
Determining attitudes of a selected group or population is one of the most disconcerting chores that historians and social scientists attempt to do. The North-South antebellum dichotomy and the Civil War era have been areas of considerable study. Quotations from documents are often used to determine "attitudes," even though a sample is small, elitist, and impressionistic. Now, Professor Michael Barton (Penn State, Capitol Campus) has written the first broad-based study of the "Character of Civil War Soldiers" in which "new social science" methodologies are utilized.

Chapter 1 is a survey of the historiography of Northern and Southern character differences. Then, in three brief chapters, Barton uses the content-analysis technique, with computer programs, to study the real character of Civil War soldiers from 185 diaries and 316 letter collections. Chapter 2, "The Values of Civil War Soldiers," is an analysis of one hundred diaries in which sixteen core values provide clues to Northern and Southern officers' and enlisted men's behavior. First, he counted the number of times that these values were used in the sample; then, he used statistical measurements (the sign test, Chi square, and Pearson's rank correlation) to measure the relationships. He concluded that: (1) "the ideological values of Freedom, Equality, Individualism, and Democracy were less often expressed than the more prosaic values of Moralism, Progress, Religion, Achievement, and Patriotism"; (2) Southerners and Northerners shared the same core value system; and (3) Southern officers expressed "those core values more frequently, and Northern enlisted men less frequently" (p. 33).

In Chapter 3, "The Character of Civil War Soldiers," Barton used eleven selected character values from a contemporary dictionary as a means of comparison. He determined that in four values (moral, kind, dutiful, brave), the Southern officers "dominated the enlisted Northerner," and, in one value, skillfulness, "Southern officers dominated both enlisted Northerners and Northern officers" (p. 37). He then chose five key character terms (kind, noble, gentleman, brave, gallant) and, after searching two hundred letter collections, found that Southern officers used these terms most often and Northern enlisted men least often, and that officers were more likely to use these "char-
acter terms” in their letters than in their diaries (p. 43).

Ten variables of writing style (average number of words, syllables, negative words, and so forth) were used in Chapter 4, “The Style of Character.” The sample consisted of 185 diaries and 107 letter collections. The analysis indicated that: (1) Northerners were more methodical; (2) officers were more expressive and verbose; and (3) Southern officers were the most verbose and Northern enlisted men were the least (p. 53). Chapter 5, “The Experience of Character,” is a study (nonquantitative) of thirty Southern letters of condolence. In these, Barton determines that: (1) self-control was stressed; (2) the soldiers’ suffering was minimized; and (3) the character and sociability of the deceased was carefully noted.

In the final chapter, “The Culture and Personality of Character,” he uses cross-cultural models and *argumenta* to develop an hypothesis concerning how the “soldier became ‘goodmen’” (p. 67). Barton suggests that in the North the culture (including child-rearing attitudes) caused many to view the rebellion as “defiance of authority and proper governance” — typical Victorian ideals (p. 71). One had to control one’s passions, particularly sexual passions, and, above all, men had to be “gentlemen.” However, in the South, the presence of slavery forced the Southerner to be more “intensely controlled, and more intensely needing control” (p. 79). He concludes by noting that “Northerners and Southerners differed from one another [because] they probably chose to” (p. 80).

This thin volume belies the enormousness of the project. It could not have been accomplished without the use of computer strategies. Appendices I and II, “Characteristics of the Sample,” and “Method of Content Analysis,” should be read *first* in order to understand the sampling process, procedure, and methodology. Unfortunately, the statistical measurements are not explained in laymen’s terms. In addition, when one attempts to measure values, one must control the group that determines what the values are (those who do the counting) over time. In this project, too many people made these judgments over too long a time period.

Nonetheless, this monograph does reinforce the notion that the two sections were remarkably similar and that their character was rather predictable. There is a twenty-page “List of Sources,” which is a bibliography of the published diaries and letter collections.

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