresisted that silence through the highly gendered sectional conflicts in Kansas.

Representing more than a disparity between national and regional meanings, understandings of Bleeding Kansas balance tenuously between economic and moral/religious understandings of slavery, and between states' and national rights, creating false dichotomies based on polarized views. Analyzing this conflict with attention to gender highlights the central role that multiple conceptions of masculinity played in fueling the violence, shedding new light on the roots of the political, economic, and moral aspects of this struggle.[10] Bleeding Kansas presented a stage upon which common tropes of masculinity were challenged, subverted, and constructed anew. Using the dual lenses of race and gender to put the perspectives of white men fighting in this border war in conversation with American Indians who participated in this conflict while actively resisting the conquest of their lands, black abolitionists who articulated the future of the free black community as part of the conflict's outcome, and black soldiers who fought in the territory later during the Civil War, multiple conceptions of masculinity become central to the border violence and determining the way it is remembered. Whites appropriated perceptions of American Indian masculinity for their border warfare in order to naturalize their colonization of Kansas, embracing the loaded issue of slavery without acknowledging black participation in and resistance to this conflict. Thus, proslavery and anti-slavery whites wrote African Americans and American Indians out of this conflict. This emphasis on a meeting of multiple masculinities highlights the roles that American Indians and African Americans,

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142; and Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover, introduction to *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), xi.

[10] Joan W. Scott argues that using gender as a category of analysis is an essential tool in breaking down false dichotomies. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1981): 1053-1075.

particularly in their construction and assertion of black masculinities, played in the cause for, fighting of, and remembrance of the Civil War. The attention to gender, intricately tied to race, brings new perspectives to the way inequality operated in the territory that was famed for its promotion of "freedom."

Chapter 1—Rethinking the Kansas Frontier: Historiography and Theoretical Frameworks

Historians analyzing the Civil War's significance and underlying causes participate in one of the longest, most intensely contested debates in American History. As a conflict included in this canon of historical writing on the American Civil War, historical interpretations of Bleeding Kansas are just as numerous as they are varied. The same debates pertaining to the causes of the Civil War – whether the "crisis" originated in fundamental flaws of the constitution, in incongruent states' and Federal rights, in the institution of slavery, in class privilege, regional dominance, or cultural difference – all apply to historical interpretations of Bleeding Kansas. Historians of Bleeding Kansas debate the importance of regional or national scales of analysis and the varying influence of politics, economics, media, morality, religion, violence, race, and gender.[11] Though distinct in their approaches, most find a common significance for this event: Bleeding Kansas represents a watershed moment in American history, serving as both a "test" for and harbinger of the coming sectional conflict. However, many ignore the integral role African Americans and American Indians played in determining this conflict.

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[11] For discussion on the vastness of historical literature on the Civil War, see LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War As a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 2; For discussion of historiography up to 1950, see Roy F. Nichols, "The Kansas-Nebraska Act: A Century of Historiography," (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. 43, no. 2, 1956).

Catching nineteenth-century historians' attention, the conflict known as Bleeding Kansas was immediately seen as a historical event, and is represented in multiple texts narrating the bloody affair, texts that actively erase American Indian and African American influence in its outcome. This conflict, spanning the years between 1854-1860, is conventionally defined as a conflict over whether Kansas would be admitted into the United States of America as a slave or free state. The earliest historiography of Kansas and the Civil War situates Bleeding Kansas as the historical moment that "open[ed] the armed conflict between slavery and freedom," serving as a "test-run" for the Civil War. [12] These histories follow two trajectories, political and military, situating the event as the decisive moment that spiraled Americans into a Civil War.

This early historiography can be traced back to Kansas's first official governor, Charles L. Robinson. Touting overtly racist views, Robinson establishes the events of Bleeding Kansas as a conflict between whites over the issue of slavery, though he argues that this conflict was not waged to better the situation of black Kansans, a population he perceived as undesirable.[13] Though other histories by Robinson's contemporaries avoid a direct denial of African American role in Bleeding Kansas, their assertions that Bleeding Kansas and the coming Civil War represented a morally charged fight between the *good* northerners fighting for "freedom" and the *evil* southerners fighting for the cause of slavery silence African American participation and

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[12] Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), 59; For discussion on Bleeding Kansas as a "test-case" for the Civil War, see Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), xi-8; Nicole Etcheson, "'Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honors': The Kansas Civil War and the revolutionary tradition," (*American Nineteenth Century History,* 2000. 1, no. 1), 62-81; Michael F Holt, *The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004); H. Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War: Kansas in the National News, 1854-1858* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2008), ix-5; Gunja SenGupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 1-9, 157; James A. Rawley, *Race & Politics; "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969), 258, 254; For this discussion in the realm of public history, see "Willing to Die For Freedom: A Look Back at Kansas Territory, 1854-181," (Kansas Historical Society Online, *http://www.kshs.org/exhibits/territorial/territorial1.htm.* Accessed 9 September 2011).

[13] Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892).

influence in this conflict. This suppression of African American voices pervades nineteenth and early twentieth-century histories of this conflict and the Civil War more broadly, obscuring their crucial role in the outcome of both Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War.[14]

Contemporary historical scholarship on Bleeding Kansas, and on the American Civil War generally, avoids these moralistic, generalizing interpretations of the crisis and its causes and meanings, though it continues to place sectional conflict's birthplace in contested Kansas soil and participates in the continual silence of African American and American Indian involvement in and influence on the conflict. In *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Civil Liberty in the Civil War Era,* 2004, Nicole Etcheson, one of these contemporary scholars, puts a new spin on role of politics in the inaugural sectional warfare, arguing that this conflict represented a battle over differing understandings of "white political liberties," with both northern and southern factions feeling threatened by the others' presence in the Kansas territory.[15] Denying the legitimacy of histories that situate this debate as a conflict over the fate of black slavery, Etcheson argues that these white men shed white blood over what they considered "white slavery," which each side accused the other of imposing on them through political domination, not over the issue of black slavery, which few truly expected to come to Kansas.[16] Etcheson roots these mutual dissatisfactions in the utter failings of popular sovereignty, a concept implemented through the

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[14] Though I have generalized and reduced the early historiography down to a common thread of "good" and "evil" representations, there are disparities between these histories based on understandings of the role of morality, politics, economics, and culture. For examples of this early history, see Albert E. Castel, *A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861-1865* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Published for the American Historical Association [by] Cornell University Press, 1958); Eric Corder, *Prelude to Civil War; Kansas-Missouri, 1854-61* (New York: Crowell-Collier Press, 1970); Stephen Z. Starr, *Jennison's Jayhawkers; A Civil War Cavalry Regiment and Its Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974); Henry Clyde Hubbart, *The Older Middle West, 1840-1880, Its Social, Economic, and Political Life and Sectional Tendencies Before, During and After the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc, 1936); Lawrence Lader, *The Bold Brahmins; New England's War against Slavery, 1831-1863* (New York: Dutton, 1961).

[15] Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberties,* 6.

[16] Ibid.

Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which, in theory, meant to leave individuals the ability to determine the fate of slavery in newly incorporated states. Rather than expanding freedom, Etcheson continues, popular sovereignty in Kansas represented "the greatest attack on political liberties that nineteenth-century Americans had ever experienced."[17] Elections fraught with fraud, illegitimate territorial legislatures, military suppression of those who defied a proslavery legislature elected in these fraudulent conditions, and open violence between factions marred early Kansans' experience of popular sovereignty, and Americans' through their example.[18] This fear of continued erosion of white liberties, Etcheson concludes, undercut claims that this conflict was about black slavery, which she extends to the Civil War.

While Etcheson challenges the validity of the "good vs. evil" trope, limiting battlefield cries for "freedom" to mean particularly *white* freedom, other scholars, though still focusing on white perspectives, question the comparative utility of national and regional scales of analysis in determining the conflict's importance. In *Seeding Civil War: Kansas in the National News, 1854-1858,* Craig Miner, using national press coverage of Bleeding Kansas, downplays the importance of the physical violence in Kansas, arguing that perceptions of the conflict, not the conflict itself, made the Civil War an inevitability.[19] Through a national perspective, he argues that the press instigated and heightened sectional divides by encouraging the polarization of events, making more of what he deems would have been an otherwise minimally influential event.[20]

Jeremy Neely, using a regional perspective in *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line,* disagrees, seeing that same violence, articulated

[17] Ibid., 2.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Miner, *Seeding Civil War,* 1.
[20] Ibid., xiii.

through a contested yet very pronounced "political, ideological, and cultural divide," as the most important aspect of the conflict, even more so than the issue of slavery itself. [21] He argues that the nature of the boundary between Missouri and Kansas, based not on geographic features but on political ones drawn through the Missouri Compromise and Kansas-Nebraska Act, changed settlement patterns and cultural understandings of these patterns based on the notion of continuing or preventing slavery.[22] The tenuous, uncertain demography blurred the distinctions between Kansas and Missouri, between slave and free, so that violence broke out between them, the fierceness of which obscures the similarities between the states' populations, which once slavery was abolished, seemed to agree that African Americans did not have a place in this region, treating them with a "common mixture of ambivalence and contempt."[23] This tension between "outsider" influence and regional solidarity brought the nation closer to sectional conflict, but once this "foreign" issue disappeared, the boundaries between them meant less and less, instead suggesting a place for African Americans outside of the inclusive space of their region.[24]

Studies that come closest to overcoming this silence of African American voices in Bleeding Kansas focus on the integral role racism played in the conflict. Racism, these scholars argue, pervaded the logic of both "free state" and proslavery ideologies. In the 1969 work *Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War,* James A. Rawley argues that the conflicts in Kansas exposed the overt racism of nineteenth-century politics. He maintains that for Americans in the 1850s, Bleeding Kansas was not what politicians and the media suggested,

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[21] Jeremy Neely, *The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 3.
[22] Ibid., 4.
[23] Ibid., 4.
[24] Ibid., 58.

a struggle between freedom and slavery, between agricultural and industrial economies, or between states rights and nationalism, but was instead an overt crisis over "the question of whether the rights of white men, the freedom of institutions [slavery], and the prosperity of a burgeoning economy might endure."[25] He argues that a "universal racial bias" exhibited through "doctrines of liberty and equality," blended the lines between proslavery and free state causes, for proslavery men "saw in antiextension a threat to keeping the institution that preserved existing race relations," while antislavery men saw in extension a threat to greater potentials for white men, a threat which they situated in black bodies.[26] Race figured heavily in the cause, fighting, and results of both Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War, a connection that was heavily discussed by black intellectuals in the era, though thoroughly avoided by whites on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line.[27]

Kirsten Tegtmeier Oertel's *Bleeding Borders: Race, Gender, and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas*, analyzes this importance of race in the border crisis, seeing the construction of racial hierarchies as reliant on gendered differentials of "otherness." She argues that a "differential racialization of Indians and blacks," articulated through anti-miscegenation rhetoric on behalf of free-state and proslavery causes, constructed a "hierarchy" of otherness, pitting one group of non-white Kansans against another, solidifying a superior position of whites above both.[28] The superiority of whiteness, as articulated by both sides of the sectional divide,

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[25] Rawley, *Race and Politics,* xi.
[26] Ibid.
[27] In his biography of Frederick Douglass, one of the black intellectuals participating in a discussion of the influence of racism in the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the events of Bleeding Kansas, David W. Blight also uses race as the critical factor in the sectional conflict, arguing that to black abolitionists like Douglass, the events of Bleeding Kansas did not represent the strengthening of two opposing sides, one for and one against slavery, but instead two sides articulating different visions of a racist future. David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 18.
[28] Kristen Tegtmeier Oertel, *Bleeding Borders: Race, Gender, and Violence in Pre-Civil War Kansas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 115.

manifested in a "moral imperative to civilize, remove, or exterminate the native 'savages,'" while affirming the "inherent inferiority" of all other non-white people in Kansas.[29] This manifested not just in the rhetorical and political battles fought abroad over the land known as Kansas, but also within the regional setting, between individuals.[30] In particular, "blackness," particularly black masculinity, represented a distinct threat to both free-state and proslavery understandings of white supremacy, as the threat of interracial sex between white women and black men permeated the rhetoric of both sides of the conflict.[31] Ultimately, this agreement on the superiority of white masculinity and supremacy across the border allowed for reconciliation, as discussed by Neely and Rawley, which based in race made Kansas a "free" state only for white males.[32]

The intersectionality of race and gender, as evidenced in Oertel's study of Bleeding Kansas, manifests in a larger body of contemporary gender histories of the Civil War. Lee Ann Whites, a pioneer in this subfield, argues that gender matters to the history of the Civil War. War in general, but the Civil War in particular, turned American households inside out, changing the very social makeup of both northern and southern cultures in the process. When challenged, the household, providing the "organizational structure of race, gender, and class relations in the nineteenth-century," also offered the racially and gendered dependents the opportunity, even the necessity, of social structural visibility."[33] A "declaration of war" called men to a "manly service, endowing masculinity with civil purpose," giving gendered meanings to the sectional conflict. Though gender historians do not suggest that differences in gender constructions

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 9-33.
[31] Ibid., 109-134.
[32] Ibid., 5-8, 132-134.
[33] LeeAnn Whites, *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 6.

"caused" the civil war, Nina Silber argues that "gender was integral to northerners' and southerners' differing conceptions of why they fought and what the war was about."[34] Southern and northern masculinities diverged at the basic unit of the household, a difference both worth fighting for and that changed significantly in the wake of the war. Thus, the Civil War becomes an interplay of masculinities, where northern and southern men competed partially over whose "brand" of masculinity would take hold in the postbellum era while silencing the masculine identities of African Americans in the conflict.

For both northern and southern men, the question of African American masculinity posed a particular obstacle and, in the case of northern men, a potential resource. Gender scholars argue that northern and southern men agreed on an understanding of the Civil War as a "white man's war." However, as the second year of war turned to a close, and it seemed the Confederate forces held an advantage, northern men could "abolish" the privileges of whiteness, allowing black men to "prove themselves on the battlefield," or they could lose their position "as free men to a worse threat: the Slave Power."[35] Either way, northern men could not retain their same position. Black men, on the other hand, stood to "win their manhood" in a way that slavery and racism prohibited in nineteenth-American political culture. By participating in the military, LeeAnn Whites argues, black men stood to "lay claim to the dominant social construction of manhood itself," performing masculine gender through violence in the name of nation and home. For this very reason, "white men felt that *their* masculinity was further threatened in the process." Fighting side-by-side with black men threatened their understanding of masculine privileges, necessitating the exclusion of those relegated "inferior," which meant the exclusion of black men

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[34] Nina Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), xiii.
[35] Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender,* 3;

from "masculine' responsibilities of military service."[36] Nevertheless, black men, through expressions of masculinity, claimed their destinies, empowering themselves not just through military service but also through education, financial autonomy and physical escape from slavery, the very acts that defined culturally constructed, once exclusively "white" manhood.[37]

Literary critic Dana D. Nelson understands the dominance of white supremacy in the "U.S. democratic imaginary" as a "National Manhood," one in which white men regardless of class come together in opposition to everyone else.[38] Throughout the iconic moments in the history of the United States of America, revolutionaries spouted lofty ideals of "freedom" and "equality," laying the framework for a unified national identity.[39] However, she argues that at the point of revolution, Civil War, and reunion, as well as other important moments of national unity, white men garnered the majority of the power and other civic benefits from this supposed "equality." Asserting their "civic fraternity," white men came together across class differences in order to express their patriotism, obscuring their wholly undemocratic beliefs by defining the concept of "democracy" as exclusively white and male.

The two categories, "white man" and "other," mutually constitute themselves. White manhood, Nelson concludes, could not exist without the exclusion of "women, Indians, blacks, primitives, poor, foreigners, and savages."[40] In this way, white masculinity, or what others call "white male supremacy" is written into the American governmental, civic, social, and cultural fabric. Nelson's theory of "National Manhood" provides a framework through which the reasons

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[36] Ibid. For discussion of how this transformation in gender norms, especially in the South, looked after the war, see Laura Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction. Urbana Champaign (University of Illinois Press, 1997).
[37] Friend and Glover, Introduction, in *Southern Manhood,* xi.
[38] Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1998.), x.
[39] Ibid., xi.
[40] Ibid., xii.

why Kansans and Missourians joined together after the conflict in agreement on the exclusion of blacks and the forgetting of American Indians can be understood.

Only by paying attention to the intervention of black manhoods in Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War in determining of the fate of slavery, can scholars move past what Gender and Civil War historian Nina Silber calls the American "policy of forgetfulness" when it came to the issue of race, "erasing memories of slavery and emancipation when they thought about the war," defining its importance instead through the union and mutual appreciation of a nation rejoined under peace.[41] Silber postures that gender played a crucial part in this forgetfulness, because northerners and southerners unified on the point of home and family after the war, once the southern definition eliminated its connections to racial slavery.[42] The Civil War fundamentally redefined *southern* manhood, eliminating the possibility of "honorable" mastery of their slaves. Gender and Civil War historian LeeAnn Whites argues that It also left "black men with a manhood that frequently continued to cost them their lives," for they represented the very destruction of that older *southern* manhood.[43] Northern men, vindicated in their separate sphere ideology, sought exclusive claims to their productive, public manhood, taking an increasingly (or continuously) racist, segregationist stance to labor, and maintaining a largely anti-suffragist, segregationist stance. In postwar America, dominant, racist hierarchies maintained their power by denying these competing, non-white masculinities that threatened the vitality of their masculinity, often through violence.[44]

While the majority of scholarship focusing on nineteenth-century Kansas history emphasizes the importance of Bleeding Kansas as a precursor to sectional conflict, writing the

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[41] Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict,* xix.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Whites, *Gender Matters,* 24.
[44] Ibid.

history of Kansas into a larger history of the American Civil War, New Western historians like Rita Napier see this same era as part of a larger history of conquest in the American West. In her introduction to a collection of these New Western narratives, *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives,* Napier argues for the need for scholarship to reimagine the role American Indians played in Kansas, both before and after statehood. These new "inclusive" narratives, Napier argues, provide a "different and more complex" vision of Kansas.[45] She argues that scholars should place American Indians as central actors in their narratives.[46] However, she also warns scholars against the type casting of American Indians into standard roles of "savagery," emphasizing and reinforcing romantic or violent stereotypes instead of providing alternative narratives. She argues that American Indian histories must address continuity rather than finality, to counter the way that American Indians are written out of the narrative of Kansas as whites are written into it.[47] Thus, Napier argues for a transformation in the way historians of Kansas write the history of American Indians, both in the way and the period they choose to narrate.

Napier's vision of the New West in Kansas joins the work of many other New Western historians who envision the "West" not just as a place of American Indian history, but a space of conquest, resistance, and racial, gender, and class confusion, challenging the ideas embraced by traditional Western historians who prescribed to the notion of Manifest Destiny. Rather than as a frontier, which implies a continually moving line of "civilization," New Western scholars argue that the West was a constantly challenged space where people questioned boundaries and the social hierarchies that defined them, reordering and constructing them anew. These new scholars criticize historians of the old frontier who wrote the West as a "zone of 'free' land and

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[45] Rita Napier, introduction to *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 3.
[46] Ibid., 4.
[47] Ibid., 6, 21.

opportunity," where white settlers staked their claim, earning their place in the West as individuals.[48] According to this New Western perspective, scholars must interrogate the way this narrative is and has been written both by contemporaries and by scholars for over a century in order to rewrite the narrative as multicultural.

Though problematic, it is important for these new scholars to understand the ways that the West and Kansas, in particular, was written as a blank slate in the 1850s, where the fate of slavery could be decided in a supposedly unsettled zone.[49] This "blank slate" ideology perpetuates the silence of African American and American Indian participation in and influence on this conflict, wholly changing the outcome and its meaning. Writing African Americans and American Indians out of this conflict also works to obscure the way inequality operated in the territory before and after it "opened up" to white settlement in 1854.

While popular histories remember the idea of "blank state" Kansas as a haven for equality, where "good" anti-slavery activists won out over the "bad" proslavery forces, Napier and other "New Western" historians of Kansas emphasize that "Kansas society was not based on rough equality or open, equal access to prestige and power."[50] Kansas was, and continues to be, a place of inequality, where differences based on race, class, ethnicity, and gender continue to

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[48] New Western historians like Patricia Limerick argue that the word "frontier" as it is used in English, implies a singularly "Turnerian" perspective, implying "the place where white settlers entered a zone of "free" land and opportunity," a zone officially closed, as Turner proclaimed, in 1893. New Western scholars like Limerick redefined the "frontier" as a multicultural, multiracial, multinational space. Limerick, *Something in the Soil,* 87-88; See also Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), xxvii; Susan Lee Johnson, "Bulls, Bears, and Dancing Boys: Race, Gender, and Leisure in the California Gold Rush" in *Radical History Review,* no. 60 (1994): 6, 8-9; Other scholars draw upon this multifaceted idea of the "frontier" in the history of the southwest borderlands, Juliana Barr, *Peace came in the form of a woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1-15; and James Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 4-5.

[49] Though Napier never uses the term "blank slate," she discusses an emphasis on a fictional "rough equality" in older Kansas historiography. See Napier, introduction, 21, 32.

[50] Ibid., 21.

define Kansas as a complex society.[51] The rhetorical emphasis on the outcome of Bleeding Kansas, defining Kansas as a "haven for freedom" obscures this longer history of inequality and resistance to that inequality. Only by directly addressing the gaps in this narrative, and fusing together the histories of slavery in Kansas, the violence of Bleeding Kansas, the removal and resistance to removal by American Indian nations in eastern Kansas, and the fighting of the Civil War in Kansas by American Indians and African Americans can historians eschew the notion of a "blank slate" for a very messy, complex, unequal meeting ground.

Connecting these disparate histories of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War seems a relatively enormous task. However, looking at the history of Kansas through the lens of gender and race, thereby seeing the ways that black masculinities impact the prewar, wartime, and postwar understandings of politics, economics, morality, race, religion, and region, provides a means to overcome the binaries set up in the literature. Placing an emphasis on American Indian resistance to conquest through an interrogation and challenge to the hyper-masculine, racist tropes of "Indianness" resituates the narrative of Bleeding Kansas as part of the history of the American West in addition to the North/South focused history of the Civil War. Focusing on black masculinity helps close the gaps between regional and national histories, as black abolitionists articulating their masculinity in response to the Kansas crisis advocated increasingly for militant, violent responses to the threat of the "Slave Power," and thus influenced the mentalities of the black soldiers who chose to fight in Civil War Kansas. Kansas undergoes massive political, religious, economic, and demographic shifts between these two periods of conflict, and holds (rather fallacious) symbolic importance as a place of "freedom," especially in

[51] Ibid., 32.

the legacy of John Brown, making it an excellent geographic grounding for studying the meeting of multiple masculinities in the long history of sectional conflict.

Taking on these tasks, this paper analyzes the rhetoric through which white men appropriated "native" identities through the two hyper-masculine stereotypes of the noble and ignoble savage, writing American Indians out of this conflict, ultimately ensuring the removal of the majority of American Indians from the eastern half of the state. This highlights the way that Bleeding Kansas operated both as sites of conquest and white supremacy. Bringing American Indian resistance to the forefront of this history with the juxtaposition of white male appropriation of so-called "native" identities with American Indian resistance asserts the presence and importance of both groups in its outcome and memory. Also, looking at the closeness of contact between white men and African American individuals during this period, seeing how white men constructed their masculinity in opposition to racialized other highlights the active role played by African American men, who in response to Bleeding Kansas and eventually as soldiers in the Civil War, shaped their own conceptions of masculinity through this conflict. Looking past popular histories that emphasize Kansas as a site of freedom and radical equality by looking to these silenced voices of American Indians and African Americans alongside the overwhelmingly dominant perspectives of white men on both sides of the conflict sheds light on the early formation of white supremacy in Kansas, which continues to be a place of inequality.

Chapter 2—Bleeding Kansas: Conquest and Slavery in the Making of a "Free" Kansas

The myth of the American frontier as a place where "wildness" and "civilization" clash violently is one of the most dominant and lasting myths of the American experience. Richard

Slotkin in *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860,* places an emphasis on the regenerative properties of the violence inherent in this myth, arguing that this "regeneration" or possibility of new growth underpins American experience and identity. The violence of this myth lies in the inherent and fatal opposition between the "American" and the "savage." As Americans progress along the ever-expanding line of the frontier, they must battle those who claim the land first, continually reinventing themselves in these newly claimed spaces. Thus, Slotkin writes, the frontier as the great "American myth" embodies "the fatal opposition, the hostility between two worlds, two races, two realms of thought and feeling."[52] Americans seeking this regeneration must define themselves in opposition to the natives, for only through this violent process can they stake claim to that nativeness.[53]

Two important character types emerge from the numerous cultural productions that produce and reproduce this myth: the farmer and the hunter, both individual, self-reliant men capable of producing culture on the edges. First, the rugged individual emerges, traveling into the "vast expanse" of the frontier, a solitary figure who embodies the very spirit of the wilderness. Hunters like Daniel Boone, one of the most popular American heroes of this type, exhibit "Indian-like" qualities by hunting deep in the woods, engaging in "acts of love and sacred affirmation" of the wilderness through "acts of violence against that spirit and her avatars," the animals and the indigenous peoples.[54] Slotkin calls this a "baptism by combat," through which rugged, individual, hyper-masculine men like Boone enter the wilderness and come out as American heroes, taking on the warrior-like aspects of the indigenous warrior through violence

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[52] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence; The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 17.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 22.

against native peoples. Second, after the hunter/warrior paves the path toward civilization, claiming the land through his violent performance of "Indianness," the yeomen farmer type arrives. The farmer, also an individual who can sustain himself, begins the transition, "mediating between civilization and savagery, white and red."[55] The symbolic "taming" of previously wild land through agriculture makes the farmer a harbinger of civilization. Each type relies on its other for its symbolic importance in the larger American myth, for without the hunter, the farmer has no right claim to the land, and without the farmer, the hunter has no way of distinguishing his purpose from that of his foe, the "savage."[56] Thus, these mutually constitutive types, both highly masculine figures who cannot exist without the process of violence on the frontier, create a highly emotional and powerful myth of American progress.

The myth of "regeneration through violence" often takes the form of "Indian wars" fought to assert both American dominance over the American Indian nations as well as their own American exceptionalism from the "over civilized" European nations.[57] In the colonial era, colonists found "Indian wars" to be uniquely American experiences. In those wars, they simultaneously emphasized their Europeanness in opposition to "Indian barbarism" and their superiority to the English motherland by "exalting their heroism in battle" in light of the "peculiar danger of their circumstances."[58] In this way, the early "Indian wars" were used to construct the first iteration of a uniquely "American" identity—one that was neither European nor "Indian," but a unique fusion of the two earned through masculine violence.[59]

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[55]Ibid., 21.
[56] Ibid., 15, 17.
[57] Ibid., 21.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 17, 19.

The mythological power of the "Indian wars" holds continued importance in American history. Often, evoking the popular symbolic value of "Indian violence" is used to stage, justify, and celebrate forms of non-Indian violence. By evoking the ultimate fight between the "good," "civilized" whites and the "bad," "savage" natives, Americans appropriate the strong mythology and nationalism tied to this violence, evoking a "naturalization" of such warfare for their own purposes.[60] Phillip Deloria, in *Indians in Unexpected Places,* argues that this appropriation of the "Indian wars" in non-related conflicts, ones often between two sparring sections of white men like Bleeding Kansas, write off American Indians, pacifying them through the appropriation of this symbolic fight.[61]

Conventional histories end the "Indian wars" in the nineteenth-century, American Indians no longer occupy the position of power in the violent "opposition." If, as Deloria argues, expectations of American Indians are no longer violent, but instead pacified and primitive, locked in the past, then this transformation must have occurred sometime in the nineteenth century.[62] Though they were not the only nineteenth-century cultural arbiters to participate in this process, men fighting for both proslavery and antislavery factions in Bleeding Kansas participated in this pacification. They reinvented the myth of "Indian" violence to exclude American Indians in everything but symbolism. Inverting the role of colonizer and colonized, white men assumed the role of "Indian," appropriating the language of "Indian violence" for solely white warfare. They staked claim to the motif of the "noble savage" in order to justify their stake in the territory, a place in which they must become "savage" to live because it is already "wild."

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[60] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 49.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 50.

While this place is conventionally called the frontier, if used at all, the term "frontier," should embody the multiple, conflicting ways that people interacted in the American border areas, ways that defined and challenged power relations.[63] Colonial historian Kathleen M. Brown sees the history of the American West as a "gender frontier," where gender differences between cultures become a site of contestation, interaction, mixture, and violence among individuals.[64] Kathleen Kennedy and Sharon R. Ullman in their introduction to *Sexual Borderlands: Constructing an American Sexual Past*, see this interaction as a sexual meeting ground, one in which diverse people in the contested areas "negotiated their identities and differences" through sexuality.[65] According to Kennedy and Ullman, the "drama of life on the edges of where people and places meet," their definition of a "frontier" or "borderland," is a place and time where the "basic stuff of sexuality—intimacy, marriage, courtship, and love—are all in flux."[66] This fluctuation of gender or sexuality in a contested space means that Americans constructed their own identities and the social practices and structures that are framed by those identities in new ways, ways that impacted distribution and access to power in these contested spaces.[67]

One of the lasting implications of sexual borderlands on contemporary imaginings of the American West is in the act of interracial marriage and sex, producing a culture of mixed heritage. In the Euroamerican/American Indian borderland, Kennedy and Ullman argue that

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[63] For discussion of the multiple meanings of the term "frontier," see Limerick, *Something in the Soil,* 87-88.
[64] Brown, *Good Wives,* 45.
[65] Kathleen Kennedy and Sharon R. Ullman, introduction to *Sexual Borderlands: Constructing an American Sexual Past* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003), xiii.
[66] Ibid., xiii.
[67] Ibid. This framework is useful for this paper, taking the way gender and race are mutually constituted and sees the way that structured power at the time, and the way that power was distributed through Bleeding Kansas well into the twentieth-century.

"sexual intimacies played a central role."[68] Cultural, economic, and diplomatic interactions between these groups relied upon the practice of intermarriage, particularly as Euroamericans wished to gain economic advantage over their European and other American Indian competitors in trade and commerce. These relationships were also integral to the maintenance of political stability, enforcing peace, at least in theory, between the treatied nations. Later in the nineteenth century, similar mixed-raced individuals living within American Indian communities were used as evidence for the "whiteness" or "civilized" nature of certain nations.[69] This proved a particularly successful tactic for the American government and for squatters in the Kansas territory, who argued that such "white Indians" should not be allowed to live on reservations in such valuable land or should not remain tax exempt. On the other hand, some of these same individuals used their liminal power between both cultures to assert their agency and the agency of their nation, using law degrees and other "civilized" trades to gather money and support to protest the violation of their treaties in Washington.[70] While the cultural and temporal meanings attached to mixture changed in the early American period, the importance of these mixed-race individuals remains central to mitigating the distance between the two in these borderlands.

While mixed-raced Americans of American Indian and white heritage experienced a certain set of expectations and limitations based on their racial identity, the sexual borderlands between African Americans and whites held a different kind of danger. Martha Hodes, in her

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[68] Kennedy and Ullman, introduction, 3.

[69] For discussion of the project of assimilation and its influence in denying American Indian identity, see *The Nations Within,* 125. This same project of assimilation and failure of the Federal government and popular American culture to recognize American Indian nations based on their perceived "whiteness" continued when citizenship was imposed on all American Indian nations through the Citizenship Act of 1929. For discussion of this process in this era of tribal policy, see Vine Deloria, Jr. and David E. Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 146-148.

[70] Smith, "The Final removal of the Wyandot Indians," 4-8; and Joseph B. Herring, "The Chippewa and Munsee Indians: Acculturation and Survival in Kansas, 1850s-1870," In *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*, ed. Rita Napier (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 78.

chapter "Wartime Dialogues on Illicit Sex: White Women and Black Men," argues that with the threat and then official end of slavery during the eras before, during, and after the Civil War, the boundary between black and white became "essential to white southerners who wished to maintain racial supremacy."[71] Without the economic and legal distinctions between slave and free, race became even more critical in determining social standing. White men evoked the threat of the hyper-sexual black male in order to justify extreme violence. This myth of the sexually aggressive black male constructed the defensive, violent yet vindicated white male, the violent acts of whom continue to threaten the lives of African Americans to this day. [72]

National Policies of Conquest

The process of conquest, highly reliant on varying expectations of "Indian savagery," did not go uncontested. Just as American Indians challenged cultural expectations of both noble and violent savagery, they also protested and actively resisted the steamroller of conquest. Thus, as Napier argues, rather than a one-sided domination of whites over American Indians, conquest is really a contested process through which American Indians assert their identities as "legitimate sovereigns protecting their territory from unjust invasion."[73]

While resistance remained a critical part of American Indian cultural survival and continued vitality in the face of conquest, these efforts were limited by both internal and external factors. Tribal divisions, splitting resistance within American Indian nations among their own political factions, as well as the persistence of animosities between nearby nations following long

[71] Martha Hodes, "Wartime Dialogues on Illicit Sex: White Women and Black Men," in *Sexual Borderlands: Constructing an American Sexual Past*, ed. Kathleen Kennedy and Sharon R. Ullman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003), 124-134.
[72] Hodes, "Wartime Dialogues on Illicit Sex," 122; And Oertel, *Bleeding Borders,* 109-134.
[73] Napier, introduction, 6; Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle also discuss American Indian sovereignty and resistance to colonization. Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, (*The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 9-15.

histories of extra tribal warfare before colonization, left room for white interests to split support and resistance efforts within and between nations. Additionally, issues of epidemic diseases and ongoing systemic problems like malnutrition plagued indigenous resistance efforts.[74] These internal limitations to tribal resistance did not exist outside of the project of colonization, as many documented cases suggest that deliberate exacerbations of tribal political divisions or even purposeful introductions of diseases by whites into native communities amplified the effects of these internal issues.[75]

One of the most trying limitations to American Indian resistance of conquest was the intervention of the Federal government into the daily lives of American Indians through treaties, a plethora of sporadic and contradictory Federal policies, and military campaigns.[76] White desire for native lands meant that white supremacy was favored over American Indian claims to the land, even while American Indians still occupied their land. Treaties served both as support for and an attack on tribal sovereignty, recognizing tribal authority as a nation independent of the United States, but almost always meaning land loss for the tribe. In return, American Indian nations were guaranteed a variety of rights as independent citizens of their own tribal nations, including annuities for the land lost, education, clothing, guaranteed hunting, fishing, and gathering rights on ceded ancestral land, and often reservations, places that were guaranteed to remain in tribal ownership after the nation was removed from the land the Federal government wanted.[77] As Deloria points out, these treaties "meant much to the Indian people and little to the

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[74] Napier, introduction, 6.
[75] Napier, introduction, 7, Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 30-31.
[76] Napier, 6-7. For discussion of treaties, reservations, and the way both defined American Indian relationships with the Federal government, see Deloria and Lytle, *The Nations Within,* 7-8, 28-36; and Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for your Sins,* 28-53.
[77] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 17.

Americans who made them."[78] Treaties were often disregarded, violated, and then nullified through other Federal governmental processes, leaving American Indian people in a vulnerable position, what Vine Deloria, Jr. and David E. Wilkins call a "constitutional no-man's land"—a position favorable for the continuation of the process of conquest.[79]

This vulnerable, legally murky territory known as "Federal Indian Policy" relied on other arms of the Federal government, including the United States Military, the Land Office, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to enforce its ever-changing tenants.[80] The US military was responsible for enforcing the stipulations of treaties, by ensuring both that American Indians resided in their reservations and that white settlers did not encroach on those designated lands. The military was also responsible for settler safety and for making sure the lines of communication remained open between the government in the East and the "Wild West."[81] The Land Office was responsible for divvying up ceded "Indian lands" as well as the larger "open" territories, for guaranteeing that the American Indian nations were compensated for these lands at "fair" market value, meaning that these lands were surveyed before they were sold. The Office of Indian Affairs, later called the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was responsible for the "wellbeing" of the American Indian people, from guaranteeing the dispersal of annuities and other treaty rights to employment.[82] In theory, the purpose of these agencies was to work together to create peace in the West.

However, the converse and often opposing purposes of these offices meant that they regularly worked against one another, and sometimes offices struggled to balance the opposing goals within the office. The Land Office was also responsible and held accountable for the

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Vine Deloria Jr. and David E. Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations,* 45.
[80] Napier, introduction, 17.
[81] Tony R. Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains: Army Operations in Bleeding Kansas* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 3.
[82] Deloria and Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations,* 40-48.

settlement of the ever-expanding American West by "good" American folk, i.e. whites, as fast as possible, and the proper or designated mode for making sure American Indians were paid justly for the lands got in the way of expedited settlement. In this way, the Land Office could, in theory, work against the military, who was responsible for enforcing those treaties, as well as against the Office of Indian Affairs, who was also responsible for treaties. However, even within the Office of Indian Affairs, many questioned the office's role and purpose—when the department was moved from the Department of War to the Department of the Interior in 1849, just five years before the Kansas-Nebraska Act that "opened" the territory to white settlement, the department questioned whether "Indian lands" should be protected, or whether American Indians were no longer a "threat," and thus should not be protected through the use of the military. Additionally, this bureaucratic reshuffling meant an increased animosity between the Indian Commissioner now in the Department of the Interior, and the US Military, which still operated out of the Department of War. Thus, the very bureaucratic hierarchies set in place to maintain so-called peace, and, in theory, uphold treaty obligations, often worked against the interests of American Indian peoples, furthering the goals of conquest. [83]

Conquest in Kansas

While this complicated bureaucratic system operated differently across the American West, in Kansas, most of these policies were directly affected by the Preemption Act of 1841 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, two acts that critically altered the relationship between American Indians in Kansas and the Federal government. First, the Preemption Act or "squatter's act" of 1841 allowed squatters illegally living on "Federal" land the right to purchase

[83] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains*, 76-78.

that land. Thus, squatters could preemptively move to a territory before it officially "opened" and buy a portion of that land after it was available for purchase. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 passed, this meant that white settlers could move to Kansas and Nebraska and set up homesteads on lands before the land was open for sale. This is particularly important in the case of Kansas, which had a great demand for settlement because of the politically charged climate over the issue of slavery expansion, and which had little available land in eastern Kansas, as many emigrant tribes had settled there after they were removed from more eastern areas like Ohio. This combination of pro-settlement policies meant that many white settlers coveted American Indian lands and felt empowered to claim that land through lenient Federal squatter policy.[84]

Although eastern Kansas had been guaranteed for American Indian settlement as part of the "permanent Indian frontier," as Mullis explains, political pressures to expand westward into this rich farming country, not to mention the increased tension over deciding the fate of slavery in the West, meant that increasing pressure was placed on American Indians in this region to cede this land.[85] Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Delaware, Wyandot, Weas, Ioways, and other emigrant Indians living along the eastern border of Kansas were forced to give up this land, receiving diminished reservations, in some cases, while others "assimilated," becoming American citizens through this treaty process. With this political

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[84] For discussion of the Preemption Act of 1841 in Kansas, see Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 131; For discussion of this act in relation to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 in Kansas, see Richard Sheridan, "From Slavery in Missouri to Freedom in Kansas: The Influx of Black Fugitives and Contrabands into Kansas, 1854-1865," in *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*, ed. Rita Napier (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 157, 158-59.

[85] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 45.

strategy, the Federal government erased, though not fully successfully, the American Indian claims to eastern Kansas.[86]

Complicating this issue even further, the land conquered through Federal policy still could not fall into white ownership without proper speculation and appraisal in order to compensate the tribes rightly for their ceded land. The government was required to delineate the boundaries around these "diminished reserves" before white speculators could preemptively claim the land for ownership and resale.[87] How then did land speculators rush to eastern Kansas as soon as the land "opened" in 1854? How could white settlers staking claim to this territory fight a war for the "fate of slavery" and the fate of white supremacy in the region beginning in that same year if the treaties had not been finalized?[88] White desire for this land, paired with both official and unofficial military policies of inaction, meant that white supremacy supplanted American Indian claims to the land while they still resided within its borders.

Mullis, in his 2004 work *Peacekeeping on the Plains: Army Operations in Bleeding Kansas,* cites economic and political reasons for this abandonment of Indian treaty obligations by the U.S. military in eastern Kansas. He argues that army officers assigned to posts in Kansas between 1854 and 1856 engaged as land speculators, performing the very crimes they were assigned to prohibit.[89] As Mullis explains, army officers were legally "obligated to remove illegal settlers from Indian property," but, "these intruder removal operations occasionally placed some officers in direct conflict" with their own economic ventures.[90] Additionally, the Federal

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[86] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 45-46. For discussion of the shift from treaty-making to legislative decree and reservations and how it affected American Indian land tenure, see Deloria and Lytle, *Nations Within,* 28-36.
[87] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 123.
[88] The Wyandot signed their treaty of cession in 1855, the same year that Bleeding Kansas emerged as a crisis on the national scene. That same year, sixty-nine Wyandot petitioned to be opted out of that treaty, desiring both to remain in the Kansas territory and to remain non-citizens. Smith, "The Final removal of the Wyandot Indians," 10.
[89] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 120.
[90] Ibid.

government dissuaded its military from using physical force against white squatters, seeing the threat of danger to white emigrants as "bad for business" in the era of governmentally sponsored settlement of the Kansas territory. Without the threat of physical violence to enforce treaty obligations and with a strong economic incentive to dishonor them, Mullis argues that members of the military drew upon the bonds of whiteness and the draw of economic prosperity, letting white squatters settle on native lands illegally.[91]

While members of the United States military presented a decidedly nonviolent presence in conflicts over settlement in eastern Kansas, they were nevertheless engaging in a violent campaign against the Lakota in western Kansas and the further western plains in what was called the "Sioux Expedition of 1855." This campaign marked "the beginning of a cycle of punitive campaigns" that were, according to Mullis, "designed to keep peace in the region."[92] Whether this goal was so decidedly valiant or more complicated, the military policy of violence starkly contrasts with the nonviolent policies in the East, especially with both events occurring at the same time, in the same region, over issues of treaty rights and lands.[93] Both regions faced contests over treaty obligations and boundaries, yet the Sioux expedition chose violence for recourse rather than silence. What was different?

While Mullis's explanation of the economic incentive and lack of physical recourse explains why the military was reluctant to enforce treaty obligations and the rights of American Indians in eastern Kansas, it does not explain why the eastern Kansas situation differed from western Kansas and other areas in the West. Theoretically, land speculation business boomed in many western places, especially along the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails where other

[91] Ibid., 119-120.
[92] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 4.
[93] Ibid.

American Indian nations had ancestral and treaty rights to the land and where whites were eager to settle.[94] Yet, the U.S. army embraced tactical violence in dealing with the American Indians residing in western Kansas, while advocating a policy of inaction in the case of eastern Kansas. If the economic incentives and white fraternity does not account for this disparity, what does?

In the case of the Sioux Expedition of 1855, the Federal government faced a militarily powerful and therefore less "civilized" group of American Indians who challenged the scope of their treaty relationship with the Federal government. Under the Treaty of Ft. Laramie, the Lakota, along with several other Plains tribes, agreed to peaceful interactions with the Federal government and white settlers, granting the United States transit rights though Plains Indian lands. This treaty, sought out by the Federal government for purposes of expansion, designated areas where these tribes could not reside for the "safety" of white travelers on these trails. These tribes, however, protested this restriction, for the route of the Oregon Trail lay within hunting and gathering ranges, places where the Lakota and other Plains Indians migrated seasonally.[95] These lands had only recently been conquered by the Lakota for their hunting privileges from other Plains tribes, and thus they had a vested interested in maintaining these rights to these valuable lands. In this way, the Federal government saw a threat to their expansion efforts, not just in their desire to keep the land, but in the continually expanding nature of the Lakota nation, which threatened the expansion of their own.[96] Thus, the use of force by the Federal government, in many ways, marked the Lakota as equal adversaries in the process of expansion, a threat which they did not perceive from the tribes in eastern Kansas.

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[94] Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest,* 61-62, 70.
[95] Ibid., 67-69.
[96] Ibid., 70-71.

The perception of the Lakota as "hostile," fitting in with the negative stereotype of the "violent," savage warrior, was used by the military to justify a violent campaign. By enforcing the stipulations of the treaty that limited Lakota movement through force, the military asserted their dominance over the Lakota warriors. This tactic relied upon the agreed-upon fear of Lakota violence against settlers and emigrants along the trails. By evoking their "savage," violent perceptions of Lakota manhood, the military in turn justified the need for violence and constructed a "superior" white military masculinity.[97]

Constructing a superior white military manhood required the belief that Lakota warriors presented a "real" threat to the settlers, evoking a masculine duty of protection and a superior warrior identity in the "success" of this campaign. In the case of the eastern emigrant tribes, however, Mullis points out how emigrant Indians were "rarely hostile."[98] Because they did not fit into the trope of violent "Indian" warrior masculinity, they were not perceived as a threat. Thus, without the perception of "Indian savagery," the white military did not choose violence as their recourse for the dispute of treaties in eastern Kansas.

Even when the military did not engage in violence as a tool for conquest, it does not mean that these men, and the men and women squatters they protected through this choice to avoid violence, were inactive in the conquest of American Indians residing in eastern Kansas. Nor does this mean that the perception of American Indians as "savage warriors" did not play a large part in the conquest of eastern Kansas and the violence that occurred between whites in Bleeding Kansas. In the process of taking their land and claiming it for the cause of disunion, these settlers evoked the trope of the ignoble savage as part of their cause, arguing that their political, moral, and economic claims to Kansas soil "naturalized" their conquest and legitimated

[97] Limerick, *Something in the Soil,* 33-35, 44-45, 72-73; and Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 13-27, 48-50.
[98] Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains,* 70.

their claims to the land. By using these tropes to construct their own masculine identities, staking claims to Indian lands in Kansas, these men silenced the continued presence of eastern emigrant tribes. These white men wrote these nations out of the conflict as "too white" or "not Indian," themselves staking claim to the two dominant tropes of "Indianness" in a way that excluded the Delaware, Wyandot, and other tribes in eastern Kansas from accessing the legal recourse guaranteed through their treaty rights.

"Savage" Lands and "Savage" Peoples: Tropes of American "Indianness"

As white men participated in the perpetuation of the myth of the American frontier as a violent place of rebirth, adopting the savagery of the land, they relied on two very popular, lasting tropes of "Indianness" to claim that naturalized American identity. The stereotypes of indigenous peoples as either the "noble savage" or the "ignoble savage" originated long before Bleeding Kansas, emerging at the time of exploration and colonization.[99] The noble savage, romantic and stoic, emerges and continues to remain a popular ideology used by people arguing that the American Indians are a vanishing race, inevitably disappearing as civilization conquers nature. Conversely, the ignoble savage, or the "wild" and "barbarous" man, often described as animalistic, cannibalistic, or devilish, is evoked to argue for the project of colonization, speaking to the fear whites display of these violent savages who must be conquered. Either way, these two converse stereotypes work to justify and reinforce the project of colonization, both used in ways that support (in one way or another) the dispossession of American Indian lands and the murder of American Indian people.[100]

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[99] Brown, *Good Wives,* 53-69.
[100] Ibid., 72-74.

Phillip Deloria, in his book *Indians in Unexpected Places* argues that the perpetuation of these popular stereotypes in the American imagination from before the nation's founding is a product of cultural expectations. Expectations, according to Deloria, are always raced, classed, and gendered, and work as "colonial and imperial relations of power and domination" existing "between Indian people and the United States."[101] By defining what "Indians" look like, reinforcing ideas that are incompatible with white society, these expectations assert colonial power over how American Indians can operate in this contact zone.[102] When they do not meet these popular stereotypes, they are disregarded as anomalies, a categorization that works to reinforce the expectations.[103]

Deloria argues that all native people had to "confront these expectations—whether that meant ignoring them, protesting them, working them, or seeking to prove them wrong."[104] In this way, by directly addressing these expectations of stereotypical "Indianness," American Indians are constantly challenging the naturalization of cultural expectations, an act which itself runs contrary to these expectations of savagery. Instead of dismissing these acts of resistance as "anomalous," Deloria redefines contrary acts as "unexpected," a title that "resists categorization and, thereby, questions expectation itself."[105] Thus, Deloria argues scholars must look past, through, around, and beyond these expectations of "Indianness," seeing where they are evoked and where American Indian people are challenging those expectations, because they always are.[106]

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[101] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 11.
[102] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," in *Profession 1* (New York: MLA, 1991), 1.
[103] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 12.
[104] Ibid., 11.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

Expectations themselves are created through the perpetuation of stereotypes and broader ideologies, both reinforcing each other in the way "Indianness" is constructed in the popular imagination. Stereotypes, generalized characterizations, when transferred to human beings, have the effect of generalizing and thus dehumanizing that group of people. In the case of the two stereotypes of noble natives who "live in harmony with nature," both simplify and generalize all indigenous peoples into a state of "savagery," one that is unchanging both temporally and across individuals.[107] Popular culture reproduces these expectations in multiple generations through "mass-produced images and literature, drama, local folklore, and social behaviors," teaching future Americans to buy into the same "noble" and "ignoble" perceptions of American Indians.[108]

Ideologies, or broader ideas about native peoples and their place within and against "white" society, have the power to both represent and define lived experiences. For instance, Deloria gives a list of key ideologies that describe American Indian people. Their inevitable disappearance, their primitive purity, and their "savage violence" all work together, embodied in the two "contrary" stereotypes to place American Indians below whites in a racial and ethnically constructed hierarchy of power.[109] These ideologies have real social, political, economic, and legal consequences. When shared by the large body of white Americans, the mutual production of limiting ideologies and generalizing, dehumanizing stereotypes works as a larger set of mass shared images, which "shape material events" through their influence on public opinion.[110]

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[107] Ibid., 8.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Deloria focuses both on the rhetorical and prescriptive elements of ideologies in the creation of expectations of American "Indianness." He argues that ideology and discourse (the way that language imposes frameworks that shape human perception of the world) work together to restrict images of American Indians in popular thought, which is "all too often interpreted from the colonial project and from the Euro-American gaze." Ibid., 6-10.
[110] Ibid., 8.

Policies, actions, and beliefs of white Americans, influenced by those expectations, shape American Indian lives. Conquest is a product of expectation.

The contradictory visions of white-Indian contact, defined by the emergence of the "noble" and "ignoble" savages, employ heavily gendered perceptions of "Indianness." First, the "noble" ideology, or what Deloria (for a lack of a better term) calls the "positive" stereotype, feminizes American Indians. The narrative attached to this stereotype follows the submission of native women, like the land, to the colonizing white men, exhibiting a consensual cross-cultural harmony, where "natives," so close to nature, gave way with the tides of change, just as "helpless" as the trees that were removed for settlement.[111] While the "noble" male native does not follow directly with this line, he is also feminized, for his likeness with nature makes him submissive to the overt masculinity of the white male conquerors. Also, his female counterpart's fictional sexual submission to the overt white masculinity completes his emasculation, making him as feminine as native women and the land. Thus, in this way the "positive" stereotype really services the white masculine sexual prowess in this version of conquest.

Rather than naturalizing the process of colonization, the converse stereotype of the "ignoble savage" warrior provides a justification and need for conquest. Rather than feminizing indigenous men the "ignoble savage" stereotype relies on masculine imagery of imminent and dangerously violent conflict.[112] By framing indigenous, hyper-masculine "savage warriors" as the aggressors, Deloria argues that the "ignoble" type "helps make sustained American aggression appear as a long defensive conquest of the continent."[113] By asserting the certainty of this violence, propagators of this stereotype justify colonization as defensive measures,

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[111] Deloria, 8.
[112] Deloria, 20.
[113] Ibid; For discussion of the importance of hyper-masculinity in American Indian-white contact, see James F. Brooks, *Captains and Cousins,* 4.

protecting the women, children, and other dependents from violent acts of aggression. This negative stereotype is perpetrated in captivity narratives, stories of cannibalism, and especially in the narrative of "Indian wars," the same cultural products that define the frontier as a place of "violent regeneration."[114]

Becoming "Native": Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Quest for "Real" Men

When East Coast born Thomas Wentworth Higginson traveled west to fight alongside his free state brethren and turn the popular tide toward anti-slavery, he wrote a series of letters published in the *New York Tribune*. These letters emphasized free state fighters' bravery, often suggesting the need for East Coast investors to give more money in order to support this bravery. In a narrative style, he articulates his journey as a "search for men."[115] Through this search, he emphasized the importance of masculinity and the impact of the wild, enthralling Kansas landscape on the free state fighters he encountered.[116] By placing an emphasis on these traits, he drew upon a language of popular tropes of "Indianness", using the stereotypes of the "noble" and "ignoble" savage to understand the free state and proslavery violence in Kansas. However, by using these expectations of "Indianness," and by reinforcing the rhetorical power of those

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[114] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* 20; and Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence,* 5.

[115] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *A Ride through Kanzas,* (The following letters were originally published, with the signature of Worcester, in the New York Tribune." Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *A Ride Through Kanzas*, Online, Library of Congress. (New York: American anti-slavery Society, 1856), 14. *http://archive.org/details/ridethroughkansa00higg*

[116] Wentworth is a significant figure in the history of abolitionism and the Civil War, and is also well-known for his literary pursuits. He is celebrated in the historiography as an arbiter of freedom, and in many ways is a representative figure of the perspectives brought into Kansas by other free state men, as he operated as one of their most famous leaders. It is important to note that his perception of and interactions with American Indians is never addressed in these portrayals. For examples of this celebratory scholarship, see Edwin W. Bowen, "Thomas Wentworth Higginson" In *The Sewanee Review,* vol. 23, no. 4 (October 1915): 436; Howard N. Meyer, *Colonel of the Black Regiment; The Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Norton, 1967); Dudley T. Cornish, and Howard N. Meyer, "Review of Colonel of the Black Regiment: The Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson" *The Journal of Southern History* 35, no. 1 (1969): 97-98; and Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm; A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New Haven: Yale University, 1968).

cultural expectations of indigenous peoples, Higginson wrote American Indians out of this narrative altogether, silencing the role they played by appropriating their "claims" to the land through adoption of their perceived savage masculinity.

As Higginson began his trip west, he brought with him certain expectations about Kansas as a "western," or "uncivilized" place, expectations that extended to the indigenous peoples who lived there. He refers to this "wild" landscape early in his narrative, explaining how he had "come to Kanzas expecting adventures."[117] These adventures, he continues, come from the "natural" and innately wild aspects of Kansas, like a particularly devastating hail storm or an "attack" by savage natives.[118] His continual reference to Kansas as a transformative, wild space suggests that Higginson believed that the wild land in many ways turns people "wild" or "savage." Thus, time spent there in this savage land had the power to turn men "wild," but also naturalizes their presence in the space, giving them some sort of title or legitimate claim to occupying that territory.

Higginson extends this claim to indigeneity by appropriating the identity of the colonized, an act that obscures his and the other free state men's role in the conquest of Kansas as white men moving to the territory to fight for or against slavery. For example, as he enters the state, he makes note of a large number of men traveling in the opposite direction. He expresses his fear that the "Free State men are leaving Kanzas at last," commenting how Governor Geary, the governor put in power through what he considered fraudulent proslavery elections in Kansas, "has conquered them."[119] By appropriating this fear of "conquest," Higginson places himself and the other free state men along the lines of the colonized, like other American Indians whose

[117] Higginson, *A Ride through Kanzas*, 10.
[118] Ibid., 10.
[119] Ibid., 7.

lands were divested by the progression of Anglo-American settlement in the American West. This appropriation of identity as a "victim," rather than a perpetrator, of conquest obscures his active role in the colonization of Kansas as well as the continued presence and resistance of American Indians in that region.

Though Higginson appropriates the "wildness" of Kansas land and the identity of the "colonized" in a way that naturalizes his claim to the territory, he steps outside of the role of "native" to argue for the superiority of white civilization. While this may seem counterintuitive to his articulation of a naturalized Kansas identity, he does this in a way that argues for a *certain kind* of white civilization. He finds the fertility of Kansas land as the perfect place for good, hard working men to thrive. "Give it freedom," he argues, "and a few years will make Kanzas the garden of America."[120] This garden cannot thrive, however, unless it is carefully crafted by free state men. Under the wrong hands, like the proslavery Missourians, for instance, the garden cannot grow. He gives the example of how "this year the Missourians have almost ruined the corn."[121] Their violence against the fruit of Kansas land makes them symbolically unfit to take Kansas into the realm of the civilization. Even so, Kansas has the potential, despite careless Missourians, for he has "never seen such luxuriance of melons, squashes, and pumpkins." Once free state men have laid their "natural" claim to the Kansas land as reborn natives, they deserve to harvest its bounty and bring forth civilization through agricultural production.

Higginson fuses his ideas about the possibilities of this "wild" place and ideas about "real men" in his "search for men." He explains how "a single day in Kanzas" is all it takes to make a man.[122] Before coming to Kansas, he had never seen true men, and had always wondered what

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[120] Ibid., 16-17.
[121] Ibid., 17.
[122] Ibid., 14.

made men of high caliber. However, after his time in Kansas, he understands that this place, and the cause of free statehood, made men. He explains how "a single day in Kanzas makes the American Revolution more intelligible."[123] Ask any Kansas man, he suggests, and he will tell you that only a "horse ranks second to a Sharp's rifle in the affections of a Kanzas man."[124] The Sharp's rifle, the infamous symbol of the free state cause, is at the very heart of a man in Kansas fighting for the free state, and second is his horse, another important tool for battle. These symbols of violence are crucial to a masculine, free state identity, and in Higginson's accounting, his emotional desires. Only in Kansas is a man's truest desire his cause, a cause which he likens in importance to the American Revolution. Thus, Higginson places a very important, transformative quality in the land of Kansas, but also in the unique cause these men adopt by moving there. In this way, he fuses the cause—a cause on par with the nation's founding battle for freedom—with the land, further naturalizing his and other free state men's claims to Kansas.

For Higginson, the city of Lawrence, Kansas embodies this fusion of cause and land, for every man he finds there embodies the "virtue of courage."[125] He rides into Lawrence on October 4, 1856, a year into the conflict. He notes how the "[...] sprit of buoyant courage [...] almost universally prevails," even though the men are "still worse off for ammunition."[126] After hearing the story of the recent sacking of Lawrence by proslavery men, he exclaims in wonder how it took "two thousand eight hundred Missourians" to attack a town of only "two hundred and fifty men."[127] Despite this overwhelming disparity in numbers, Higginson notes how these men survived and protected their women and children, speaking to their incredible and unmatched

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 12.
[125] Ibid., 15.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 10.

manhoods. Despite these successes, he notes how "nobody talks of courage, for every one is expected to exhibit it."[128] The men of Lawrence embody the very virtues of manhood that Higginson could not find in the East. They are more "men" than the Missourians because they stood their ground while outrageously outnumbered, and they did this without sufficient ammunition. In the close of his discussion of Lawrence, he challenges his reader to meet their superior manhood, explaining how despite the odds stacked against them, they will continue to "stay and meet it." "They will meet it, if need be," he continues, "unaided." He then asks the reader "Will they be unaided?"[129] By asserting the Lawrence men's superior manhood, and by narrating stories of relative success against all odds, Higginson appropriates this fusion of cause, land, and masculinity to urge his readers to donate money, insinuating that if they do not, they prove their inferior masculinity.

As Higginson continues his journey through Kansas, he notices how Kansas has transformed his own men into true, masculine Kansans. He notes how though he was sure "we had had their [proslavery] spies among us," that "they had seen that we were well armed, and that our men, though quiet, were determined," and they decided it was better not to attack.[130] Thus, his men, transformed by Kansas, became men of higher caliber and toughness, a combination that had the potential to prevent violence. This spirit of manhood that he cites within his own men and the other free state men he encounters in Kansas is so visible that proslavery men can see it and fear it. Thus, Higginson writes himself and his men into the larger narrative of the masculine free state cause before they have ever engaged in the violence of conflict, instead emphasizing the transformative, naturalizing quality of the space itself.

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[128] Ibid., 14.
[129] Ibid., 24.
[130] Ibid.,, 6.

Higginson's narrative, bolstering a "naturalized" free state manhood, relies not only on accounts of free state bravery, but also on the feminization of proslavery cowards. In comparison with the men of Lawrence who clearly ooze hyper-masculine courage, he dismisses the proslavery men as a "pack of cowards."[131] Furthering that condemnation, he observes that "these enemies are more susceptible of fear," and are clearly lesser men than their free state opponents.[132] He goes on to note that most of these proslavery forces are not men at all, but are "quite young and slender," appearing more like women than men.[133] By comparing the courage of his men and other free staters transformed by the land and cause against the cowardess of the Missourians, he reinforces the superiority of his men and argues for their stronger claim to Kansas.

Higginson emphasizes the failure of proslavery men to claim Kansas as their home, further reinforcing the link between land, cause, and masculinity. Their cowardess stems not just from their fear of free state manhood, but from their cheating nature in the political arena. Higginson criticizes them for "proclaim[ing] openly that they went to Kanzas to fight and vote for Slavery," and after "all [had] finally voted at Leavenworth," they "are going home."[134] Because these men did not want to stay and make Kansas their home, Kansas must not have transformed them in the same way it turned Higginson's free staters into "true men." Higginson further reinforces this difference in claims to Kansas space by the names he calls free state and proslavery men. Every time he refers to his men, he calls them "Kanzans," but he refers to proslavery men by their state of origin, mostly "Missourians," but sometimes from states in the deeper South. Even though both groups of men emigrated for the purpose of fighting in this

[131] Ibid., 21.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

conflict, he claims the territory for his men and his cause, naturalizing his occupation of Kansas and staking claim to an identity as a native.

In addition to the distinction he makes between native Kansans (his free state men) and the proslavery outsiders, he also distinguishes between the relatively manly Missourians and the "dandy" southerners from the deeper South. Though his men clearly receive the majority of the benefits of the wild Kansas space, the Missourians, maybe through proximity, garner some of those wild qualities. As far as other southerners are concerned, he "observe[s] here a large class of young men who are evidently not Missourians, but from other Southern States – a slender, puny race."[135] He goes on to document the "dandy" behavior of one particular Virginian named Stringfellow, who embarrassed himself in a drunken fit. This small man lacks the self control of a "real" man in holding his liquor, but also is dressed finely, emphasizing his preoccupation with clothing.[136] By painting this man as both womanish and without "good character," like his men, Higginson emphasizes the way that southern men fighting for the proslavery cause are not true men, and do not have claims to the masculinity and transformative powers of the Kansas territory.

Though Higginson dismisses southerners from outside this border region as feminine and cultured, denying their claims to wild Kansas, his characterization of Missourians as hyper-masculine, barbaric savages complicates this division. Higginson's appropriation of a native identity as a free state man draws upon the perception of indigenous peoples as closer to the land, and thus having a truer claim for its occupation. However, Higginson projects an opposing expectation of indigenous peoples as "ignoble savages," violent, uncontrollable yet hyper-masculine warriors onto his Missourian foes. Different from the feminine Virginian dandies,

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., 20.

Higginson emphasizes how proslavery Missourians behaved "like devils," murdering, ravaging, and torturing everywhere they went.[137] In this way, Higginson reframes the conflict as one between warring stereotypes of natives, the "noble" and "ignoble" savages meeting together in the wild Kansas territory to determine the fate of slavery.

Higginson's portrayal of free state men as noble savages, baptized by the land as reborn natives, justifies his claims to the Kansas territory as by creating an opposition between his men and the savagery of the Missourians in the conflict. Free state "nobility" and Missourian "barbarity" are mutually constitutive elements in the construction of the Bleeding Kansas conflict. Seeing the border areas as a wild, transformative place, yet defining his free state men as "Kansans" and the proslavery men as "Missourians," he links the two separate places with the two dominant tropes of "Indianness."

From this perspective, the conflict becomes a battle between "good" and "evil," but also a battle that is justified because both groups belong in these "wild" places. In his account of Jim Lane, the famous free state general who would later recruit African American soldiers in the Civil War, Higginson remembers the general describing the weary yet honorable free state fighters in opposition to the barbaric Missourians: "retreating from his adopted country, hungry, ragged, and almost barefooted, walking wearily on, with others hunted like himself, while some, who had been less scrupulous, rode by on horses which they had plundered from the Missourians, who had first plundered them."[138] Even though his men had been reduced into a state of savagery, walking barefooted in a "native" state, they claimed a higher moral ground than the Missourians, who, as aggressors, were always the first to plunder. In this way,

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[137] For discussion of Missourians as evil or "like devils," see Ibid., 3. For discussion of other Missourian cruelties like torture of prisoners, see Ibid., 12.
[138] Ibid., 6.

Higginson evokes both dominant cultural expectations of "Indianness" in a way that naturalizes the conflict in this "wild" space, leaving the path for a legitimated claim to Kansas once the "superior" or more "noble" side (free state) wins.

In Higginson's use of these two dominant stereotypes of American Indians in his understanding of Bleeding Kansas, he moves beyond abstract symbols and directly compares his men with American Indians, claiming an identity as a "colonized" subject rather than as a colonizer. He explains how "People in Kanzas are like Indians—the eat what they can, and sleep where they can; and when they have no house and no food they wait awhile till something turns up. I can see that this state of things brings out some bad qualities, but far more good ones." Thus, he simply states that the "wild" place, Kansas, transforms men into "Indians."[139] He transfers this role of "Indian" as the role of the "colonized" by putting proslavery forces in the role as "colonizer."[140] Lamenting early losses like the sacking of Lawrence, he comments on the sad state of affairs that drives free state men to leave the territory. He laments how "we are scattered, starved, hunted, half-naked, but we are not conquered [...]."[141] Using the imagery of the "savage" closer to nature, without the fine trappings of "civilization" like clothing, shoes, and a well-rounded diet, and by asserting how his people are not yet conquered, he appropriates the history of the American conquest of indigenous peoples for his own cause. No longer is conquest a racial issue, but instead becomes a moral one, where he has claim to the land and is divested of that land because of proslavery "barbarity." By mutating these roles of conqueror and conquered, placing white men on both sides of that divide, he obscures the way that his own movement into

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[139] Ibid., 17.
[140] Ibid., 17.
[141] Ibid., 6.

Kansas, and the movements of all free state and proslavery men into the territory, are in themselves acts conquest over the indigenous people already there.

Despite the many references to the reborn indigeneity of his own men, he only mentions American Indians once in his entire narrative, obscuring their presence in the region by referring to their violent impact on free state men in the region, and then only dismissing this impact as a relic of the past. This one passing mention occurs in his description of his travel from Lawrence to Topeka on a road which "runs thirty-three miles through the most beautiful region of Kanzas, the Delaware Reserve."[142] This native place, a markedly beautiful territory, as he describes, boasts many natural amenities, including "well-wooded" land and "luxuriant" soil.[143] After mentioning how only "a few Indian cabins on the way" were left, he points to how "some points of the road have a sad celebrity."[144] He explains how he passed "the spot where Mr. Hops was murdered and scalped, for a bet of a pair of boots."[145] Despite this, he assures the reader that "now the road is comparatively safe." His assertion that the road was once unsafe, marked by the violent savagery of "real" Indians, in reference to the scalping, but is now safe, suggests that Higginson believes there are no more American Indians occupying this territory, or that they have all been assimilated and are now safe and "white." Thus, through his one mention of American Indian presence, placed in the past, he serves to reinforce his own "native" claims on the Kansas territory, as white supremacy has mastered American Indian savagery.

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[142] Ibid., 18.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

Working Against "Savagery": American Indian Resistance to Conquest in Kansas

This cyclical, pervasive pattern of conquest accompanied by the silencing of that conquest through white appropriation of "Indianness" erased true native identities and agency from the era's history. American Indians in eastern Kansas resisted white conquest, constructing their own indigenous identities outside of the dominant tropes and fighting the systematic robbery of their lands.[146] However, this continued presence and resistance are often omitted from mainstream narratives of Bleeding Kansas. The work of historian Joseph B. Herring studies the accommodation and resistance of two eastern Kansas nations in "The Chippewa and Munsee Indians: Acculturation and Survival in Kansas, 1860s-1870." He traces their unique alliance in the face of pressure from the Federal government to give up their lands and move to the new "Indian country," as well as from whites fighting each other and threatening members of the tribe to leave. He explains how "of the thousands of Indians living in the area when Kansas became a territory, the Chippewas and Munsees were among the few hundred remaining just twenty years later," a statistic in itself that speaks to the power of their resistance.[147]

Chippewa and Munsee resistance to removal did not look like the resistance seen in the "Indian Wars," like those fought in the far West. Instead, the two nations, faced with internal dissension and mounting pressure from squatters and land speculators, allied together, crossing religious, cultural, and tribal differences to maintain their land base. At first, the divisions between the Chippewa Band, led by Chief Eshtonoquot, who encouraged his people to observe Algonquin religious practices, and the Munsee, who observed the Moravian sect of Christianity,

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[146] Limerick, *Something in the Soil,* 33-34; Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest,* 179-180; Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins,* xiii.

[147] Joseph B. Herring, "The Chippewa and Munsee Indians: Acculturation and Survival in Kansas, 1850s-1870," In *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*, ed. Rita Napier (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 77.

limited their ability to resist white encroachment on their lands.[148] However, after an 1864 treaty with the Federal government that "gave the two tribes citizenship and assigned land to the church," Eshtonoquot and others who aligned with him politically threatened violence, knowing that the "selling of surplus land" that accompanied this transition would mean his people's final removal from Kansas.[149] After he was deposed, accused of "savagery" by his political opponents, Eshtonoquot feared that his people would lose their home in Kansas. Setting aside divisions over citizenship, he rejoined the nation's governing council, which informed the Federal government that they would not sell surplus land despite their new status as citizens. They devised a way to maintain these lands as citizens, losing their official recognition as "Indian" but maintaining the land guaranteed to them through treaties.[150]

While internal divisions meant that individuals protested in different ways, many stepped outside the bounds of expectations of Indian resistance, choosing politics and diplomacy instead of violence to resist removal. Through new identities as citizens, the Munsee and Chippewa of Kansas resisted removal, asserting their presence in a place where whites were continually rendering them invisible. Herring, along with other historians and contemporary actors in this story, dismisses the Chippewas and Munsees after they became citizens, arguing that while "they had retained their lands," they had "lost themselves as Indians."[151] However, their resistance to removal in itself can be considered an assertion of their native identity.[152] By using legal channels outside of the treaty relationship, the Chippewas and Munsees succeeded where many indigenous nations could not.

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[148] Ibid., 80.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid., 85-87.
[151] Ibid., 87.
[152] Herring ends his narrative on the note of decline, arguing that the nations could not maintain their identities as well as their land. However, he defines "Indian" identity by their "ties with the Federal government," instead of seeing the way they defined 'Indianness" through their own criteria and actions. Ibid.

The Pottawatomie, another nation residing in eastern Kansas during Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War, also utilized non-traditional forms of resistance to avoid removal. An anonymous historian writing for Rita Napier's New Western collection emphasizes the Prairie Band of the Pottawatomie nation's resistance to removal, allotment, and citizenship through their resistance to the stereotypical white perceptions and expectations of "Indianness." While the two other bands of Pottawatomie residing in the state moved to Indian Country along with many other eastern Kansas tribes pressured and threatened through a multitude of white forms of conquest, the Prairie Band stayed. They hired lawyers, raised funds for legal fees, lobbied Washington, and mobilized non-violent protest tactics within the reservation in order to maintain their traditional forms of communal land holding.[153] They combined these non-traditional resistance efforts with traditional, passive resistance tactics, sponsoring religious ceremonies and dances, an extremely successful method for rallying support among their relatives in Wisconsin.[154] With these tactics, the Pottawatomie maintained a coherent land base well into the 1890s when the Federal government exerted its arbitrary power to allot even without the band's consent.[155] Even then, the Band refused to talk to the government about the sale of surplus lands—lands that were most desired by white settlers—never acknowledging the government's power to take more of their lands.

Though the Prairie Band eventually had citizenship forced upon them through this arbitrary display of Federal power, they continued to display the strength of their way of life. Even with allotment, the Prairie Band, like the Munsee and Chippewa, remained in Kansas. They lived lives of resistance to dominant culture, living on these lands communally despite the

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[153] Anonymous, "The Prairie Pottawatomie: Resistance to Allotment," 92-93.
[154] Ibid., 95-96.
[155] For discussion of the evolution of arbitrary power exhibited by the Federal legislative branch in its relationship with American Indians, see Deloria and Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties,* 42-41.

change in classification from "communal" or "tribal" to "private." Also, by refusing to negotiate with the Federal government, working within the Federal system on their own terms and refusing to when those terms were violated, the Prairie Band asserted their own agency.[156] They weakened Federal power over the Prairie Band's daily lives by not giving the U.S. government a voice, and ultimately by not letting their arbitrary decisions change the everyday reality of their lives. In this way, the Prairie Band resisted conquest, utilizing the tools of the colonizer for the service of their traditional practices.[157]

Though many historians downplay Wyandot resistance to land speculation and robbery in eastern Kansas because it did not last as long as other tribes, their active political participation and lobbying against white encroachment, opposition to slavery, and active engagement in claiming "civilized" histories in Kansas well before white settlement remains a remarkable example of American Indian resistance to conquest.[158] The Wyandot first moved according to a treaty they signed with the Federal government in 1842 that ceded their remaining lands in Ohio and Michigan for lands in Kansas. Seeing the lands they were promised as too far from "civilization," they purchased lands from the Delaware in eastern Kansas at the junction of the Kansas River with the Missouri, an area that is now the valuable land known as Kansas City.[159] From their settlement in Kansas to the point in which they became citizens in 1855 and after, the Wyandot asserted their presence in the region, staking claim to its agricultural fertility, its

[156] Ibid, 94-97.
[157] Ibid., 99.
[158] Many historians downplay Wyandot resistance because they became U.S. citizens earlier than other Kansas eastern emigrant tribes. See Robert E. Smith, "The Final Removal of the Wyandot Indians," 10.
[159] Ibid.

political importance in determining the fate of slavery in the West, and to their own identities as American Indians despite mounting pressure to move and to give up those native identities.[160]

While a large minority of the Wyandot refused citizenship like the Prairie Pottawatomie, others used the tropes and expectations of citizens of the United States in order to protest the aggressive land acquisition practices of white emigrants in eastern Kansas.[161] Tribal member Mrs. Lucy B. Armstrong, the wife of Wyandot Lawyer John Armstrong, used her status as citizen to claim rights to the eastern Kansas territory on behalf of her people. She uses the popular tropes of what civilization looks like in the nineteenth-century to argue for Wyandot claims to the land. She cites how the Wyandot "had built and occupied their first church—the first church built by the people in the territory."[162] She explains how the "first school established in Kansas was at Wyandotte" where her "husband, J.M. Armstrong, was contractor for the school house, and taught the first school in it, commencing July 1, 1844."[163] Ten years before the region "opened up" to white popular sovereignty by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Native people brought civilization to Kansas, Armstrong proves. Later, she argues, even after those remaining Wyandot who refused citizenship were removed to Indian Territory, "almost all [Wyandot] young men were in the war for the preservation of the Union."[164] Thus, by bringing the physical and social structures of civilization to Kansas, and through their young men earning their manhood in the same way that northern men and later African Americans asserted their masculinity, the Wyandot deserved this land.[165] By asserting native identities that did not fit into the cultural expectations of stereotypical savages in order to resist removal through conquest, the

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[160] Ibid.
[161] Smith mentions in passing that "before the final removal of the Wyandots to Indian Territory, a large minority of the Wyandots retained their classification as non-citizens." Ibid., 10-11.
[162] Lucy Armstrong, as cited in Adams, "Wyandottes," 2.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., 2.
[165] Ibid.

citizen Wyandot like Armstrong worked against the silencing power of white appropriations of those expectations.

One of Armstrong's most powerful and direct attacks on the silencing of American Indian presence and participation in Bleeding Kansas was in her prior claim to the border crisis and violence over the issue of slavery in Kansas. In a paper protesting their removal, she wrote how the Wyandot "had [their] border ruffian war before [the emigrant white settlers] had [theirs]." She explains how within the Wyandot nation, "those who were pro-slavery were descendents of Virginians who had been taken prisoners by the Wyandotts during the Wars in Ohio." The majority of the Wyandot, she implores, sympathized with the North. After their own internal conflicts, she goes on to argue that the Wyandot were essential participants in the events of Bleeding Kansas. For example, she explains how "a Wyandotte was the messenger who warned Lawrence of the invaders" before the first sacking in November, 1855.[166] Thus, by writing her people into the events of Bleeding Kansas, which had only ever been portrayed as a "white man's war," and by placing her people not just in the center of the conflict, but as participants before whites entered the scene, she asserts her people's agency, presence, and importance in this conflict, bringing native identities and claims to the center of a war fought over land that was taken through the conquest of her people.

Even before the Wyandot Treaty of 1855 that brought the complication of citizenship into the realm of their resistance, Armstrong and other Wyandot leaders staked their claim to the issue of slavery, protesting the imposition of proslavery missionaries in their tribal community. On January 4, 1849, in a letter to Washington, Lucy Armstrong asserted her people's right to determine their own religion and their anti-slavery beliefs on their treaty lands. She identifies

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[166] Ibid.

that "an effort is now being made by slave-holding missionaries and Government Agents to induce the Indian Department to expel our missionary from among us, and thus deprive us of our religious rites." She argues that "we think that a slave-holding ministry ought not to be forced on us." Pointing to her people's strong objection toward slavery, she identifies these missionaries as unwanted outsiders. These missionaries, according to Armstrong, "bring their Slaves right in among us and engage in the traffic before our eyes." She cites "about twenty negro slaves in the Shawnee and Wyandotte Territory" at this time.[167] She uses her people's beliefs in the anti-slavery cause, and commitment to her religion to argue against the imposition of slavery in the region years before the issue would be taken up by free state and border ruffians through popular sovereignty and violence.

Interestingly, in this letter Armstrong draws upon the expectations of "Indianness" with the dual effect of arguing against the imposition of slavery in Kansas and the distinction between "real Indians" and the future "citizen Indians" in the Wyandot community. She explains how bringing slaves onto Wyandot lands has "a very bad affect upon the real Indian". According to Armstrong it "confirms him in his preconceived notion that labor is dishonorable." Through her articulation of the situation from both sides, Armstrong stakes a more "sophisticated" or "civilized" argument against slavery for herself and the other "citizen Indians," while simultaneously arguing that "real Indians'" objections to slavery can impede their "progress" toward "civilization." This complicated vision of anti-slavery activism among the Wyandot suggests that alternative "citizen Indian" identities relied upon a staunch distinction between their beliefs and those articulated in the stereotypical archetypes of the ignoble and noble savages. Armstrong, in order to claim her native identity while simultaneously arguing for her

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[167] Lucy B. Armstrong, Letter, (4 January 1849), Kansas Memory, Kansas Historical Society Online Collection, (Topeka, KS: Date Accessed 20 March 2012) *http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/219788*

civility, evokes and thus reinforces the idea that a "real Indian" is of course primitive and thus opposed to work.[168]

Armstrong's notion that slavery has "a very bad affect upon the real Indian" also evokes a long history of masculine identification with the "real Indian." By identifying him by a male pronoun, she reinforces the images of the "savage" as violent and male that would later be used to claim the same Kansas territory for whites during Bleeding Kansas. Though, as a woman, Armstrong can appeal to Washington, appropriating the legal channels of the conqueror's government for her own protest and the assertion of her identity as a citizen, she does so by reinforcing the alternative image of the "savage Indian" as male.[169] Resistance, in the form taken by "citizen Indians" like Armstrong, meant a rhetorical distancing of the hyper-masculine "savage" Indian in the assertion of an identity that was less stereotypical or gendered, but in that distance reinforcing that very stereotype of native savagery.

Between the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in May 1854 and the outbreak of the Civil War, the United States military was called into the Kansas region to maintain a "peaceful" society. The U.S. military, standing in for the masculine authority of the Federal government, operated under the same cultural expectations of American Indians, especially American Indian masculinity, as those discussed by Deloria. The way that they treated the western Kansas plains tribes, mainly the Lakota nation, differently from the emigrant tribes in eastern Kansas speaks to the power and lasting implications of these two divergent perceptions of American Indian masculinity. By using force, promoting violence according to the stereotype of native "savagery," and the choice to avoid using force in the protection of eastern tribes' treaty rights, they reinforced the divergent stereotypes of American Indians. By treating the eastern tribes

[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.

differently from those of the West, by arguing that force was not necessary in dealing with the white digressions in eastern Kansas, the US military erased the eastern tribes' claim to the land, and, in turn, identity as American Indians. This, paired with the appropriation of more traditional tropes of savage Indianness by those involved in the conflict, erased American Indian presence in Bleeding Kansas even though the conflict would not have existed without both northern and southern white conquests of native land.

Chapter 3—African American Silence and Resistance: Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War

Many of the men who claimed Kansas territory as theirs through an adoption of a "noble" and "native" identity claimed that nobility not just through their interactions with the "savage" and violent proslavery men, but through their moral claims to an antislavery cause. However, territorial Kansas embodied the multitude of conflicting behaviors, ideologies, and identities plaguing America in the 1850s, contradictions that can only be understood by examining their gendered implications. Within its borders resided southern, proslavery men, who did not own slaves, and northern free-state advocates who did not oppose slavery, as long as it resided solely in the traditional Old South. Within this seemingly disparate group of men from the slave power engaging in deep, bloody conflicts over that very institution were men like R. H. Williams, an English-born member of the pro-slavery guerilla "Border Ruffians." Interestingly, Williams fought for slavery despite feelings of uneasiness at its moral implications. In a similar vein, those free state men fighting against the institution of slavery in Kansas expressed overtly racist perspectives on the place of non-whites in Kansas, citing black men's dangerous masculinity as cause for their denouncement of both the institution of slavery and the black man, slave or free.

Within this topsy-turvy border environment, an environment fraught with sectional regional conflict, John Brown, considered both a "true" abolitionist and eventual martyr without racist preconceptions and a dangerous, violent man with questionable sanity, embraced the masculine characteristics attributed only to the proslavery guerilla warriors, challenging the very nature of what it meant to be a northern man in Kansas.[170] Is John Brown an enigma? Is R. H. Williams? Or is the very nature of masculine struggle in Kansas tied directly to the influence of non-white masculinities? Through these examples, dismissed as "enigmas" in the evaluation of general struggles in Bleeding Kansas by those who determine that politics, religion, and economics meant more than racial and gender strife, Bleeding Kansas can be reinterpreted as a struggle between multiple conceptions of masculinity of both white and non-white origins.

Through the events of Bleeding Kansas, the differences between northern and southern manhoods lessened, looking more and more like those expressed by the southern influence in the state, suggesting their success in implementing their own brand of masculinity even if they lost the political battle over the future of slavery in Kansas. What did this proslavery style of masculinity look like in Kansas? Like Whites and Silber, Oertel argues that proslavery men endorsed an environment of "violence and aggression," transmuting the "southern code of honor" to include a fierce protection of the "threat" antislavery movements posed to their definitions of home, family, and ultimately male power in its ties to the patriarchal system of slavery.[171] Within this context, proslavery guerilla fighters questioned the manliness of northern men, who at times fought side-by-side with their women rather than protecting them and their

[170] For a detailed biography of John Brown that highlights the multiple and often conflicting portrayals of Brown as abolitionist, martyr, insane, and hyper-masculine, Robert E. McGlone, *John Brown's War against Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[171] Oertel, *Bleeding Borders,* 86.

place in the home. They acted in aggressive, rash, and jealous manners in the name of protecting women and the "emotional home," which meant also protecting the economic, political ties of the southern home to slavery.[172] Though holding on to different motivations for their behaviors, northern free-state men adopted the language and violence of the border ruffians, participating in highly brutal warfare.[173]

If this violent, aggressive, debased behavior represented a departure from the northern trope of masculinity, then what had it looked like before border warfare? According to Whites, Silber, and Oertel, a distinctly white, middle-class northern masculinity "championed a man's ability to control his behavior, manipulate his environment, and maintain power over others" through his "domination of the marketplace" with rewards of retreat in the domestic sphere.[174] However, as losers in the "battle over manliness," northerners adopted a definition of masculinity that accepted "refined manhood" that could *prevent* debased warfare by being "manly enough to 'strike the first blow.'"[175] Influenced by a culture of lawlessness, perpetual threats of violence, and most importantly, an unsettling display of non-white masculinities intervening in a seemingly white battle of manhoods, northern men engaged in some of the bloodiest guerilla warfare documented in United States history.[176]

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[172] Ibid., 86.
[173] Ibid., 100.
[174] For discussion of the "trope" of northern manhood, see Oertel, *Bleeding Borders,* 86, 99; Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict,* xiv-xv; and Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender,* 9-10.
[175] Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender,* 107.
[176] Oertel, *Bleeding Borders,* 107.

John Brown and R. H. Williams: Anomalies? Subverting the Tropes of Northern and Southern Masculinities in Bleeding Kansas

John Brown, remembered for both his "brutality and nobility of spirit," embodies the transition in performance of northern manhood in the struggle known as Bleeding Kansas.[177] On one hand, celebrations of his leadership of free state forces in the largely bloodless Wakarusa War and the extensive media hype of his martyrdom following his capture and hanging after Harper's Ferry suggest Brown's godliness. This portrayal fits well with his deeply religious antislavery upbringing. Despite these saintly portrayals, Brown also engaged extensively with violence in the abolishment of slavery and racism. Brown thought deeply about the role violence held in the fate of Kansas Territory, playing upon and responding to the climate of fear in Kansas, precipitated by a failure of territorial and Federal governments to quell proslavery violence which had culminated in the sacking of Lawrence in the Spring of 1856.[178] In direct response, on May 24, 1856, Brown, along with several of his free-state supporting sons, brutally murdered and butchered proslavery men in a Pottawatomie Creek settlement. Though none of these men owned slaves, Brown physically punished them for their role in the perpetuation and growth of the "Slave Power," which threatened his familial, moral, and religious beliefs extensively, returning violence with another, rather gruesome, act of violence. Through this act, he put forth a uniquely northern interpretation of the role of violence, seeing the failure of

[177] Robert E. McGlone, *John Brown's War against Slavery* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13.
[178] McGlone, *John Brown's War against Slavery*,11; Nicole Etcheson, "John Brown, Terrorist?" (*American Nineteenth Century History,* 10, no. 1: 2009), 29-48.

electoral politics and his own duty as a religious, abolitionist man as cause for taking on slavery himself, a role which he solidified in his martyred death.[179]

The symbolic importance of John Brown as a radical abolitionist ready and willing to enact violence on behalf of the antislavery cause lasted long after his death and the coming of the Civil War. He represented not just for his moral and political cause, but the active northern participation in sectional bloodshed. Proslavery men in the Missouri/Kansas borderland, however, had long been associated with the implementation of violence for their cause. While the connection of violence and masculinity seems more natural to the expression of southern masculinity, southern men's expressions of humanity, emotional responses to the horrors of slavery, do not fit in with this common trope. Self-proclaimed "Border Ruffian" R. H. Williams reveals the complexity of his reconciliations of a distinctly proslavery construction of masculinity with his moral aversions to the "dark side" of the institution of slavery.[180]

When R. H. Williams first encountered the Kansas Territory, he proclaimed "what a splendid country is waiting the advent of the white man!"[181] Expressing this overtly white supremacist perspective, Williams understood the territory as a landscape of transition, one passing from the realm of savagery, waiting for a white man's touch to bring it to civilization. As the professed "strong pro-slavery man," Williams likely inferred the spread of slavery in his discussion of a progressing "civilization," seeing the two (slavery and civilization) as irrevocably tied. However, before coming to this region, he had never witnessed the "cruelty and barbarity of

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[179] After his experience in Bleeding Kansas, John Brown fled the territory, instituting plans for Harpers Ferry, his attempted slave revolt for which he was eventually executed. For discussion of the connections between John Brown's time in Kansas, the Pottawatomie Massacre, and later Harpers Ferry, see McGlone, *John Brown's War*, 11-13, 199.

[180] Arthur J. Mayer and Joseph W. Snell, Introduction to *With the Border Ruffians: Memories of the Far West, 1852-1868*, R. H. Williams (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), xix-xxii.

[181] R. H. Williams and E.W. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians*, 78.

the Institution."[182] This transformative moment occurred on a journey along the border between Kansas and Missouri, where Williams witnessed a runaway slave shot in the back in "his frantic rush for the woods near by." Williams recognized that this man was "running for life and liberty," a desire through which he "held on in desperation."[183] By characterizing this man's attempt at flight as a desire for "life and liberty," Williams acknowledges this man's desire for qualities that most men (regardless of their stance on slavery) would acknowledge as distinctly "white." Also, by noting that the slave-dealer's response to this flight was a "brutal deed, done by a brute," but sanctioned by the law, Williams questions the "honor" of the man whose job remained essential to the maintenance of the system of slavery, undermining the very constructions of southern manhood upon which his own masculinity relied.[184]

How can William's moral dilemma follow his decision to "throw his lot in" with the proslavery cause despite his immediate disgust with this, to him, "new aspect of slavery?"[185] Though disturbed at the moral implications of slavery, Williams' investment in the institution's hierarchical structure and construction of manliness may explain this discrepancy. Though admittedly, the form of Williams's perspective as a recollection, written years after Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War, may also account for this duality, Williams' recollections imply his reliance on the gendered hierarchies constructed through slavery in his formation of Border Ruffian masculinity. He considered "honest Ann," his only slave, to be the "only honest person in the place!" To him, Ann's dedication reflected upon his superior "mastery," where he trusted

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[182] Ibid., 74.
[183] Ibid.
[184] For discussion of "honor" and its role in the construction of southern masculinities, see Friend and Glover, "Introduction" in *Southern Manhood,* x; Whites, 9, 14. Silber *Gender in the Sectional Conflict,* xiv; For application of this connection as it applies to the southern masculinities in Kansas, see Oertel, 90-94.
[185] R. H. Williams and E.W. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians,* 74.

Ann to hide his personal stash of gold because he did not trust the men around him.[186] Thus, Ann's behavior supported his own masculine authority, a connection which he used to place himself above the group of Border Ruffians accompanying him, solidifying his position of patriarchal authority and command.

This masculine expression of white superiority also manifests in his accountings of sexually charged, inebriated nights spent dancing with "Shawnee half-breed girls."[187] One woman in particular, Sally Blue Jacket, a "remarkably handsome girl," expressed her desire for him by provoking him to join in on her night of consumption. He remembers how she "pulled a flask of whiskey out of her pocket," right there on the dance floor, and "pressed me to join her in a drink."[188] By situating her as the sexual aggressor, Williams bolsters his sense of manhood, which he frames as unequivocally desirable.[189]

Contrary to this favorable, if not entirely romanticized, portrayal of "half-Breed" native women, Williams displays a different kind of racialization in his description of native men. In his description of his first meeting with a Delaware Chief, Williams expresses a surprise at the congenial nature of their repartee. As the Delaware man walked away in "good humour," Williams describes a "great relief," for he exclaims how "in his presence my scalp seemed to fit rather loosely on my head," suggesting the man's inherent barbarity.[190] This hyper-stereotyped portrayal of native men, paired with his description of "half-Breed girls' heightened desire for him, which they express even in public spaces, suggests that Williams constructed a racial

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[186] With the Border ruffians, 79; For discussion of the relationship between "mastery" over slaves and the construction of southern masculinity, see Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict,* xix; Whites, *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender,* 3; Friend and Glover, Introduction, *Southern Manhood,* x, xi.
[187] R.H. Williams and E.W. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians,* 108.
[188] Ibid.
[189] For a discussion of how white male masculinity is constructed through interactions with indigenous women during the Gold Rush, particularly through dancing, see Susan Lee Johnson, "Bulls, Bears, and Dancing Boys: Race, Gender, and Leisure in the California Gold Rush," *Radical History Review* no. 60 (1994): 4-37.
[190] Ibid., 78.

hierarchy based on the superiority of his white manhood. Because native women desired him, an act which assumes the emasculation of native men, paired with his portrayal of the savagery of native men, which contrasts distinctly with his description of the Shawnee girls as daughters of "well-to-do people and fairly well educated," he supports his manhood over the inferior native masculinity.[191] The connection Williams makes between the inferiority of other white masculinities, native masculinities and the superiority of his suggests that Williams reevaluated his own manhood according to experiences and conflicts with alternative constructions of masculinity, supporting the notion that his masculinity relied on the culture of slavery, if not its morality.

Though not directly expressed in his accounting of the event, Williams' description of the runaway slave suggests the intervention of black masculinities on his self-constructed masculinity in his time in Kansas. Scholars studying the role of gender in slavery characterize the act of running away, in the case of slave men, as a physical reclamation not only of their "life and liberty," as Williams explains, but of their sense of manhood as well. This example of expression of black masculinity in Kansas counters historians who dismiss the influence of slavery and black populations in Bleeding Kansas, for this event clearly helped construct William's own sense of white supremacist masculinity.[192]

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[191] R. H. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians,* 108; For discussion of the construction of white manhood on the basis of native women's "preference" for their sexuality over that of the emasculated native man in Kansas, see Oertel, *Bleeding Borders,* 114-119.

[192] For discussion of self-emancipation and black masculinity, see Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 13-16; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Brian L. Moore, *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean Society* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Maggie Montesinos Sale, *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); David Barry Gaspar, and Darlene Clark Hine, *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Arlene R. Keizer, *Black Subjects: Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narrative of Slavery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004);

As evidenced by John Brown's violent subversion of gendered stereotypes of northern civility and restraint, and Williams's articulation of his own proslavery masculinity that conflicted directly with his moral qualms with the Institution's barbarity, Bleeding Kansas presented a stage upon which common tropes of masculinity were challenged, subverted, and constructed anew. Showing the influence of non-white manhoods, Williams's account provides a case for Kansas warfare to be reinterpreted as a competition of multiple masculinities, not just white northern and southern, in addition to a political, economic, or moral struggle over the fate of slavery as an institution. Far from anomalies, both Brown's and Williams's subversions of the typical northern and southern masculinities provide an explanation for the ways that white Kansans came together, across the issue of slavery, to agree upon white supremacy as common law. Yet, Brown's celebration in official Kansas state history and the relative silence of the impact of proslavery men like Williams in Kansas's formative years obscures this contemporary legacy of white supremacy in Kansas.

Black Abolitionist Response to Bleeding Kansas

The increased popularity of radical, militant black abolitionist sentiments in the 1850s suggests an intimate tie between border warfare and the increasingly violent expressions of manhood propagated by black intellectuals in the decade that ushered in the Civil War. This change can be seen in the radical shift in Frederick Douglass's perspectives on the role of violence in the abolishment of slavery. After an impassioned speech given by Henry Highland

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Christopher B. Booker, *"I Will Wear No Chain!": A Social History of African American Males*. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2000.

Garnet, a radical abolitionist and Presbyterian pastor, speaking at the National Negro Convention 1843, calling forth his enslaved brethren to "arise, arise!" against the "Slave Power," Douglass responded critically. He wished "in no way to have any agency in hurrying about" a revolution that would surely endanger the lives of free and enslaved African Americans.[193] Nine years later, in 1852, Douglass's stance on radical violence in the abolution of slavery turned on end. He advocated for the annihilation of slave hunters empowered through the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, arguing that "every slave-hunter who meets a bloody death [...] is an argument in favor of the manhood of our race." Thus, "resistance," he postures, is both "wise as well as just."[194] This assertion, representing a marked turn in his understanding of the role of violence, also redefines black manhood in its connection with antislavery violence, arguing that for every "just" death, blacks are brought that must closer to *humanity*, in one interpretation of manhood, but also more literally in construction of violent antislavery black masculinities.[195]

How and with what significance did Frederick Douglass's views on antislavery violence reverse so thoroughly? Douglas thought deeply about the connection between the violence of Bleeding Kansas, the markedly racist viewpoints of both sides in that conflict, and other political and very real physical challenges to African American rights in the 1850s, leading him to reconsider the role of violence and black militancy in determining the fate of slavery and black freedoms in the United States. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act first passed, and violence emerged as the ultimate resolution of the conflict it created in the Kansas territory, Douglass

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[193] Frederick Douglass and Philip Sheldon Foner. *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), 22.
[194] Ibid., 44.
[195] For discussion of black abolitionists' (like Douglass's) break from Garrisonian abolitionism, particularly in their movement away from moral suasion and moving toward a "by any means necessary approach," see Patrick Real, *Black Identity & Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 205-207; For discussion of a black abolitionism as a "third" or alternative movement to the racially insensitive or unrealistic characteristics of white abolitionism, see R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 140-144.

articulated his own plans for making Kansas a truly "free state." He proposed that free African Americans should take residence in Kansas, physically challenging both northern and southern visions of Kansas as an exclusively white state, reclaiming Kansas violence as part of a black movement against slavery.[196] However, a relative lack of support for this plan among free black populations in the North and governmental restrictions on black settlement in Kansas determined its failure. Despite this setback, the events of Kansas nevertheless inspired Douglass, among many other black abolitionists, to commit to the role of violence and black militancy in the coming Civil War.[197] Through these events, Douglass and other black abolitionists popularized violent, militant black abolitionism to a greater degree among both spheres of influence, which would hold special significance for African American participation in the Civil War in Kansas.

In the 1850s, Douglass, and the northern free black community more broadly, felt deeply the impact of three influential political events, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act along with the bloody violence it inspired, and the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Stanford* decision, that altered African American's position in the United States from a tenuous, uncertain position to an entirely unsafe and unwelcome marginality.[198] Employing a mixture of religious and secular ideas, Douglass expressed simultaneous emotions of hope and

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[196] Tekla Ali Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act: From Reformer to Revolutionary," in *The Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1854,* ed. John R. Wunder and Joann M. Ross (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 122.

[197] Ibid.

[198] For the influence of these three political moments on black abolitionist thought, see Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act, 113"; Lechner, Zachary J. 2008. "Are We Ready for the Conflict?: Black Abolitionist Response to the Kansas Crisis, 1854-1856." *Kansas History.* 31, no. 1); and Walter C. Rucker, "Unpopular Sovereignty: African American Resistance and Reactions to the Kansas-Nebraska Act," in *The Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1854*, 130. For its specific influence on Frederick Douglass's politics and writings and the Civil War see Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* xi; Waldo E. Martin, *The Mind of Frederick Douglas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Norton, 1991).

despair, seeing an increasing failure of electoral politics to engender the rights of men who could not vote, and coming to the ultimate realization that antislavery pacifism and "moral suasion" associated with Garrisonian abolitionist circles could not bring about liberation. Instead, this "liberation would require a physical" fight.[199] These three political events obscured the boundaries between free and slave states, between safety and danger for all free and enslaved blacks, extended the temporal and geographic scope of slavery, which "served to solidify the subordinate status for free blacks," while simultaneously extending the reach of white supremacy, solidifying it as the official Federal policy.[200] Though a large portion of black intellectuals saw this pattern as reason for a turn toward emigration, to Canada, Haiti, or the Caribbean, Douglass interpreted these events as the wake-up call to force for blacks to take their rights and the rights of their brethren into their own, masculine hands, especially since they were not allowed to do this in Kansas, the flashpoint of the Civil War.[201]

Douglass's first inclination toward a more violent abolitionism responded to the heightened culture of fear propagated among free blacks put forth by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This act effectively negated the North as a symbol of freedom for blacks, enslaved and free, giving slave catchers the legal right to travel northward to recapture—read, kidnap—African Americans and bring them down into slavery. Douglass, along with many other free blacks and abolitionist sympathizers, mourned the loss of freedom in the North, for the burden of proof rested on the alleged fugitive slave, most of whom could not afford or did not have access to legal representation. In response to this crisis of magnanimous proportions, leading even Douglass to fear the loss of his freedom, on June 2, 1854, Douglass posed the famous question in

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[199] Douglas, as quoted in Johnson, 113. For discussion of Douglass's expressions of "hope and despair," see Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 9; and Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act," 113.
[200] Rucker, "Unpopular Sovereignty," 130-131.
[201] Rucker, "Unpopular Sovereignty," 131; Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act," 113.

literary form, "Is it right to Kill a Kidnapper?" Here, he argued that streets "stained with the warm blood of a man in the act of perpetrating the most atrocious robbery which one man can possibly commit upon another—even the wresting from his very person and natural powers," were not only justifiable, but necessary for the survival and expansion of the American free black community.[202] He proposed dealing with slave catchers in their own barbaric, cruel manner, proclaiming that "the only way to make the Fugitive Slave Act a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers," threatening their lives in the ways they perpetually threatened the lives of African Americans, compelling free blacks to take their lives, and the lives of their families, into their own hands.[203] Essentially, he argued that black manhood, built upon the security of their own lives and the lives of their dependents, implied taking up arms against the slave power.

Within this politically charged climate, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act solidified a large body of black abolitionists' commitment to the connection between violence and freedom, a connection drawn with highly gendered rhetoric. On March 3, 1854, William J. Watkins, one of sixty-six black Boston residents who petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for the formation of a black militia, emitted a rallying cry, speaking of the dangers the "Slave Power" posed the entire industrial North in the wake of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He argued that this piece of legislation not only threatened the freedom and manhood of free blacks, but effectively emasculated the entire North. This danger, Watkins continued, is posed by the South, who "cares for the North only on condition that she behaves herself," by "consent[ing] to have

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[202] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Writings,* 284.
[203] Frederick Douglas's 1852 speech to the National Free Soil Convention in Pittsburg, as quoted in Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act," 116.

the manhood "crushed" out of her."[204] By using this gendered rhetoric, Watkins assigned the South the dominant role of patriarch in its relationship with the effeminate North, threatening to expand its powers past the Mason-Dixon line, presenting an incredible danger to the very lives of free blacks, but also the political and cultural power of all men in the North. Very literally, Watkins engaged threats to black and white northern manhoods through this bill, bringing race and gender front and center in the discussion that would inevitably spark sectional violence in Kansas.[205]

Militarist sentiment popularized among black abolitionists like Watkins who understood the Kansas-Nebraska Act as a threat to life, liberty, and manhood, understood the growing importance of violence as evidenced in Bleeding Kansas in the settling the question of slavery. By 1858, Douglass had fully embraced this sentiment, arguing that blacks had been "put on trial for our manhood," one they would have to fight themselves, reclaiming the events of the battle in Kansas for their own futures and manhoods.[206] He and other black abolitionists put forth the mantra of "theft, robbery, and Murder," attributes they assigned to the slave power and proslavery men, characteristics that directly contradicted southern definitions of manhood. As men, they claimed the rights and responsibilities to protect their families and enslaved brethren from these abhorrent crimes. Though fully unsatisfied with the political climate, Douglass led the way in arguing for a joint juncture with the Union in the *disunion* efforts. Douglass articulated an opinion that sought to turn the growing sectional conflict into a black person's war, where black

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[204] William J. Watkins, "Document 40," in *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, ed. C. Peter Ripley et. al (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 227.
[205] For discussion of popular sovereignty and black abolitionist takes on its meaning, see Johnson, "Frederick Douglass and the Kansas Nebraska Act," 118-121.
[206] Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War*, 14.

men would fight their own battles, challenging northern and southern agreement on the future of white supremacy, reinventing the events of Bleeding Kansas for their own cause.[207]

How, with the negative political climate, did Douglass see this war as one African Americans could embrace as theirs? Douglas saw this answer in the physical participation in violence. He argued that violence, like that enacted by John Brown in Kansas, had "done more to upset the logic and shake the security of slavery, than all the efforts in that direction for twenty years."[208] If violence was the answer, then Douglass foresaw black men, in their desire for retribution and earned manhood, physically engaged in the role of violence would take in the abolition of slavery. This role, Douglass, as well as other black abolitionists, concluded, could only emerge on the sectional battlefield of the coming Civil War, where black men could reclaim the violence of the 1850s for their own freedoms and manhoods.

African American Soldiers in the Civil War

Manhood, according to Douglass, stood for African Americans' ability to claim their humanity, their rights to citizenship, and belonging to a nation that had pushed them to the margins. This could only be achieved, he argued, through the physical expression of black masculinity, honor, and loyalty to nation by enlisting as soldiers, a responsibility which had been denied to them in Bleeding Kansas, but could be reclaimed in the nationwide sectional violence.[209] Despite ample support among many black intellectuals, the majority of northern sentiment reflected an uncertainty or even disdain for the role of black soldiers in the war, wanting to define the war as exclusively white. While Republicans like Abraham Lincoln explained this

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[207] Ibid., 244.
[208] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Writings,* 487.
[209] Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 148, 155.

hesitation as a conservative measure, arguing that the tenuous position of border states in the Union made the inclusion of black soldiers in the Union a risky business, Douglass dismissed this excuse as a way to justify the exclusion of the goal of emancipation from motivations of the North in fighting the Civil War. However, two years into the war, with the North severely undermanned and disadvantaged tactically, Lincoln and northerners changed their tune, adopting a fierce black enlistment campaign, making the participation of black soldiers not only part of the Civil War, but a critical component of its success. Thus, black soldiers' participation in the Civil War became the critical stage upon which black men claimed their manhood and their stake in the welfare of the Union.[210]

The black abolitionists' "call to manhood" positions the performance of black masculinity in the ranks of military service, using the gender loaded terms of "duty," "honor," "noble," and "power," to conscribe black manhood in the ritualistic, though thoroughly real, act of violence. In his April 2, 1863 letter to the *Weekly Anglo-African*, George E. Stephens places the lives of the "wronged and outraged sisters and brethren" in slavery in the hands of free black men who must "take up arms and place [their] interests and [their] lives in the balance against [the slaves'] oppressors."[211] He argues that it is "better to die free, than live slaves," and thus it is the responsibility of free black men to liberate those still enslaved because they have the freedom to do so.[212] "For the sake of honor, manhood and courage" he pleads, black men must take up arms against the criminal slave power, taking the war and the fate of those still enslaved into their own hands, staking claim to their own fates, but also of the fates of their brethren. This

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[210] For discussion of Frederick Douglas and his thoughts on black enlistment in the Union, see Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 149, 155-160, and Ira Berlin, *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 436.
[211] Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, 199.
[212] Ibid..

emphasis on the responsibility free black men held for those who could not fight, their families, women, children, and those who were still held captive in the bondage of slavery, situated black manhood in a unique space, where they were made responsible by the black community for the ending of slave oppression. By taking up arms, free blacks gained the ability to strike back against slavery, fighting alongside men who needed their help, but did not necessarily internalize their cause.[213]

The northern free black community united in support of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment, the first black unit recruited in the North as symbolic of the abolitionist cause and black manhood's stake in achieving its success, the basis upon which many more free blacks would enlist, eventually bringing free blacks into the Kansas battleground. As part of this new turn in black involvement in the war, many prominent black community figures like Frederick Douglass acted as recruiting agents for the Union, extolling the virtues of enlisting, including but not limited to the rights of citizenship, the achievement of a self-defined destiny, self respect, and, most significantly to this analysis, extolling African American manhood and courage.[214] For recruits in the South, military service could even mean freedom itself. Testimonies from the members of the Fifty-Fourth supported the right of slaves to enlist, arguing that the enslaved could overturn the emasculating nature of bondage, for "if there is one spark of manhood remaining in the bosom of the slave that has resisted the surging waves of oppression," that the "school of the soldier will fan it into a glowing flame."[215]

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[213] Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 164.

[214] For discussion of the Fifty-fourth regiment, see Smith, *Black Soldiers in Blue*, 138, 141-142; and Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2*, 239. For discussion of Frederick Douglass as a recruiter, see Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 163-164.

[215] G. E. Stephens, Sergeant Co. B. 54th Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry, Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2*, 242.

Though the enlistment and service of black Union soldiers served as a model for the achievement of black manhood in the Civil War, as embodied in the Fifty-Fourth regiment, with this trend arose a number of obstacles and problems only blacks faced in their military service. These problems can be seen in the writings of a member of the Fifty-Fourth, George W. Stephens, in his letter to the *Weekly Anglo-African,* expressing his objections to the unequal pay given to black soldiers in comparison to whites of equal rank, an objection that gets to the heart of his connection between service and manhood. He argues that "to accept our pay in this way would degrade us, and mark us as inferior soldiers, and would be a complete annihilation of every vestige of our manhood." Thus, his manhood, defined by his *superiority* of military prowess, could only be degraded if they *accepted* less pay, and accordingly status as inferiors. Thus, the Fifty-Fourth's refusal to accept pay for over eighteen months, a decision which left their families hungry and their loyalties to the Union questioned, nevertheless loudly declared their commitment to the earning of their manhood through service.[216]

Though a vast number of the northern free black community supported enlistment, this support was not ubiquitous, and many of the problems, like unequal pay, experienced by black soldiers heightened naysayer concerns. In a letter to the *Weekly Anglo-African,* "R.H.V." spoke against black enlistment, arguing that "No regiments of black troops [should] leave their bodies to rot upon the battlefield beneath a Southern sun" for a nation that did not promise any certain future of freedom and equality. He argues that a long history of black service to the nation and that nation's history of injustice imposed upon the black population should be enough to guarantee blacks equal rights as citizens and individuals.[217] This sentiment was reproduced in criticism of the unequal treatment of black soldiers after the enlistment process proved

[216] George W. Stephens, "Document 60," in *Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2,* 296.
[217] R.H.V., "Document 22," in *Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2,* 118-119.

successful. Frederick Douglass cited the issue of unequal pay, unequal treatment and ill use of black labor for non combat positions, the forced enlistment of uncertain black men by the point of bayonet, their segregation into all-black regiments, their denied advancement into positions of authority, and, most tragically, their mistreatment as prisoners of war, as issues explicitly ignored by Union authorities in the thick of war.[218] A reformer, not a soldier, Douglass publicized these crimes against black soldiers, struggling to reconcile his responsibility as a black man, his understanding of the role of service in the future of black masculinity and freedoms, and the perpetuation of racism in the process of war. This process put black men, claiming their manhoods, in the same Kansas-Missouri border region where the sectional conflict had been determined as exclusively white years earlier in Bleeding Kansas, giving them a chance to reinvent the outcome of that conflict.

Civil Warfare on the Western Border: Black Soldiers in Kansas and Missouri

Nowhere was this danger and uncertainty of the place of black soldiers in the Civil War felt more strongly than in the turbulent border regions of Kansas and Missouri, who used their role as black soldiers to overcome Bleeding Kansas's legacy of white supremacy in the region.[219] Within a culture of retribution based on the bloody and deeply personal border war of Bleeding Kansas, enacted by citizens and soldiers alike staking claim to their manhood by continuously revenging perceived grievances, enlistment, or even mere presence, by blacks in the region was

[218] Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 161, 167.

[219] Black soldiers fighting in the Missouri/Kansas border region were at great risk of danger and race-based violence, especially if captured as a prisoner of war. Black soldiers also faced additional violence from proslavery sympathizers remaining in Missouri, and they risked their lives every time they crossed the Kansas border, even when they were not on active duty. For discussion of this increased danger of black military service in this region, see Dudley Taylor Cornish, *Kansas Negro Regiments in the Civil War,* 3-6.

always a dangerous gamble.[220] In response to the inequalities, dangers, and fear bred through service and general treatment of African Americans in this border region, black soldiers asserted their masculine role as protectors through their use of literacy in engaging the Federal government for reform. Primarily in Missouri, where the emancipation proclamation was not readily enforced due to Lincoln's aversion to losing border-state support, families of soldiers were abused as punishment for former slaves' enlistment. A petition signed by over one hundred soldiers and local residents of Louisiana, Missouri, testified to this injustice. Addressed to General Rosecrans, these individuals argued that in order for a more successful recruitment of black soldiers in Missouri, the government would have to rectify the mistreatment of their families by slaveholders and proslavery Missourians.[221] They begged that "if, under Law, the families of recruits are to be protected from violence in consequence of the enlistment of the Husbands and Fathers, it may be so stated in clear and unequivocal terms." Thus, by staking claim through their role as providers for their families, they connected their masculine familial obligations to their role as soldiers, arguing that whole black families must be protected if the government wanted the assistance of black soldiers, a demand which seemed imperative considering the Union's reliance on black troops in gaining their tactical advantage.[222]

An anonymous black Union soldier, speaking on behalf of his black comrades in Missouri, felt empowered in his position as soldier to take the problems of his family directly to the secretary of war. He argues that the "Colored Men of these 44th & 16th and 18th three Wives is Scattered abut over world without pertioction in Suffrence condishtion." Knowing their wives

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[220] For discussion of border warfare, retribution, and revenge in the border warfare, see the Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*; Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty,* 219, 245-247, and Neely, *Border Between Them,* 58.

[221] "Petition addressed to General Rosecrans," in *Free at Last: Documentary History,* 364.

[222] Ibid., 365.

were suffering "for the want of Husband Care," some of whom have not seen each other in the expanse of two years of service, this soldier postured that it was the government's responsibility to reconcile this problem.[223] This assertion of the importance of the suffering of his family, and the families of his fellow black soldiers, directly to the Federal government suggests that his position as a soldier, not to mention his ability to read and write, enabled him to express this concern, one that his masculine role as "Husband" necessitated, to those he considered responsible.[224]

This connection between literacy, military service, and expression of manly duties as a provider lead some black soldiers to combat their previous slave-owners and those continuing to possess their kin. In a letter to the slaveowner in possession of his children, Spotswood Rice, a soldier stationed in Missouri, articulates his power in his position as soldier to take back his children from his previous mistress. He argues that "my Children is my own and I expect to get them." This expectation, he clarifies, comes from his "power and authority to bring her [his daughter Mary] away and to acute vengencens [vengeance] on them that holds my Child." He connects this authority to the vast number of black soldiers employed in the Civil War. He argues that "we are now making up a bout one thoughsand blacke troopse to Come up through," a solidarity which one mistress cannot stop. By expressing how "this whole Government gives chear to me," he uses his role as a soldier to stake a claim to the larger body of the Federal government, an expression of his sense of connection between service and citizenship.[225] In command of his masculine role as father and protector, in his command of the written word, and

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[223] "Anonymous to secretary of war," in *Free at Last: Documentary History,* 528-529.
[224] For discussion of the empowerment of black men as soldiers, see Friend and Glover, Introduction, *Southern Manhood,* xi; and Blight, *Frederick Douglass's Civil War,* 148-151; For discussion of the role of literacy in that empowerment, see Heather Andrea Williams, "Commenced to Think Like a Man": Literacy and Manhood in African American Civil War Regiments," in *Southern Manhood,* 196-197, 213.
[225] Spotswood Rice, "at the Benton Barracks Hospital in St. Louis, Mo, Sept 3, 1864," in *Free at Last: Documentary History,* 480.

his part in a larger mass of black soldiers, Rice signifies his power to change the problems he encounters as a black soldier.

The expressions and articulations of black manhood seen through the lives and writings of black soldiers throughout the Civil War, but also more specifically in the border region of Kansas and Missouri, counters the assertion that Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War it inspired was only a fight between warring white powers or masculinities. The links between the violence of Kansas warfare, the competition of white and non-white, sectioned masculinities in Bleeding Kansas, its influence on the popularization of black militant abolitionism, and the concurrent support for black military service in the Civil War, suggest that black masculinities were integral to both conflicts. However, popular and contemporary histories rarely communicate this central role played by black men.

The overwhelming influence of geography, religion, politics, and economics, and boundaries of time in framing the events of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War as separate events obscures the role black masculinities played in the sectional warfare in Kansas both before and during the Civil War. In "Welcoming "Pa" on the Kaw: Kansas's "Colored" Militia and the 1864 Price Raid," 2002, Roger D. Cunningham, a Kansas military historian, points to the influence of public memorials in this silencing process. He argues that despite a state legislative policy banning blacks from participating in the Kansas Militia, an emergency, in the form of the 1864 Price Raid that threatened the Union strongholds in Missouri and Kansas, necessitated the recruitment of black troops for service to their state. Cunningham argues that black Kansans responded with overwhelming support to this cause, and close to 1,000 blacks fought in these decisive battles. Not only this, but over 100 or so of these black soldiers held positions of authority, representing an unprecedented concentration of black military leadership in the Civil

War as a whole. By serving in this conflict, these men, asserting their manhood through military service and warfare, risking much more than white soldiers due to the mistreatment of black soldiers by confederate forces in the region, determined the decisive win that preserved "freedom" in Kansas. However, all of these unique narratives of black service in the Kansas theatre for the Civil War are absent from the public memorial honoring Union soldiers who died in Price's Raid. This denial of their contribution to this success, a paramount mark of their manhood, combined with their denial of compensation because it was illegal according to the state constitution for them to serve, only those promoted to Federal service were compensated for their injuries, effectively writes the impact of these black militias out of Kansas history.[226]

Conclusion

What is the significance of this historical silence? Ironically, Kansas celebrates its part in the Civil War, extolling its virtue as a symbol of freedom. Interpretations of Bleeding Kansas, as the "flashpoint for the Civil War," according to self-representations on a state-sponsored online public exhibit, silence the influence of racism and white supremacy, which historical scholars agree was ensured by the outcome of Bleeding Kansas.[227] As the "home of John Brown," a perpetual symbol of abolitionism and freedom and liberty for blacks across the nation, many Exodusters, fleeing the racism and violence of southern Reconstruction, sought out Kansas, hoping to benefit from the freedom it extolled. Ironically, Kansas's reputation as a place for "universal liberty" regardless of race, did not guarantee blacks the rights of citizenship, for the

[226] Roger D. Cunningham, "Welcoming "Pa" on the Kaw: Kansas's "Colored" Militia and the 1864 Price Raid, *Kansas History* 25, no. 2 (2002): 87-101.
[227] "Willing to Die For Freedom: A Look Back at Kansas Territory, 1854-181." Kansas Historical Society Online.

Kansas state constitution denied suffrage until it was nationalized.[228] The symbolic importance of Kansas obscures its continued promotion of white supremacy throughout the twentieth-century, a legacy which continues to persist in its re-imagination of Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War. Only by applying gender as a category of analysis, seeking out a longer history of the sectional conflict of Bleeding Kansas and Kansas's role in the Civil War, seeking out both regional accounts and national perspectives by black abolitionists and soldiers fighting in the war, can Bleeding Kansas be reinterpreted as a competition of masculinities of both non-white and white origins.

Focusing on the continued importance of Bleeding Kansas in the formation of a "free" Kansas, a fictional haven of equality and possibility, obscures the way that Kansas operated as a site of conquest, slavery, and continued racial and ethnic inequality well into the twenty-first century. By examining the ways that white males appropriated hyper-masculine "Indian" stereotypes, naturalizing their colonization of Kansas, and the way that proslavery men articulated their own superior, hyper-masculine identities over African American slaves in Kansas, the roots of these inequalities are brought to the center of this conflict. However, it is important to understand how American Indians and African Americans resisted this gendered, racialized narrative of white supremacy and conquest. American Indians participated in this conflict while resisting white conquest of Kansas. Black abolitionists and soldiers in the territory articulated the conflict as central to the future of the free black community. These conceptions of masculinity, intricately tied to race, played a central role in fueling the border violence and determining the way it is remembered, a notion that should urge historians, Kansans, and Americans more broadly to reconsider their perceptions of these events and their legacies.

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[228] Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty,* 250-253.

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