

## *“Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier”: Youth Enlistment in a Northern County*

LIKE MOST WARS, the American Civil War was fought by young men. Some of those young men were legally too young to serve. Nineteenth-century America was a society in which notions of childhood and children were changing, and in which the boundary between childhood and adulthood was becoming increasingly complex. Yet in a society that had decided that war was an adult experience, a significant number of boys continued to volunteer before they were legally permitted, and communities continued to allow them to fight.

This study constructs a social profile of the youngest soldiers from Franklin County, Pennsylvania. By developing a portrait of these boys, it provides a clearer picture of youth enlistment and the participation of young recruits and furthers our understanding of the boys who went to war. The cohort investigated consists of youths aged from ten to seventeen recorded as residents of Franklin County in the 1860 US census. These boys included the youngest legal soldiers in 1861, as well as those still too young to legally fight at war's end. Eighteen was the minimum age for enlistment. There are marked differences of maturity between the youngest and the oldest, and this study will identify enlistment indicators for both the underage soldiers and those who enlisted legally. It is important, however, also to note what they had in common—they all became volunteer soldiers in the Union army.

Franklin County was chosen for the case study because of the availability of political and economic resources at the Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War website, a digital archive of Civil War-era correspondence and other records of inhabitants of the county and of Augusta County, Virginia. These excellent resources are used in conjunction with the 1860 US federal census and regimental records from Samuel P. Bates's *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–5*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu>; Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–5* (Harrisburg, PA, 1869–1871); *Eighth*

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There have always been boy soldiers, and unfortunately there probably always will be, but the American Civil War was arguably the last Western conflict in which underage soldiers played a significant role. Modern day discussions of child soldiers focus on conflicts in developing countries and rightly condemn the appalling conditions under which children are coerced into military service. They conjure up disturbing images of vulnerable children manipulated by adults, and of lost childhood.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars have argued that widespread participation of children as frontline troops is a fairly recent phenomenon, while others contend that adolescents have the capacity for adult reasoning and decision making and that the “child soldier as exploited victim” is a twentieth-century construct. The “Straight 18” definition of a child soldier as anyone younger than eighteen enlisted in armed forces has also been questioned, because of changing notions of children in different times and societies.<sup>3</sup> However, while it is important not to impose twenty-first-century sensibilities onto past conflicts, minimum age regulations were in place before the start of the Civil War, and age restriction in some form had been mandated in the United States since 1802.<sup>4</sup>

Arguably the earliest study of Civil War soldiers was commissioned by the United States Sanitary Commission in 1864.<sup>5</sup> In a detailed anthropological survey of over one million Union soldiers, Benjamin Apthorp Gould constructed a portrait of the typical soldier. Gould explicitly excluded from this work those who joined after the initial organization of regiments, draftees and substitutes, black soldiers, “miscellaneous” troops (sharpshooters, engineers, and mounted infantry), musicians, and those younger than eighteen and older than forty-five. Gould estimated that only about 1 percent of soldiers were underage, but he conceded that some were not forthright about their age.<sup>6</sup>

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*Census of the United States, 1860* (Washington, DC, 1860) (hereafter cited as *1860 Census*).

<sup>2</sup> P. W. Singer, *Children at War* (Berkeley, CA, 2006); David M. Rosen, *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism* (London, 2005); Daya Somasundaram, “Child Soldiers: Understanding the Context,” *British Medical Journal* 324 (2002): 1268–71.

<sup>3</sup> Singer, *Children at War*, 14; Rosen, *Armies of the Young*, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Singer, *Children at War*, 13–15; Eleanor C. Bishop, *Ponies, Patriots, and Powder Monkeys: A History of Children in the Armed Forces, 1776–1916* (Del Mar, CA, 1982), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Apthorp Gould, *Investigations in Military and Anthropological Statistics* (New York, 1869), v.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

The Union army was a predominately volunteer civilian army, with a relatively young mean age of twenty-four. The soldiers were literate, from a politicized and democratized society, and, although there is some debate as to whether political awareness was a major enlistment motivator, the majority voted in the 1860 election. The typical Civil War soldier was an agricultural worker, single, Protestant, and loyal to his immediate peer group.

Studies of enlistment in Northern towns suggest differences in enlistment rates corresponding to social and economic factors. A study of enlistments in Concord, Massachusetts, found that “economic frustration and social malaise,” rather than patriotic fervor, pushed young men who were vulnerable to changes in agricultural and industrial practices into the army.<sup>7</sup> A study of Newburyport, Massachusetts, found that boys aged twelve to seventeen whose fathers had high-status white-collar occupations were more likely to enlist than sons of unskilled workers. Those who attended school were less likely to enlist than those who were already employed.<sup>8</sup> A study of two New Hampshire towns—Claremont and Newport—with similar social and economic profiles but different political sympathies found political affiliation to be an enlistment indicator. Enlistment rates across occupation and wealth were similar to those found in other studies, except for the higher participation rate for high-status white-collar occupations in Republican Claremont.<sup>9</sup> These studies provide points of comparison for a study of youth enlistment in Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

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Franklin County is in southern Pennsylvania, nestled mid-way along the state's border with Maryland on the Mason-Dixon Line. A largely rural county, in the mid-1800s it had a growing industrial base centered in Chambersburg, the county seat. The Cumberland Valley Rail Road ran through it, linking the county to commercial centers to the north, east,

<sup>7</sup> W. J. Rorabaugh, “Who Fought for the North in the Civil War? Concord, Massachusetts, Enlistments,” *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): 695–701.

<sup>8</sup> Maris A. Vinovskis, “Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations,” in *Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays*, ed. Maris A. Vinovskis (New York, 1990), 12–20.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas R. Kemp, “Community and War: The Civil War Experience of Two New Hampshire Towns,” in *Toward a Social History of the American Civil War*, 41–44.

and south.<sup>10</sup> Most people lived in rural communities, and many of these were long-established, mature agricultural areas, with little new land being developed for farming. The average farm value was approximately seven thousand dollars, and most agricultural production was in the broad swath of rich farmland that stretched from the northeast of the county down across the southwest and central areas. The value of farm production per capita in Franklin County outstripped that of the rest of the North, and indeed most of the South, in the 1850s. The population was forty thousand, with five thousand in Chambersburg. There was a sizeable African American population centered in small towns in the southern region of the county, although they remained on the fringe of white communities. The local press fostered vigorous political debate, and the county recorded high voter participation in the 1860 election. The county had a long tradition of military participation, with militia units in every conflict from the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War to the Mexican War.<sup>11</sup>

In April 1861, Franklin County became caught up in the chaos and excitement of the mobilization of the Union army following secession by Southern states and the start of the Civil War. Camp Slifer was established near Chambersburg, military hospitals were established in Chambersburg and Greencastle, and the local railroad became a major military transport artery taking men and materiel from Harrisburg to the front lines in the South.

A total of 350 white youths, almost 9 percent of the white Franklin County boys between the ages of ten and seventeen, enlisted over the course of the war, with 245 mustering in over the first two years. Thirty-eight joined in 1861, making up just over 10 percent of the total county enlistment for the year, and 207 enlisted in 1862 (approximately 9 percent of total Franklin County recruits for that year). Twenty-nine (76 percent) of the 1861 youth enlistees were underage, while ninety-four (45 percent) of the 1862 recruits from the cohort were too young. In 1861 most of the boys enlisted for three months in state militias, while others joined three-year regiments. In the summer of 1862, the youths responded to the national call for three hundred thousand more men, and many enlisted in the nine-month militia regiments, which were initially intended to be

<sup>10</sup> *Franklin Repository*, Aug. 3, 1859, June 6, 1860, and July 11, 1860.

<sup>11</sup> Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania: Containing a Copious Selection of the Most Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, etc., . . .* (Philadelphia, 1843), 349.

kept within Pennsylvania, but were sent further afield. Others volunteered for three-year terms.

The broad profile of the youngest Franklin recruits suggests that they were born in Pennsylvania, were white, and attended school; they lived at home with their parents, and the older boys were employed; they were farmers' and tradesmen's sons and were from rural areas. Their average age was just over seventeen years.

John Skinner was a typical young recruit from Franklin County. The second son of a farmer from Fannett, a rural township in the north of the county, Skinner worked as a farmhand, went to school, and lived with his family. When he was seventeen he joined the 126th Pennsylvania Infantry in August 1862. John lied about his age and claimed to be twenty. He enlisted with his older brother, and they served with at least seven other young men from Fannett who volunteered that summer. After he mustered out in May 1863, he returned home, and in August 1864 he reenlisted in the 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry.<sup>12</sup> John Skinner was like countless other young men across the North who volunteered and served with family and peers from their home communities.

Military regulations at the start of the Civil War stated that the minimum age for combat troops was eighteen, and the minimum height was 5 feet 4.5 inches; those under twenty-one required parental consent, lodged in triplicate, and no one under eighteen was to be mustered in. While the General Orders issued by the War Department were very clear as to the procedures to be followed, correspondence between the department and state officials indicates that the regulations were amended at both the federal and local levels. By late 1862 regulations had been modified to allow young recruits to muster in with verbal consent, providing their captain was satisfied that age restrictions were met. Musicians, who were not considered combat troops even though they were in a field of battle and acted as messengers and stretcher bearers, could enlist at age fourteen.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the federal government regulations stipulating the minimum age, and clear, well-documented instructions issued to enlistment officials, approximately 20 percent of Franklin County's underage soldiers openly admitted that they were younger than eighteen. Only one openly

<sup>12</sup> 1860 Census; Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers*, vol. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, DC, 1880–1901), ser. 3, 2:343, 400, 434, 445 (hereafter *Official Records*).

underage recruit, William Boyles, enlisted as a musician and so could legitimately enlist at fourteen.<sup>14</sup> Others enlisted as infantry, artillery, and cavalry troops and were shown no favoritism because of their age. That so many could enlist openly underage implies significant complicity of local officials desperate to fill new regiments; the frequent reiteration of recruitment regulations suggests that they were often flaunted or disregarded.

The young recruits may have been aware that after September 1861 they could not be discharged from military service solely on the grounds of minority.<sup>15</sup> Many were already in paid employment as farmhands and apprentices and likely looked physically capable of serving as infantrymen. The medical examination that every recruit had to undergo was often less than thorough—it failed to detect numerous women enlisting as soldiers—and as long as teeth were sound enough to tear cartridge casings, right hands were strong enough to fire a gun, and recruits were close to the minimum height, they passed the examination.<sup>16</sup> Only a few were later discharged with a surgeon's certificate "for want of physical development": at age fourteen and only 4 feet 3.5 inches tall, musician William Boyles was simply a boy too young and too small. Theo Brandt, aged seventeen, was discharged six months after his enlistment because he was "not sufficiently developed for duties of a cavalry soldier."<sup>17</sup> William Boyles did not reenlist and disappeared from the records, while Theo Brandt reenlisted a few months later in August 1862 and again in January 1864.

Boys from elsewhere in the Union have left diaries, letters, and memoirs that explain and justify their decision to enlist. Theodore Upson, a sixteen year old from Indiana, simply wrote, "we must have more soldiers. This Union must be saved. . . . I don't feel right to stay home any longer." Jesse Bowman Young of Illinois perhaps spoke for other youths when he wrote that "many of the boys of that time were just as patriotic as the grownup people. They did not know much about the causes . . . they could not see all the dangers . . . but they loved their flag, and they adored the

<sup>14</sup> Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers' Records, Valley of the Shadow, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/dossiers>.

<sup>15</sup> US War Dept., *Revised U.S. Army Regulations of 1861* (Washington, DC, 1861), 511.

<sup>16</sup> David Williams, *A People's History of the Civil War: Struggles for the Meaning of Freedom* (New York, 2005), 146.

<sup>17</sup> Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers' Records, Valley of the Shadow.

Union, and they trusted Mr Lincoln, and they were ready to do their share.”<sup>18</sup>

Sometimes the call to war was simpler. Samuel B. Franklin from Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, on the county line with Franklin County, lived by the rail line. He reported, “every train had soldiers . . . going to the front or returning . . . and I could hardly keep from going along. I bore this up until the fall of 1861”—when he enlisted in the Seventy-Seventh Pennsylvania Infantry.<sup>19</sup>

It is likely that the youths of Franklin County responded to the war in similar ways and for similar reasons as others across the country, although very little is known about the thoughts of the county’s youngest recruits. These young men played no part in prewar decisions, in the political processes that brought America to flashpoint, or in the partisan rhetoric of community debate. Instead of making the gradual transition from adolescent to adult—finishing school, completing apprenticeships, and establishing the beginnings of a work history—they stepped directly into a decidedly adult arena.

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By the late 1850s there were over two hundred schools with about nine thousand students in Franklin County. Most children attended the public schools, with nearly 79 percent of those aged five to fifteen in class, in line with the northern average of 75–80 percent.<sup>20</sup> School attendance in the year leading up to the 1860 census was higher for underage recruits (83 percent) than for legal enlistees (60 percent) in 1861 and 1862. While most political socialization of children occurred around home and hearth, local schools were also important in instilling in children an understanding of political processes.<sup>21</sup> Students learned the fundamentals of representative government, and by the time they left school they had a basic knowledge of how the system worked. A resolution from teachers in

<sup>18</sup> Theodore F. Upson, *With Sherman to the Sea: The Civil War Letters, Diaries and Reminiscences of Theodore F. Upson* (Bloomington, IN, 1958), xxiv; Jesse Bowman Young, *What a Boy Saw in the Army: A Story of Sight-seeing and Adventure in the War for the Union* (New York, 1894), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Allan Frank and George A. Reaves, “*Seeing the Elephant*”: *Raw Recruits at the Battle of Shiloh* (Westport, CT, 1989), 31.

<sup>20</sup> *Valley Spirit*, Feb. 9, 1859.

<sup>21</sup> Phillip Shaw Paludan, *A People’s Contest: The Union and the Civil War, 1861–1865*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence, KS, 1996), 11.

Greencastle, published in 1862, demonstrates the politicization of education in the county: “setting aside all feelings of prejudice that may have sprung out of party sentiment,” it called for support of President Lincoln and the war effort and condemned the “evil” of states’ rights and secession.<sup>22</sup> While many enlistees had left school by then, others may have absorbed their teachers’ patriotic exhortations in their lessons.

Because the economy of the county was heavily reliant on agriculture, much of the employment available to boys was unskilled labor or farm work that required a level of physical maturity. The Pennsylvania child labor laws of the 1830s and of 1849 were enacted primarily to protect children working in the emerging textile and mining industries and to ensure that working children received some education.<sup>23</sup> Although there was some heavy industry in Franklin County there were no large factories or textile mills, and child labor was not an issue, although children continued to contribute unpaid labor to rural households. Older youths in paid employment as farmhands or laborers were still able to attend school for at least a short time each year, and many youths drifted between school and paid seasonal employment.

Although most recruits had attended school, over 50 percent of the underage soldiers of 1861 were also involved in paid employment, although this dropped to just over a quarter in 1862. Almost three-quarters of all legal enlistees were employed, with most working as either unskilled laborers or farmhands or apprenticed in trades, though it is not known whether employment was part time or full time. For youths in rural areas, this may have been seasonal work.

The phenomenon of boys following fathers, brothers, friends, or neighbors into military service may have been a significant factor in youth enlistment. While some young boys did follow older brothers into service, in many cases the youngest were the first to volunteer, with sometimes tragic consequences. On February 12, 1862, fourteen-year-old Joseph Mentzer Jr. enlisted for a three-year term in Company K, 107th Pennsylvania Infantry. Four days later his father, Joseph Mentzer Sr.,

<sup>22</sup> Franklin County: “Resolutions,” by Unknown, Sept. 3, 1915, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/mem/FM0043>. Originally published in *Greencastle Pilot*, Nov. 13, 1862.

<sup>23</sup> Dirk Krueger and Jessica Tjornhom, “Economic Inequality and the Emergence of Child Labor Laws,” Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper No. 01-36 (Stanford, CA, 2002), 4–5, <http://www-siepr.stanford.edu/papers/pdf/01-36.pdf>; Kenneth C. Wolensky and Judith Rich, “Child Labor in Pennsylvania,” *Historic Pennsylvania Leaflet No. 43* (Harrisburg, PA, 1998), [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/things/4280/child\\_labor/478193](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/things/4280/child_labor/478193).



enlisted in the same unit, leaving behind his wife and four other children. Mentzer Sr. was killed at Antietam in September 1862, while his son survived to reenlist, to briefly desert and return to his unit, and to muster out at war's end.<sup>24</sup>

Those who followed fathers and brothers often did so not because they were left behind but because they shared the same values and beliefs as their family members, and they volunteered as equals. Joseph Michaels, a seventeen-year-old day laborer from the South Ward of Chambersburg, enlisted in Company K in early 1862, three weeks after his older brother John, and ten days after his father Christian. The three served together, leaving behind Joseph's mother and six siblings. Joseph and John fought together, were both wounded at Gettysburg, and mustered out in 1865. Christian was medically discharged in mid-1862 but reenlisted twice more. Another older brother, William, enlisted in 1864. The Michaels, as a family, felt strongly enough to potentially sacrifice four of their number, with Christian legally too old to enlist at age forty-six and Joseph too young at seventeen.<sup>25</sup>

The mass recruitment drives of 1862 saw several groups of brothers enlist on the same day and serve in the same unit: the Bowman brothers, George, fifteen, John, seventeen, and Calvin, nineteen, the sons of a poor blacksmith from Washington Township, enlisted together in Company E, 126th Pennsylvania Infantry. Eighteen-year-old Hiram and sixteen-year-old Ferdinand Senseny, sons of a wealthy carpenter from the South Ward of Chambersburg, joined the 126th Pennsylvania together, as did the Dunkle brothers, Solomon, aged eighteen, and Michael, aged nineteen, sons of a carpenter from Fannett.<sup>26</sup>

Seeing friends and neighbors in uniform undoubtedly inspired some youths to volunteer, but of the 1861 recruits, only nine had neighbors who enlisted during the war, and five of these neighbors joined in later years. As with family enlistment, it appears that the youngest often joined first, and so enlistment of neighbors had little influence on early youth volunteers. In 1862, a higher proportion of legal recruits had neighbors who were in service during the war; however, with large numbers of men enlisting in the same regiments within days or weeks of each other, it is difficult to determine the role of peer pressure in youth enlistment.

<sup>24</sup> 1860 Census; Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers*, vol. 3.

<sup>25</sup> 1860 Census.

<sup>26</sup> 1860 Census; Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers' Records, Valley of the Shadow.

While social and economic status and other demographic details can be gleaned from the census, it is difficult to ascertain the political affiliations of the households in which the young men lived. The voting outcomes in townships across the county for the 1860 presidential election, however, may give a broad view of the political sympathies of the recruits, even though they were too young to vote in that election and some were still too young to vote at war's end.

Support for President Lincoln came largely from the broad middle section of the county—the areas with highest farm values—and from places with sizeable black populations, particularly Southampton and the South Ward of Chambersburg. Over 80 percent of eligible Franklin County voters went to the polls in the 1860 election, with 56 percent supporting Lincoln; first-time voters—young men under age twenty-five—particularly supported Lincoln.<sup>27</sup> Initial reviews suggest that regions of Franklin County with Republican sympathies sent more young men as soldiers, supporting Kemp's assertion based upon his study of New Hampshire towns that political affiliation could be an enlistment predictor.<sup>28</sup> The political outcome of the 1860 election is not always indicative of enlistment trends, however: York County, just sixty miles east of Franklin County, had an overall Democrat vote of 52 percent, yet the enlistment rate across that county was much greater than for Franklin.<sup>29</sup> Areas in Franklin County with Democrat sympathies, such as Warren in the southwest, Fannett in the north, and Lurgan in the northeast, also sent significant numbers of recruits. The relatively high number of enlistees from these areas who came from household with assets valued at over two thousand dollars—some with significantly higher value—may also support Kemp's suggestion that those with high-status employment (and therefore higher asset value) were likely to have Republican affiliations.<sup>30</sup> These households included asset-poor youths living away from parental homes and influence, residing with employers where they might be influenced by different political opinions.

<sup>27</sup> Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859–1863* (New York, 2003), 82.

<sup>28</sup> Kemp, "Community and War," 41–44.

<sup>29</sup> Mark A. Snell, "If They Would Know What I Know It Would be Pretty Hard to Raise One Company in York: Recruiting, the Draft, and Society's Response in York County, Pennsylvania, 1861–1865," in *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*, ed. Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller (New York, 2002), 72.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Using prewar political data as enlistment determinants becomes more problematic, however, for years later in the conflict. Political debate within the county became increasingly heated, and the vigorous partisan campaigns for the state and local elections in 1862 saw a swing to the Democrats. The two major newspapers, the Republican *Franklin Repository* and the Democratic *Valley Spirit*, although extremely partisan, both supported the war and called upon the men of Franklin to do their duty.

That the Civil War armies were politically aware has been well documented in previous studies.<sup>31</sup> The young soldiers were the products of a politicized society, and strong legacies of open political debate together with a high level of literacy ensured that the vast majority were aware, at the very least, of the broad ideologies and issues at the heart of the conflict. Very few letters written by Franklin boys remain, but one letter from Samuel Z. Maxwell, of the South Ward of Chambersburg, highlights his political awareness. Samuel enlisted at the age of eighteen in the 126th Pennsylvania Infantry in the summer of 1862 and reenlisted in the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry in 1863. He hoped to return home on furlough at election time “so as to give AGC [Governor Andrew Curtin] my little help.”<sup>32</sup> Although Samuel claimed to be twenty-one at his initial enlistment, he was only nineteen in 1863 and unable to vote, so it is unclear what his “little help” could be.

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As the winter of 1862 turned into the spring of 1863, the war to restore the Union became a war against slavery. The manner in which it was fought also changed: it became harsher and more brutal, descending into a war of attrition.<sup>33</sup> Increased use of heavy artillery inflicted terrible damage to men and horses from a great distance, and trench warfare left men lying and dying in the mud in a hail of shot and shell.<sup>34</sup> It became

<sup>31</sup> Pete Maslowski, “A Study of Morale in Civil War Soldiers,” *Military Affairs* 34 (1970): 122–26; James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Z. Maxwell to his Aunt and Cousin, Oct. 1, 1863, Valley of the Shadow, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0673>.

<sup>33</sup> Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Conflict in the American Civil War* (New York, 1987), 7–17.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command* (Bloomington, IN, 1988), xi–xii.

harder for civilians, as economic infrastructure, including private property, became targets to harm the economy and demoralize the populace.<sup>35</sup> Fewer men volunteered; quotas were imposed on towns and villages that had already sent the best of their young men, and the draft threatened to take the rest.

The war came to Franklin County. The Confederates briefly captured Chambersburg in October 1862, giving the people of Franklin County a taste of what was to come. The county endured more enemy actions than any other Northern county, with thirteen separate incidents culminating in the razing of Chambersburg on July 30, 1864.<sup>36</sup> During the Gettysburg campaign in the summer of 1863, almost the entire Confederate army moved through Franklin County and Chambersburg. General Lee established his headquarters in Chambersburg in his preparation for the battle at Gettysburg, and nearly two-thirds of the rebel infantry camped in the town's surrounds.<sup>37</sup> Franklin County was also witness to the terrible aftermath of Gettysburg as the Confederate army retreated to Virginia through Greencastle, with an ambulance wagon train carrying over ten thousand wounded men that was seventeen miles long and took thirty hours to pass.<sup>38</sup>

In July 1864, Lieutenant General Jubal Early instructed General John McCausland to occupy Chambersburg and demand payment of five hundred thousand dollars, or one hundred thousand dollars in gold, as compensation for houses burnt in a Union raid. When the town refused to pay, McCausland followed through on his threat to "lay the town in ashes." The fire razed three-quarters of the residential and business area, destroying five hundred buildings and leaving three thousand people homeless.<sup>39</sup> Chambersburg was the only Northern town burned by the rebels during the war.

The soldiers who joined in the second stage of the war, from 1863 to 1865, under the shadow of conscription and quotas, have been described

<sup>35</sup> Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861–1865* (New York, 1995), 3–6.

<sup>36</sup> *Military Operations of the Civil War: Guide-Index to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861–1865*, vol. 2, *Main Eastern Theater of Operations* (Washington, DC, 1968–1990), section O, Checklist of Recognized Military Operation by County/Date, 376.

<sup>37</sup> Everard Smith, "Chambersburg: Anatomy of a Confederate Reprisal," *American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 432–55.

<sup>38</sup> Edward L. Ayers and Anne S. Rubin, *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War* (New York, 2000), part 1, "Eve of War," 17.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, "Chambersburg," 437, 439.

by many as somehow lesser soldiers and lesser men than the volunteers of the early years—the conscripts, the draftees, and the substitutes; the bounty men who chased the dollars.<sup>40</sup> Yet while the draft continued, men of the Northern states continued to volunteer and the young men of Franklin County continued to enlist. From 1863 onwards, the recruits enlisted for three-years, or until the end of the war. In this second stage of the war, only 105 white youths from Franklin County enlisted, less than half of the number from the first years. Only 18 joined in 1863, 69 in 1864, and 18 in 1865. Forty-three of these recruits were underage.

In the second half of the war approximately 30 percent of the recruits from the youth cohort had fathers or brothers in military service, which was higher than for the earlier enlistees. Some of this increase may be explained by the fact that most of the youngest soldiers still lived in the family home, so older brothers who still lived at home at the time of the 1860 census can be traced. Boys who had been simply too young and too small at age eleven or twelve or thirteen to volunteer with older brothers were now more able, physically at least, to follow them into the ranks. Thirty-nine percent of underage soldiers joined siblings in the army. Jeremiah Bowman, too young in 1862 to join with his older brothers George, John, and Calvin, was still legally too young at fifteen when he enlisted in 1864; Benjamin Huber, aged seventeen in 1865, followed his brother Abraham who volunteered in 1861.<sup>41</sup>

The sentiments that saw brothers enlisting together continued, with several sets of brothers enlisting and serving together. John and Martin Lutz enlisted together after the destruction of Chambersburg. They were the oldest sons of a wealthy farmer from Greene, and both boys worked as farmhands. Twenty-year-old John and nineteen-year-old Martin enlisted together in August 1864 in Company G, Two Hundredth Pennsylvania Infantry. John suffered gunshot wounds to his left hand and right leg and, in March 1865, was captured at Fort Steadman. He mustered out in May 1865. There is no record of Martin's fate.<sup>42</sup>

For some young men, the bounties were little incentive to enlist. Franklin County was growing more prosperous. The local paper reported

<sup>40</sup> Adam I. P. Smith, *The American Civil War* (New York, 2007), 147; James I. Robertson, *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia, SC, 1988), 37.

<sup>41</sup> 1860 Census, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers' Records, Valley of the Shadow.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

that “trade has an impetus hitherto unknown within the experience of the present active men,” and farmers “had a succession of bountiful harvests” that brought good prices.<sup>43</sup> Local wages were high and jobs were plentiful. Joseph Upperman, a twenty-two-year-old farmhand from Letterkenny, was one of the reluctant soldiers. Joseph enlisted in early 1865, in the 103rd Pennsylvania Infantry. He delayed enlistment until the final few months of the war: perhaps the threat of the draft was too close, perhaps community pressure finally forced him to enlist, or perhaps the bounties were simply too much to resist. Joseph Upperman was one of the oldest of the age cohort, and the oldest at enlistment. It is difficult to determine what set him apart from youths of the same age who enlisted in the early years at seventeen. Joseph was not the only reluctant soldier: his older brother Jacob, who had recently joined the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry, was suspected of having “chopped off two fingers and horribly lacerated” his trigger finger in an act of self-mutilation to get a discharge from service.<sup>44</sup> Jacob’s damaged hand did not earn him his discharge, and he mustered out after the war. Joseph mustered out in June 1865, having served for three months and seen no active duty. In 1890 he received a pension. The enthusiasm or sense of duty and service that sent many family groups into the army was not shared by all. It is difficult to determine how many other youths were reluctant to enlist, but it is likely that the Upperman brothers were not alone.

No doubt peer pressure among adolescents was in effect to a degree, but with so many boys from relatively small communities enlisting at one time, it was unavoidable that they would enlist with friends and neighbors, sometimes by accident rather than design. Less than a third of early recruits from the youth cohort and only 17 percent of those youth who enlisted after 1863 had neighbors in service. Just as peer pressure was not necessarily an enlistment trigger in the early years it was not an indicator for the second stage. Pressure to enlist most likely came from the community and the press, who tried to encourage, goad, and shame the young men of Franklin County to enlist.

More of the later recruits (88 percent of underage and 79 percent of young legal recruits) had attended school in the census year, most likely because they were younger than the boys of 1861 and ’62. Fewer were in paid employment: more legal enlistees were employed, but very few

<sup>43</sup> *Franklin Repository*, Apr. 27, 1864.

<sup>44</sup> *Franklin Repository*, Mar. 30, 1864.

underage enlistees were employed, again because they were too young at the time of the census. More youths still lived in the parental home than recruits from the early years. It appears that age-dependent factors such as school attendance and residence in the parental home are not significant enlistment indicators.

While there are only slight differences in some variables between those young men who enlisted early and those who joined the war effort in later years, there are interesting differences in head-of-household occupation and household assets, which suggests a change in the social and economic status of the young recruits. There was a significant decline in the proportion of recruits from white-collar households, dropping from 15 percent in early years to 7 percent in the period 1863 to 1865. Proportionally fewer recruits from these households were underage, with 17 percent underage in 1861–1862 and 9 percent in the later years. The proportion of boys from laborers' households almost doubled, from 13 percent in 1861–1862 to 24 percent in 1863–1865, and proportionally more of the later group were underage. The percentage of youths from farming households fell marginally, from 36 percent to 35 percent: as more hired farmhands enlisted, farmers may have been unwilling to send their sons to war in times of good harvests and a labor shortage. The overall number of enlistees from tradesmen's households also fell slightly, from 30 to 28 percent, although in 1863–1865 almost one-third of legal enlistees were sons of tradesmen. The proportion of underage recruits who were tradesmen's sons fell from 31 percent to 21 percent. The overall percentage of youths from households where the head was unemployed remained steady at 6 percent, but the distribution changed markedly: in the early years 6 percent of both underage and legal enlistees were from these households, while in 1863–1865 the proportion of underage recruits from households where the head was not employed doubled to 12 percent and for legal enlistees fell to 2 percent.

The distribution of household assets was quite broad, but there was a distinct downward trend across most value categories that echoes the downward shift in occupational status. The proportion of boys from households with assets valued between \$200 and \$499 rose significantly, from 13 percent to 25 percent, while the percentage from households with assets valued between \$1,000 and \$1,999 rose marginally. The proportion of those with assets valued between \$500 and \$999 and of those with more than \$2,000 decreased. The pattern of household asset value among

later recruits confirms suggestions that the war continued to be fought by sons of working men.

The change in the objective of the war, from restoration of the Union to emancipation and abolition of slavery, fueled much of the political debate in the county, and indeed across the North. Some townships that had demonstrated strong Republican affiliation in the 1860 presidential election, such as Greene, near Chambersburg, and Metal on the western county line, sent proportionately more young men, although this was not the case for all Republican areas. The nonagricultural areas of Greencastle, the South Ward of Chambersburg, and the Borough of Chambersburg all sent considerably fewer youths than in the early years. Surprisingly, the Democratic stronghold in the north of the county, Fannett, sent proportionately more than most Republican townships. It may be that in the staunchly Democratic townships of Lurgan in the northeast and Fannett in the north, higher enlistment was due in part to the rush to fill quotas before the sting of the draft. In areas of lower farm value, the bounties may have been an attractive inducement. It is difficult to identify clear political triggers, however, as the 1862 local and state elections saw a marked swing to the Democrats. It does appear that party political issues played a less significant role than in the first part of the war.

Debate continued in the local press regarding the conduct of the war and the changing objectives of the government: although Franklin County was not a hotbed of Copperhead (antiwar Democratic) activism, four of its six neighboring counties were centers of strong antiwar sentiment, and it was inevitable that Copperhead sentiments would flow into Franklin County.<sup>45</sup> There was also an increasing disengagement from the war by the very rich and the very poor, and this was reflected in a downward shift in the social status of recruits. More middle-class and white-collar families became reluctant to send their sons and more youths from working-class and laboring households enlisted. The war had dragged on much longer than anyone had expected, Union victory was not imminent, and enlistment was being shaped by more than patriotic ideals.

It is possible that youths from economically marginal circumstances enlisted in response to increasing bounties offered by the federal government and bolstered by state and local authorities. By January 1864, enlist-

<sup>45</sup> Arnold M. Shankman, *The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement, 1861–1865* (London, 1980), 19n4.



ment bounties were as high as three hundred dollars from federal sources, with an extra two hundred dollars from the Borough of Chambersburg.<sup>46</sup> Local papers stressed the importance of enlisting in Franklin County, as chasing higher bounties elsewhere increased the burden of quotas on fewer men and excluded families from the support of local volunteer benefit funds.<sup>47</sup>

The timing of enlistments in 1863 and 1864 suggests that the Confederate invasions were significant triggers, as all of the recruits of 1863 enlisted after Lee's invasion and the Gettysburg campaign. The areas most affected by the 1863 invasion, and which took the brunt of massive stock and property losses, however, appeared to initially send fewer young men to be soldiers, with only one youth from Chambersburg and one from Mercersburg enlisting.

The recruits of 1864 were subject to two major triggers. The increased federal bounty was offered to those who enlisted between October 23, 1863, and April 1, 1864, after which it dropped back to one hundred dollars. In Franklin County, thirty-six youths enlisted in the first three months of the year: eighteen were underage and nineteen were from households with assets valued at less than five hundred dollars. Ten of the boys were sons of laborers and ten were farmers' sons. Only three were living away from the parental home in 1860. The youths were responding more to the attraction of the bounties than to fear of conscription, as the draft called for men aged between twenty and forty-five and the majority of youths in the cohort examined were too young to be conscripted. By April 15, the recruitment push boosted by increased bounties had almost filled enlistment quotas in Greencastle, both boroughs of Chambersburg, and Mercersburg, all of which had suffered losses in Lee's invasion.<sup>48</sup>

After the destruction of Chambersburg, the borough requested an exemption from the upcoming draft, and on September 6, 1864, the request was granted "by reason of the calamity suffered by the citizens of Chambersburg from the enemy."<sup>49</sup> Despite this, enlistment increased in and around Chambersburg; more youths enlisted after the destruction of the town than in the first half of the year, with over forty boys from the

<sup>46</sup> Franklin County: "General Information for Soldiers and their Heirs, Entitled to Old Bounty," Jan. 18, 1870, Valley of the Shadow, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/mem/FM0064>; *Valley Spirit*, Jan. 13, 1864.

<sup>47</sup> *Franklin Repository*, Feb. 17, 1864.

<sup>48</sup> *Valley Spirit*, May 4, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> *Official Records*, ser. 3, 4:642, 698.

studied cohort enlisting in just six weeks. Fourteen recruits were underage, and most came from the townships on the eastern side of the county, which felt the force of the invasion.

Many of the boys enlisting in 1864 and 1865 were considerably younger than the legal age: approximately 19 percent of the recruits from 1863 to 1865 were aged twelve years or younger in 1860. The youngest, William Gruber, who was nine at the time of census, enlisted at the age of thirteen in January 1864. William was the second son of a poor laborer from the borough of Orrstown, and he enlisted in the 185th Regiment, 22nd Pennsylvania Cavalry as a bugler, claiming to be eighteen.<sup>50</sup> He did not follow family members or immediate neighbors. He might have just been chasing adventure or the increased bounties.

All those who enlisted in 1865 did so over a four-week period from mid-February to mid-March. The end of the war was imminent, and the bounties were still on offer, so for some youths, enlistment may have been opportunistic: there was little chance that the late enlistees would have to face any combat. For those looking for adventure, enlistment at this time offered a chance to be a part of something worthwhile without the extreme peril that earlier recruits faced. Eighteen boys enlisted in 1865, and only five were underage. All were from rural areas, and most were from the northern and central townships.

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Any discussion of youth enlistment in Franklin County—or indeed of any enlistment in the Union army in the later years of the war—needs to consider black military participation as both a discrete issue as well as an important part of the broader narrative. The texts that explore black military service mainly focus on the freedmen from the South and their transformation from slaves to Union soldiers and free men.<sup>51</sup> There is little or no discussion of African American youth enlistment in these texts. The presence of very young men in black regiments or as camp followers is acknowledged but—as in works on white soldiers—there is little specifically about youth or underage enlistment. Likewise, Dennis

<sup>50</sup> 1860 Census; Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Soldiers' Records, Valley of the Shadow.

<sup>51</sup> Martin H. Blatt, Thomas J. Brown, and Donald Yacovone, eds., *Hope and Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment* (Amherst, MA, 2000); Versalle F. Washington, *Eagles on Their Buttons: A Black Infantry Regiment in the Civil War* (Columbia, SC, 1999); Keith Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom* (Kent, OH, 2002).

Keesee's text on youth enlistment mentions the United States Colored Troops (USCT) only in the context of the white youths who became its officers and ignores the black youths who were enlisted in these regiments.<sup>52</sup> Just as white youths enlisted as Union soldiers, and found no favoritism because of their age, African American boys across the North enlisted in the regiments organized in Massachusetts in 1863 and in later USCT units raised in their home states.

At the beginning of the war African Americans were told that there was no place in the Union army for them, that they could not and would not fight, that it was a "white man's war," and that they were not wanted. In 1862, when President Lincoln called for three hundred thousand more men, they were again rebuffed.<sup>53</sup> In early 1863, as debate raged around the issue of black enlistment following President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts authorized the formation of black regiments.<sup>54</sup> These were not the first black units, as in the summer of 1862 African American troops were recruited in Union-occupied Kansas, South Carolina, and Louisiana, but they were the first to be organized in Northern states.<sup>55</sup> After the successful muster of the Massachusetts regiments, the Bureau of Colored Troops was created in late May 1863, placing the organization and recruitment of black regiments under federal authority, and on June 30 the First Regiment, United States Colored Troops (USCT) was mustered in at Washington, DC.<sup>56</sup> By the end of the war over 160 regiments had been organized, including twelve heavy and ten light artillery batteries and seven cavalry regiments.<sup>57</sup>

The young black men who enlisted did so under different circumstances, different terms, and with different expectations than their white counterparts. They were not permitted to enlist until early 1863, and even then their ability as fighters and soldiers was openly questioned. They served in segregated regiments, were commanded by white officers, and were unable to become officers themselves.

<sup>52</sup> Dennis M. Keesee, *Too Young to Die: Boy Soldiers of the Union Army* (Huntington, WV, 2001), 128, 175, 139.

<sup>53</sup> Hondon B. Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC, 1988), ix, 2, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, 365.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> *Official Records*, ser. 3, 5:255; Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers*, x.

<sup>57</sup> Noah Andre Trudeau, "Proven Themselves in Every Respect to Be Men: Black Cavalry in the Civil War," in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, ed. John David Smith (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 277.

Franklin County had a prewar African American population of 1,800, the fifth highest in Pennsylvania, and 80 percent of the county's black residents had been born in the county.<sup>58</sup> Nearly 440 lived in the South Ward of Chambersburg and about 330 lived in Montgomery, while nearly 100 lived in Mercersburg, an important point on the Underground Railroad.<sup>59</sup> African American men in Pennsylvania had been disenfranchised in 1838 by court ruling and by a revision of the state constitution, but the areas in which they lived demonstrated very strong support among the white population for the Republicans in the 1860 election.<sup>60</sup> It is open to speculation, however, as to whether they settled in areas that were sympathetic to antislavery or whether their presence encouraged Republican and abolitionist principles.

A recruiting officer from the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry visited Franklin County in early 1863 but, according to the local Democratic newspaper, "did not obtain a single recruit."<sup>61</sup> The paper disparaged the local black population as unwilling and unfit to fight, claiming "they will have to be drafted, if obtained at all."<sup>62</sup> Less than a month later, in April 1863, the same newspaper reported that "some forty or fifty black recruits for the Massachusetts regiments left . . . for Boston"; while the editors were "only too glad to get rid of these worthless negroes," they protested the notion that the recruits would be credited to Massachusetts quotas while "free white male citizens" would be forced to fill local quotas.<sup>63</sup>

In the spring of 1863, Forty-five men from the county joined the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry, with thirty-three from Mercersburg alone, and thirteen joined the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Infantry. Eleven more men who were born in Franklin County also enlisted, giving the county one of the highest per capita enlistment rates for the new regiments.<sup>64</sup> This contrasts starkly with the slow initial enlistments for white soldiers at the start of the war.

The act of volunteering—stepping forward to accept one's duty to defend community and country—was long considered a measure of man-

<sup>58</sup> *1860 Census*.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.; Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, 14–15.

<sup>60</sup> *Valley Spirit*, Nov. 14, 1860.

<sup>61</sup> *Valley Spirit*, Mar. 25, 1863.

<sup>62</sup> *Valley Spirit*, Mar. 18, 1863.

<sup>63</sup> *Valley Spirit*, Apr. 29, 1863.

<sup>64</sup> Edwin S. Redkey, "Brave Black Volunteers: A Profile of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment," in *Hope and Glory*, 27; Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, 367.

hood.<sup>65</sup> The roles of soldier and citizen were tightly interwoven, yet they were explicitly denied to African Americans by federal legislation of 1792 restricting militia service exclusively to white men.<sup>66</sup> Military service was long regarded as a coming-of-age experience for white youths, but for black soldiers it was an opportunity to be considered men deserving of citizenship and equality in the eyes of the white population. For African American communities, the enlistment of so many of their sons was a declaration that, although they were seen as separate from the white population, they were an important part of the fabric of Franklin County and were prepared to assume the same responsibilities as their white neighbors for the defense of their county and country.

It is difficult to apply the same criteria as for white soldiers when trying to identify the young black men from Franklin County who enlisted. The first African American regiments were credited to Massachusetts simply because black soldiers were unable to enlist at home. For this study, those black recruits who claimed Franklin County as their birthplace or as their residence at enlistment and who can be located in the county in the 1860 federal census, are included, irrespective of the place of enlistment. There were 188 black boys aged ten to seventeen recorded as residents in the 1860 census, and thirty-one became soldiers. Twenty-two youths, including eight who were underage, enlisted in 1863, with most rushing to join the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, suggesting that had they been permitted, they may have enlisted sooner.<sup>67</sup> Like black soldiers across the North, the African American youths of Franklin County enlisted at a proportionately higher rate than the white youths, with over 16 percent of the black age cohort enlisting compared to 9 percent of the white age cohort. Because only thirty-one recruits can be identified with some degree of confidence, definite conclusions are difficult, though some interesting insights about the characteristics of the youngest USCT from Franklin County can be gleaned.

Of the recruits identified, thirteen (42 percent) were underage at the time of enlistment and eighteen (58 percent) were of legal age: the youngest was twelve, but claimed to be seventeen at enlistment in 1864,

<sup>65</sup> Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York, 1993), 12.

<sup>66</sup> Ira Berlin, Joseph Patrick Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War* (New York, 1998), 5.

<sup>67</sup> Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops, Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917, National Archives, Washington, DC, microfilm series M1898 (hereafter USCT Records).

and the oldest was twenty. The average age was 17.4 years, which was older than the mean age for the white cohort, but that is due in part to later enlistment. At least three of the black enlistees were among the very youngest of all soldiers from Franklin County (in the 1860 census David Little was only eight, Joseph Christy was nine, and Shadrack Campbell was ten).

Recruitment officials who had turned a blind eye to white underage recruits were often even less scrupulous when enlisting African Americans, as long as they were physically fit and close to minimum height. Seven enlistees were openly underage and only one was a musician. Isaac Williams was fifteen but claimed to be seventeen in 1864, and as a black musician in the Twenty-Fifth USCT he had to pay for the numbers and letters for his bugle, unlike white musicians.<sup>68</sup>

Very few recruits had immediate neighbors in military service: rather than follow neighbors, the nature of black communities meant that extended family groups and church congregations enlisted together. While not all enlistment documents and muster rolls are complete, it is interesting to note that all of the recruits were under twenty-one, and therefore legally minors, at enlistment, but only one, eighteen-year-old John Campbell, had written parental permission.<sup>69</sup> Although a similar consent form cannot be located for his younger brother, Shadrack Campbell, who enlisted in 1865, John's parents' consent does suggest that the decision of the Campbell brothers to enlist was not opportunistic, but well considered and deliberate. At the time of John's enlistment, verbal parental consent was adequate, so written permission indicates family endorsement. It does not appear that other Campbell brothers enlisted, however, which suggests that although there was family endorsement of John's and Shadrack's enlistments, the decision to volunteer was an individual one.

John and Shadrack Campbell were the fifth and seventh sons of William Campbell, a forgerman from Quincy, a rural township with a black population of only forty-three. The Campbell family was one of only two black families to own real estate in Quincy, and they had the highest total asset value at \$920.<sup>70</sup> John enlisted in the Twenty-Fifth USCT for three years in January 1864 and served for a time as a clerk in

<sup>68</sup> USCT Records, M1823, roll 97.

<sup>69</sup> USCT Records, M1823, roll 98.

<sup>70</sup> *1860 Census*.

the office of the acting assistant adjutant general until he mustered out in December 1865.<sup>71</sup> Shadrack joined in February 1865, aged fifteen, as a substitute for a white draftee. He was tall at five feet eight inches and most likely worked as a laborer or a forge hand with his father, so would have been physically fit. Shadrack was assigned to the Second USCT Cavalry until he mustered out in February 1866.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the Campbell brothers, there were five other sets of brothers who enlisted, and another five recruits had older brothers in service, and as was the case for white enlistees, the younger siblings often enlisted first. The enlistment of brothers suggests that the decision to volunteer, in many cases, may have been a family decision and that families who made the commitment to participate were prepared to lose more than one son. The Krunkleton family of Mercersburg sent four sons to enlist in the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry: two older sons, William and Wesley, who had left home; Cyrus, age nineteen; and James, age seventeen. On July 16, 1863, just two months after enlistment, at James Island, South Carolina, Wesley, William, and James were wounded, and Cyrus was killed in action.<sup>73</sup> Their youngest brother, fifteen-year-old Zacharias, enlisted in early 1864 in the Twenty-Fifth USCT.<sup>74</sup>

The Watson brothers, eighteen-year-old Hezekiah and twenty-year-old Jacob, were from Mercersburg, and both were employed. Hezekiah was a quarryman, and Jacob worked with his father as a butcher. They still lived at home with their parents in 1860, and although their father owned assets worth a modest six hundred dollars, he was one of only five black men to own real estate in Mercersburg, and he was the wealthiest.<sup>75</sup> Hezekiah and Jacob enlisted within a few weeks of each other in early 1863, joining the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, and both were promoted, Jacob to sergeant and Hezekiah to corporal. The brothers both served with distinction, and Hezekiah was wounded at Fort Wagner in South Carolina in July 1863. Fortunately both survived the war, and after mustering out in 1865 they returned to Franklin County.<sup>76</sup> Their older brother, Parker, enlisted in September 1864 in the 127th USCT.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>71</sup> USCT Records, M1823, roll 98.

<sup>72</sup> USCT Records, M1817, roll 19.

<sup>73</sup> USCT Records, M1898, roll 10; Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, 367.

<sup>74</sup> USCT Records, M1823, roll 85.

<sup>75</sup> *1860 Census*.

<sup>76</sup> *1860 Census*; USCT Records, M1898, rolls 17, 20.

<sup>77</sup> USCT Records, M589, roll 92.

William Little of the South Ward of Chambersburg was the oldest son of a laborer of modest means who owned real estate valued at three hundred dollars.<sup>78</sup> Sixteen-year-old William enlisted in the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts in late March 1863, claiming to be twenty. He had worked as a laborer and may have passed for being older. After enlistment he was quickly promoted to corporal and then to sergeant two months later, but he was reduced in rank for incompetency a year later.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps he was just too young to be a sergeant in a fighting regiment in the Union army in wartime. His younger brother David, aged twelve, enlisted in the Forty-Fifth USCT in 1864, claiming to be seventeen. Neither of the boys attended school, but both were literate. Both survived the war.<sup>80</sup>

African American children in Franklin County had low school attendance rates—42 percent of black children attended school in 1860 compared to 79 percent of white children—and this was reflected in school attendance of the recruits. Only 31 percent of underage and 44 percent of legal enlistees in the age cohort were in school in 1860. Two-thirds of legal enlistees were employed, while only three of the underage recruits were in paid employment. Some of the legal recruits who were employed also attended school for at least part of the year.

Although nearly 85 percent of young black recruits were from households with assets valued at less than one hundred thousand dollars, twenty boys came from households that owned real estate and sixteen were sons of those households rather than employees. Though not rich, these were well-established, settled families. No recruit came from a household that had no assets. These facts suggests that, just as most white enlistees did not come from the poorest households, the young black men who responded came from relatively comfortable families; it was not necessarily the “poor and ragged” recruits who lined up to enlist.<sup>81</sup> Similar findings from Ohio, where other black regiments were organized, indicate that Northern black recruits were generally literate, employed, and from families that were well established in their communities.<sup>82</sup>

The employment opportunities for black men in Franklin County, like in most other counties in the North, were limited in general to low-

<sup>78</sup> 1860 Census.

<sup>79</sup> USCT Records, M1898, roll 11.

<sup>80</sup> 1860 Census; UCST Records, M589, roll 54..

<sup>81</sup> John David Smith, “Let Us All Be Grateful That We Have Colored Troops That Will Fight,” in *Black Soldiers in Blue*, 29.

<sup>82</sup> Washington, *Eagles on Their Buttons*, 14.



status, low-paid jobs such as day laborer, or to very physically demanding and dirty trades such as butchering or blacksmithing. This reality is reflected in head-of-household occupations: no recruits came from white-collar households.

Despite there being only one farmer's son, most of the enlistees were from rural areas, as most of the African American population lived on the outskirts of towns; there were only four from the larger centers of Greencastle and the South Ward of Chambersburg. Five were from Montgomery and seven came from Mercersburg. While white enlistment demonstrated a downward shift in economic status in the latter part of the war, there does not appear to be a similar downward shift for African American enlistees. However, this may be due to the small sample size.

Although all the Franklin recruits were born in Pennsylvania, ten (32 percent) had at least one parent whose birthplace was in a slave state. The connection to slavery only a generation removed, the closeness to the Mason-Dixon Line (only five miles from Greencastle), and the constant flow of fugitive slaves through the county all served as reminders that freedom could not be taken for granted.

For those who enlisted after the Confederate invasion of the county, their decisions may have been more complex. While their idealism may not have diminished, it may have been tempered by awareness of the conditions under which the USCT served, with poor supplies and the possibly fatal consequences of capture. They were also aware of the real risks of war. To enlist also meant leaving families with fewer resources with which to endure subsequent invasions.

Later enlistees also had the opportunity to enlist closer to home: nine of the cohort enlisted in the USCT in Chambersburg, which may indicate opportunistic enlistment. Some of the younger enlistees who were entering the workforce may have faced competition for the lower-paid menial jobs from former slaves who were pouring into the North, and the bounty offered to all enlistees may have been tempting to those from poorer households. Four of the recruits, including two of the youngest enlistees—David Little and Shadrack Campbell—were substitutes for white draftees.

By the end of the war, the young USCT soldiers from Franklin County had acquitted themselves well, although some paid the ultimate price. Jacob Slider, aged seventeen, died from wounds received at New Market Heights in Virginia, and Stanley Johnson died from wounds at

Morris Island in South Carolina. Eighteen-year-old Newman Raimer died from disease at Morris Island, and Cyrus Krunkleton was killed in action at James Island, South Carolina. Thomas Phoenix, aged twenty, received a shell wound in the back at Petersburg and was admitted to the Colored Troops Hospital at City Point, Virginia. The hospital was taken by Confederates, and there is no further record of Thomas.<sup>83</sup> William Christy was first reported "wounded and missing since the battle at Olustee, Florida, February 20, 1864," and it was later noted that he was "supposed to have died in hands of enemy."<sup>84</sup>

Seven of the African American soldiers were wounded, and all of those who died or were wounded enlisted in 1863. Of the thirteen who enlisted in the Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts regiments in early 1863, four died and six sustained wounds, resulting in an extremely high casualty rate of 77 percent. As these two regiments were the first to be organized in the North, much was expected of them, and they were sent into sometimes unwinnable situations to prove that African American soldiers could, and would, fight. They bore the brunt of some of the most ferocious Confederate fighting and so suffered high casualties. None of the soldiers who enlisted in 1864 and 1865 were casualties, possibly because of their shorter time in military service, or possibly because they were in regiments that were assigned more fatigue duty, and so faced less combat. These regiments were also part of the occupation troops stationed in the Southern states after the end of the war, and although they faced other perils, they were not in combat.

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From across Franklin County nearly three thousand men, black and white, enlisted over the course of the war. Overall, 381 youths enlisted, with 350 white and 31 black youths. Approximately 9 percent of the white and 16 percent of the black youth cohorts enlisted. Over the course of the war 203 youths enlisted legally and 178 were underage when they volunteered; only 20 percent of underage enlistees declared their true age. These figures suggests that estimates in previous studies that rely on soldiers' self-reported information have grossly underestimated the true number of underage soldiers in the Union army.

<sup>83</sup> USCT Records, M1823, roll 51.

<sup>84</sup> USCT Records, M1898, roll 3.

Enlistment was linked to political affiliation, with townships that voted for the Republicans in the 1860 election sending more sons. However, areas that had supported the Democrats also sent significant numbers. In all, the underage and legal young soldiers of the first stage of enlistment were drawn from the broad middle of Franklin County society, perhaps especially its Republican side.

In the second stage, from 1863 to 1865, the war became more brutal and more dangerous, and its impact was felt directly in Franklin County with the Confederate invasion in June 1863 and the razing of Chambersburg in late 1864. There were fewer enlistments. Of the 106 recruits, 10 enlisted in 1863, 78 in 1864 in response to a recruitment drive and increased bounties, and 18 in 1865. Forty-three were underage, and 63 enlisted legally.

As fewer white young men enlisted, there was a downward drift in head-of-household occupation and household asset value. The most notable shift was evident in the enlistment of sons of white-collar workers, which dropped from 15 percent to 7 percent of the cohort from the first to second stage of enlistment. There was an increasing disengagement of the very rich and the very poor, and middle-class and white-collar households seemed to have become increasingly reluctant to allow their sons to go to war. It is likely that the downward occupational and economic drift in enlistment trends was in part a result of the changing nature of the war, though the precise balance between different factors is difficult to ascertain.

The study identified thirty-one young African American men in the age cohort who enlisted, with thirteen (42 percent) underage and eighteen (58 percent) legal enlistees. Seven recruits were openly underage. These young black men enlisted at a higher rate than did white youth, and they began to volunteer as soon as they were able to in early 1863. All were freeborn, and all were born in Pennsylvania.

There were few differences between underage and legal black enlistees. Although 85 percent of enlistees were from households with assets valued at less than one thousand dollars, twenty (65 percent) were from households that owned some real estate. All of the enlistees were from households that owned some assets; they were not wealthy and in comparison with white households they were poor, but these were settled and established families of some substance in their communities. The downward social and occupational drift evident in white enlistment in the second

stage of the war was not mirrored in African American enlistment.

Family enlistment was a significant factor for African American troops as well as white troops; 54 percent of underage and 61 percent of legal black enlistees had brothers or fathers volunteering. The decision to volunteer was often a family decision, and at a time when many white families were keeping their sons at home, the families at the heart of African American communities were willing to send and potentially lose their sons.

The invasion of Franklin County in 1863 had an ambivalent influence on white enlistment, although for the black community it gave impetus to enlistment. It offered a glimpse of what a Confederate victory would mean to the free black communities. The African American enlistees had a level of political awareness, and they continued to enlist despite initial inequality and poor conditions.

The young soldiers from Franklin County were politically aware, and their enlistment was in some sense an expression of that political awareness. They acted with agency, albeit limited by deference to parental and military authority. They were not sent to war, rather they were allowed to go; it was their decision to enlist, and most went with parental knowledge, if not approval. Their story gives an insight into the homes from which they came—in Franklin County these were from the broad, middle section of the community. Undoubtedly some were pushed into service by poverty and limited aspirations. Enlistees came from all social and economic groups, and from industrial and rural regions: they were pulled into the army by local community expectations, both explicit and implicit, and by their own understanding of what was required to be a man.

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