*“Whenever the Yankees were gone, I was a confederate”: Loyalty and dissent in Civil War era Rapides Parish, Louisiana*

On April 8, 1864, in the midst of the Union’s Red River expedition, the New Orleans *True Delta* estimated that “several hundred” free residents of Rapides Parish, Louisiana had signed oaths promising future loyalty to the United States. U.S. military records demonstrate that over 330 free residents of Rapides had taken loyalty oaths by that date. Following military engagements at Mansfield on April 8 and Pleasant Hill the next day, the Union campaign, intended to capture Shreveport and enter Texas, soon ended in debacle. Union forces only held Alexandria, the parish seat of Rapides, from March 15 until May 13, 1864, yet at least 907 parish residents, of whom 664 were men, swore oaths, a number that amounted to fifty-six percent of the parish’s voters in the January 1861 election of delegates to the state Secession Convention. The oath swearing marked a turnaround in the professed allegiances of many Rapides residents, a parish that had voted overwhelmingly for secessionist delegate candidates in January 1861. Among the oath-takers were members of the local secessionist elite, including Lewis E. Texada and John K. Elgee, two of the four men who had represented Rapides at Louisiana’s January 1861 Secession Convention.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The widespread oath-taking in Rapides, which occurred *after* several Unionists had already been compelled to leave the parish, embarrassed local resident Thomas O. Moore, a sugar planter who had been elected governor in 1859. He wrote to a local planter in June 1864, “Oh God! how I am grieved at the conduct of the citizens of Rapides” in “taking the oath.” Moore denied that the motive in taking the oath was “disloyalty.” Instead, “alarm & the conclusion that the enemy would continue to occupy the country induced them [Rapides residents] to do so.” Yet “if protection of person was what was desired,” it would have been easier for these citizens to reach the lines of Confederate General Richard Taylor than “the Yankee Provost Marshal.” Though Benjamin Butler had demanded oath signing during his control of New Orleans, the extent of oath taking in Rapides in so short a time unsettled Moore. [[2]](#footnote-2)

This article examines the geographical, age, occupational, and gender breakdown of civilian oath-takers during the Union army’s brief occupation of Alexandria in 1864, explores the motivations of civilian oath takers, and analyzes conditions in Rapides Parish before, during, and immediately after the war. In doing so, it engages debates over the practical value of loyalty oaths as a measure of loyalty, the extent of southern Unionism, the vitality of Confederate nationalism, and the inability of the Republican Party to attract meaningful levels of white support in the immediate postwar period. The party’s continued failure to attract white voters contributed to the ultimate collapse of Reconstruction.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Post-war Republicans ostensibly associated party loyalty with wartime loyalty to the Union, while historians have observed that post-war white Republicans were most often wartime Unionists. One north-central Louisiana Unionist later claimed that Republicanism “was a kind of transition from being a Union man. I regarded the republican party all along as being the Union party.” In the South, the most committed wartime Unionists would refuse to aid Confederate authorities, and even actively support the Union cause, militarily or otherwise. While some Unionists in central Louisiana, notably the future governor James Madison Wells, met this high bar of Unionism, most self-consciously Unionist southerners accommodated to some extent with Confederate authorities. As historian Robert Tracy McKenzie observed in his study of Civil War era Knoxville, Tennessee, local Unionists “largely acquiesced to Confederate rule and exhibited a ‘Unionism’ characterized primarily by ‘prudent silence,’ ‘strict neutrality,’ and a willingness to make money while awaiting Federal deliverance.” By the time the Union army occupied Rapides Parish, very briefly in May 1863, and for two months in 1864, the Union was fighting an emancipationist war. With Lincoln’s lenient December 1863 terms for reunion, southern “Unionism” needed only entail acquiescence with the end of slavery, and support for restoring the Union. Yet despite having a substantial white “Unionist” population (as defined by oath taking), whites in Rapides Parish exhibited minimal support for postwar Republican candidates. As an approximate gauge of Republican Party support, only 19 Rapides whites voted to ratify the new state constitution in April 1868, while 941 opposed it.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Studies of the Civil War South have generally tied considerations of wartime loyalties to discussions of the strength or weakness of Confederate nationalism. Recently, historian Jarret Ruminski has gone beyond these “strong” or “weak” binaries. As his study of contraband trading in Mississippi reveals, many white Mississippians considered themselves loyal Confederates, even as they traded across Union lines, an act many other Confederates considered treasonous. The oath-taking in Alexandria demonstrates that, much like the contraband traders Ruminski examined, for most central Louisianans, professed Union loyalties seldom overrode existing Confederate allegiances.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In a pattern repeated by civilians across contested southern territories, for many Rapides residents the oath was an imperative of military occupation, rather than indicating opposition to the Confederacy. There were Unionists in central Louisiana in 1864, some of whom, motivated by opposition to Confederate wartime policies, swore oaths in Alexandria. Most white Rapides residents, however, many of whom were otherwise loyal Confederates (if not enthusiastic contributors to the war effort), routinely swore fealty to the Union in return for the protection of property or commercial gain during the parish’s military occupation. Willingness to take the Union oath rarely entailed meaningful Unionist loyalty, while the failed Red River campaign of 1864 ironically left Rapides Unionists in a weaker position than before the invasion. Even before Republicans’ ever closer postwar identification with black civil and political rights, the wartime legacy of pillaging, guerrilla violence, and the expulsion or murder of local Unionists made Rapides Parish unpromising territory for Republicans hoping to attract white southern support.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Rapides Parish, whose name derived from the rapids located just above the parish seat of Alexandria on the Red River, was formerly a French and then Spanish post (as “Post de Rapides” and “El Rapido,” respectively). Although there were influential families of Francophone and Spanish descent, the culture was predominantly Anglo, with the major newspapers publishing overwhelmingly in English. Its land comprised part of the alluvial valley of the Red River, well suited to cotton and sugar production, with the remainder being pine hills and pine flats. In 1860, over fifteen thousand of the parish’s twenty-five thousand inhabitants were enslaved blacks. This slave population was concentrated among large slaveholders, in the alluvial, plantation areas of the parish. There were 291 free people of color in the 1860 census. Although some ten percent of the heads of household in Alexandria were of foreign birth, the parish as a whole, where seven percent of free residents were foreign-born differed little in terms of nativity from other country parishes. In its politics, Rapides was slightly more Democratic than Louisiana as a whole, and it gave a larger majority to John C. Breckinridge in the 1860 presidential election than the statewide margin. Whereas only fifty-two percent of Louisianan voters statewide backed secessionist delegates in January 1861, such ambivalence was not evident from the voting in Rapides, where a secessionist won the only contested election by 772 votes to 416. It seems, however, that Rapides’ senatorial representative to the Secession Convention, John K. Elgee, was originally unsure whether to support secession. Several politicians with statewide influence resided in Rapides, not least the Confederate Governor Thomas O. Moore, and James Madison Wells, governor in the immediate post-war period.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Initially there was widespread support for secession and the war effort in Rapides. Twelve infantry and two cavalry companies volunteered from Rapides in 1861, and the parish Police Jury doubled its appropriation for war purposes that summer. Mirroring a trend across the state, citizens formed a vigilance committee, of which Lewis Texada was a member, to minimize expressions of disloyalty to the Confederate cause. It became increasingly difficult to express dissent: as James Madison Wells testified in the Southern Claim case of Thomas Woodard (a man who passed the Claims Commission’s high bar of proof for wartime loyalty), conversations between the two men were kept private, since “it was worth a man’s life to oppose the war in the manner in which we did in our conversations.” There were undoubtedly few prominent men in Rapides willing to undergo the social ostracism and danger to their persons that opposition to the Confederacy entailed.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Although Lincoln believed that Unionists formed a majority in all states except South Carolina, the notion of there being a large core of consistently loyal Unionist planters in the lower Mississippi Valley, as historians Lawrence Powell and Michael Wayne have contended, was “a myth created by the planters themselves after the fact and sustained by Northern officials for purposes of their own.” James Madison Wells, a Rapides planter and post-war Republican governor whose wartime loyalties were as unimpeachable as those of any planter in the region, later contended that “there were not during the war, ten loyal slave holders within the limits of the Parish of Rapides.” Before the arrival of Union forces, there was no substantial group of Unionist planters in Rapides.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Though numerically insignificant, there were conscientious objectors in Rapides. One conscientious objector, Antal Vallas, was a Hungarian-born clergyman and mathematics professor at the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, located across the river from Alexandria. Upon coming to teach at the Seminary from its opening in January 1860, he opposed the Board of Supervisors’ efforts to turn the school into a military academy. Following the Louisiana legislature’s stipulation that professors be assigned military commissions for their command over cadets, Vallas refused a commission and opposed wearing military uniform. He subsequently declined service in the Confederate army, signed the amnesty oath in 1864 when the Union army came to Alexandria, and left for New Orleans in April, where he presented a report on the history of the State Seminary to the Free State Constitutional Convention. Vallas’s opposition to military involvement stemmed from religious objections, as well as his stated Union sympathies. Another conscientious objector, James H.C. Barlow, a member of the Rapides bar, and a wartime candidate for District Judge in Confederate Louisiana, testified in 1869 that he was summoned for militia service but, “went to the post and told them that I would not use a gun…. For the reason that I was in favor of the United States and did not want to fight.” He was subsequently given work as a Confederate clerk.[[10]](#footnote-10)

As the war progressed, Rapides and the surrounding area were home to war-weariness, widespread draft evasion, and jayhawking. The term “jayhawker” was used regularly in Louisiana to refer to anti-Confederate guerrilla troops, a group that included Unionists, Confederate deserters, draft resisters, and other outlaws. In October 1863, Henry Watkins Allen, soon to be elected governor of Confederate Louisiana, wrote from Alexandria to the Secretary of War James A. Seddon that “the people are desponding—very desponding,” and that the surrounding country contained some 8,000 “deserters and runaway conscripts.” In February 1864, General Richard Taylor ordered a Battalion of Louisiana State Troops to “[scour] the parish of Rapides, north of Red river, in quest of jayhawkers and deserters” in light of recent “outrages” committed in that area, and to arrest any man who failed to provide “substantial proof of his loyalty to the Government.” In his closing address to the state General Assembly in January 1864, Governor Moore had noted the presence of “parties harboring or concealing conscripts and deserters, and others of giving information to jayhawkers of the situation of troops,” and called for a new law to criminalize the behavior, with the trial “as summary as it can be made.” Acting on Moore’s suggestion, the state legislature passed two acts punishing disloyalty to the Confederate cause: first, “an act to punish persons for harbouring deserters;” and a second act punishing written or spoken words subversive to the state or Confederate government, for using “appliances or influences” to inhibit enlistment into the state or Confederate military, or for assisting the constitution of the United States. Such acts demonstrated, as historian Bragg observed, that “Confederate prestige and authority in Louisiana in 1864 were on the wane.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

Beyond the prevalence of dissenters, draft evaders, and jayhawkers, slaves challenged the established order of Confederate Rapides. Despite later efforts by white southerners to assert the contrary, ample evidence undermines the trope of the persistently faithful slave during the war. While such slaves existed, refusal to work and flight into Union lines were more common responses. Governor Moore’s Elmwood plantation and the surrounding area was one of numerous sites of slave insubordination once the Union army’s proximity made escape a realistic possibility in May 1863. At the time, local whites acknowledged the danger of the slaves’ actions, even while deeming such behavior “demoralization” or “delusion.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

A Confederate wartime report estimated that 8,000 slaves escaped Rapides Parish during the Union army’s 1863 and 1864 expeditions, over half of the parish’s 1860 slave population. Numerous planters recorded losses of slave property throughout the war. Besides refusing to work or fleeing to Union lines, many black men served in the military. Almost six hundred blacks were accepted for service at temporary recruiting posts set up in March 1864 at Alexandria and Fort DeRussy. Before the end of the war, over 24,000 Louisiana African Americans had enrolled in the Union army.[[13]](#footnote-13)

After the war, black enthusiasm for the Union was apparent from their continued service as an occupying military force. In contrast with the swift demobilization of white troops, and the shabby conduct of those who remained, inspection reports for Louisiana’s Red River Valley noted black units’ superior performance. Away from military service, immediately after the war former slaves across the South linked their wartime loyalty to demands for political rights and land.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Contrasting with the self-evident loyalty (and non-citizenship) of most blacks, southern whites were far more inscrutable in their allegiances. Military officials in Louisiana, as elsewhere, required many white civilians to pledge future loyalty to the Union. The geographical, age, occupational, and gender breakdown of the oath signers from Rapides and the surrounding region offers a fascinating glimpse of the civilians who chose to swear Union loyalty during the Red River campaign.

In addition to the roughly 900 Rapides residents who signed oaths of future loyalty in Alexandria in 1864, over 300 citizens from surrounding parishes, such as Winn, Natchitoches, Catahoula, Calcasieu, Avoyelles, and St. Landry came to the town to take the amnesty oath. Winn Parish in particular was notorious for its small farmer-led anti-secessionist sentiment. The parish had overwhelmingly voted for Cooperationist delegates to the 1861 Secession Convention (representatives who opposed immediate secession from the Union), while seventy-two residents subsequently sent General Ulysses S. Grant a list of resolutions in September 1863, which asserted their loyalty to the Union and contended that “we have only been kept from our loyalty to the United States by the force of arms and oppression.” Catahoula Parish, too, was also known for its persistent Unionism and resistance to Confederate conscription policies. At least twenty-three of these non-Rapides signers subsequently served in a Unionist cavalry scout battalion organized in Alexandria.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Such figures accord with the recollections of Union soldiers who served in the Red River campaign. In his March 29, 1864 diary entry, Lawrence Van Alstyne, a private of Company B, 128th New York State volunteers, recalled “men coming in every day [to Alexandria] that have escaped the conscript-officers and have been living in the woods like wild beasts.” Rather than being “poor whites,” Van Alstyne claimed these were “intelligent men,” who had opposed secession, rejected Confederate military service, and subsequently offered to serve as Union scouts or fight in the Union military.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Some 375 men mustered in for service in the First Battalion, Louisiana Cavalry Scouts from Alexandria in April 1864. One enrollee was Captain Dennis E. Haynes, who wrote an 1866 polemic detailing the “massacre of the martyrs of liberty of Western Louisiana” and denouncing the postwar return of ex-Confederates to power. Although substantially fewer white men entered the Union army from Rapides than the “twelve companies of infantry and two of cavalry” who by November 1862 had joined the Confederate service, their numbers still represented a significant body of opposition to Confederate governance in central Louisiana.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Given the stringency of the February 1864 Confederate conscription law, which required all white males aged seventeen to fifty to enroll for military service, the age breakdown of the male oath signers reveals the Confederate authorities’ difficulties in enforcing military enrollment. Some seventy-five percent of the male Rapides Parish signers were of conscription age, of whom fifty-eight percent were aged eighteen to forty-five (the previous age bracket for conscription). A slightly larger percentage of oath-swearing men from surrounding parishes were of conscription age: eighty-three percent were aged seventeen to fifty, while sixty-nine percent were between eighteen and forty-five. Of the male conscription-aged signers, eighteen percent from Rapides were foreign-born, compared with only six percent from the surrounding parishes. None of these men signed oaths as non-citizens, which suggests that they were liable to be conscripted into Confederate service. While the number of signers who were themselves on leave from military duty, or otherwise were not evading conscription, is unknown, the number of men of military age in Rapides and the neighboring parishes was high. Moreover, the greater likelihood of oath-signing men from outside Rapides to be of conscription age suggests that these men were somewhat more likely than Rapides residents to be avoiding Confederate conscription or be genuinely sympathetic to the Union, and supports the Confederate authorities’ concerns about the extent of draft evasion and jayhawking in central Louisiana. Several parishes surrounding Rapides, namely Natchitoches, Sabine, Winn, and Catahoula, had voted for cooperationist delegates to the 1861 Secession Convention. Although not coterminous with opposing secession altogether, or opposing the Confederacy once the war had begun, areas that voted against secession were likely to be more fertile grounds for outright opposition to Confederate wartime demands.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Presuming that the parishes surrounding Rapides that opposed secession in January 1861 were more likely to contain opponents of the Confederacy, the oath signers’ declared occupations fit with the stereotype of southern dissenters as poorer farmers with little material investment in the southern slaveholding system. In Virginia, for instance, the eleven counties that sent no men to fight for the Confederacy shared a geographical proximity to the Union, a general absence of slavery, and lower personal and real estate wealth than the state overall. While fifty-three percent of Rapides oath signers who declared a profession called themselves farmers, self-identified farmers accounted for eighty-three percent of the occupations given by signers from the nearby parishes.[[19]](#footnote-19)

In contrast with the surrounding parishes, a significant number of oath signers from Rapides listed professional occupations. Some forty-eight signers (eight percent of signers with a listed occupation) described themselves as “planters,” of whom at least thirty-three were slave owners in 1860. Many were major slave owners before the war. These thirty-three owned over two thousand slaves between them, about fourteen percent the parish’s 1860 slave population. Among these planters, twenty-two owned at least twenty slaves, while the median slave ownership was thirty-four. Beyond self-identified planters, a much greater percentage of signers from Rapides compared to the surrounding parishes listed professional occupations, such as lawyers, clerks, physicians, and merchants, likely a reflection of the greater diversity of occupations in an urban area like Alexandria, versus the more rural surrounding region.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Of the Rapides residents who signed oaths of future loyalty to the Union between March and May 1864, at least 243 were women, or about twenty-seven percent of the total signers. This marked what historian Stephanie McCurry termed “the new recognition of women’s political personhood.” Given the requirement from June 1863 that registered enemies of the state, including women, take an oath in Union-controlled New Orleans, it is hardly surprising women swore oaths in Alexandria during the Red River campaign. The number of women taking oaths, whether required or volunteered, reflected the move toward a harder war by 1864, where domestic traitors might be forced to go within enemy lines or have their property confiscated.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Nevertheless, some wealthy Confederate women relied on traditional gender norms to receive protection from Union army officials. Neither Margaret Texada nor her husband Joseph W. Texada, a planter and Confederate captain, took the amnesty oath. Upon having her house set alight during the Union retreat, she recalled asking U.S. soldiers for help. “‘Surely there is one gentleman among you who will help me put out this fire’ & to their credit one man stepped forward & said ‘Madam I will’ & he did use every effort to assist me.” Given the fact that Margaret Texada’s home was apparently already burning by the time her pleas were heeded, it is questionable how far domesticity served as “a shield for safety” in Rapides, though the ultimately successful appeal for “gentlemanly” behavior remains telling of the strategies Confederate women used to protect themselves and their property during military occupation.[[22]](#footnote-22)

In his 1954 study of Civil War era oath taking, historian Harold Hyman contended that despite the extensive application of loyalty oaths in the Union-occupied South, they were a poor measure of future loyalty, since “many took such oath[s] with strong reservations in their hearts, for they felt that an oath taken under compulsion could not bind them.” Bertram Wyatt-Brown’s study of southern honor similarly observed that in spite of the importance southerners gave to their word, many did not consider the breaking of an oath given under duress to be a breach of their honor code, and oaths were often superseded anyway by “fealties to family, to community, or to a local figure of power, or to personal advantage.” As the war progressed, many southerners rationalized their submission to Federal authorities while still preserving their honor: they lacked an alternative besides starvation, imprisonment or exile. Moreover, since northerners were outside the circle of honor, Confederates need not act honorably toward them. There are ample examples of contemporary northern and southern observers doubting the efficacy of oath-taking in ensuring Unionist loyalty. James Parton, a northern observer in New Orleans wrote in 1864 that “it was understood that an oath given to [self-proclaimed Unionists] for the purpose of retaining property were a mere form of words not binding upon the consciences of the chivalric sons of the South.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Nevertheless, many Confederates within Louisiana and across the country considered taking the amnesty oath an unforgivable breach of honor. After Louisiana Congressman John Perkins introduced resolutions in the Confederate Congress to commend the “true men and women of the Confederacy” who refused to take the Union oath in occupied New Orleans, Reverend Benjamin M. Palmer, formerly resident in New Orleans and an influential member of the southern Presbyterian Church, rebuked citizens who held Confederate convictions privately while publicly swearing loyalty to the Union. Writing from South Carolina in February 1863, Palmer claimed that these insincere oath takers dishonored themselves, showed contempt for God, destabilized the rule of law, and undercut Confederate patriotism. Rather than swear false oaths, Confederates living in Union-controlled New Orleans should have registered as aliens. From Cheneyville, Rapides Parish, Colonel Louis A. Bringier, of the Confederate Fourth Louisiana Cavalry, wrote to his wife in April 1864: “If you have not taken the oath, I will be happy to see you again – but if you have, you can prepare for a divorce – for I will certainly never associate with you again.” Similarly, J.R. Mainor informed ex-Governor Moore in July 1864 of his “regret to hear that so many of the citizens of Rapides have taken it [the amnesty oath]. I hold to the doctrine that to preserve & maintain honor reputation & credit is much more sacred honourable & important to us in this life & the next, than to secure prosperity by a sacrifice of these principles. We cannot know when to put confidence in those that have taken the Yanky oath.” In January 1864, Moore had argued that if faced with a Union-led invasion, the “manly” course was to leave one’s home rather than “to remain in his [the enemy’s] lines, subjected to his brutal tyranny.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

Some loyalty oaths were coerced. The Department of the Gulf Headquarters gave orders to arrest Alexandria’s Confederate postmaster, Eugene Biossat, in March 1864. In addition to the usual oath form, Biossat signed a special loyalty oath pledging “my honor as a man to confine myself to my home and immediate premises with the exception of reporting to the P[rovost] M[arshal]s every morning,” as a condition for his release from arrest. Biossat, who also edited the conservative *Louisiana Democrat* before and after the war, later alleged that J. Madison Wells, the Free-State Lieutenant Governor in 1864, had orchestrated his arrest.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Biossat was probably correct, since the Union commander Nathaniel P. Banks relied on Wells to identify influential local Confederates. On March 29, 1864, Banks informed General Grover that since “the mass of the people in this country” had sworn the oath of allegiance “voluntarily, and no doubt with honest intention to the Government of the United States,” the “leading families who have been strongly identified with secession” should take it too. “As soon as their names can be obtained from Governor Wells, or other reliable friends of the Union, they should be required to take the… amnesty oath, or to remove within the lines of the rebel army.” Before accompanying the Union army up the Red River, Wells had fled Rapides in November 1863, apparently after making impolitic remarks about Stonewall Jackson’s death. Moreover, Wells acknowledged during an 1869 congressional investigation that he extracted oaths from several Confederates “as a little personal matter” during the military campaign. As “there were a great many persons who visited the town for the purpose of getting assistance from General Banks, and getting the military to guard their property in the vicinity of the town” in April 1864, Wells recalled, he persuaded Banks “to retain all such persons who had desired to force me to take the confederate oath,” and to “make them take my oath.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

In other instances, it is likely that Wells influenced his friends and extended family to take oaths of loyalty to the Union. Oath signers included Laulette Stafford, Wells’s youngest daughter, and John K. Elgee, Wells’s step-father-in-law who had represented Rapides at the 1861 Secession Convention. Wells later testified that “I obtained a pass through Gen. Banks to get him [Elgee] to New Orleans, I made him [Elgee] go & take the oath of allegiance to the government of the U.S.” Elgee died in 1865, a possible suicide.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Beyond familial ties, and the settling of personal scores, an obvious stimulus to oath-taking was the protection of private property, and a desire to continue engaging in business. Several historians have highlighted what William Blair termed “the link between livelihood and loyalty in the occupied South,” or at least declared loyalty. Confederate civilians’ pragmatic Union oath swearing under military occupation mirrored the behavior of numerous whites with Unionist convictions from Confederate-controlled northern and central Louisiana, who sent family members to fight in Confederate armies. The Assistant Adjutant General in the Department of the Gulf stipulated on March 24, 1864 that “the Provost Marshal [at Alexandria] will furnish to deserving Refugees, rations sufficient for their subsistence.” Given the connection made between “loyal” citizenship and aid in Union-occupied New Orleans, Union oath swearing was likely an important characteristic in determining “deserving Refugees.” Further down the socioeconomic scale, economic hardship appears as a stimulus for several oath takers. On her oath, Agnes Asman listed her occupation as “pauper.” She had lived in Pineville in 1860, while her father had a personal estate of $800 and real estate worth $1600 that year. Two others listed their occupations as “nothing.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

Several civilian oath takers within Rapides also received army protection. Many of these military orders were given *before* the civilians took the loyalty oath, suggestive of a selectively conciliatory Union occupation policy to encourage Confederate civilian acquiescence, at least initially. (“Offensive rebels” were an exception; Banks demanded they “leave Alexandria and go within the lines of the enemy.”) On March 23, 1864, orders were issued to “place a guard over the place of Mrs F. Sprigg” for protection of her person, family, and cotton “until it can be hauled to the Quartermaster Depôt in town.” Frances Sprigg, who sold 281 bales of cotton to the Confederate government in December 1862 in return for bonds, took the amnesty oath on April 7, 1864. On March 28, the Assistant Adjutant General gave orders to return a buggy horse taken from Dr. John P. Davidson. Davidson pledged Union allegiance on April 3.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Beyond ensuring personal security, commercial considerations stimulated oath taking in Rapides, as they did the entire Union Red River campaign. General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck’s initial orders for Banks as department commander privileged commerce. They included a goal “to ascend with a naval and military force the Red river as far as it is navigable, and thus open an outlet for the sugar and cotton of Northern Louisiana.” Coupled with Lincoln’s desire to ensure the organization of a loyal Louisiana state government, cotton speculation formed the major impetus for the 1864 Red River campaign.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Union general David Hunter’s scathing May 1864 report claimed that “Cotton and politics, instead of the war, appear to have engrossed the army [in the Department of the Gulf]…. we are amused with sham State governments, which are a complete laughing-stock to the people, and the lives of our men are sacrificed in the interests of cotton speculators.” The naval forces were particularly aggressive in hauling cotton back from the surrounding countryside as a prize of war. In a later congressional investigation into the campaign, Colonel James G. Wilson noted that Admiral Porter jokingly explained the “C.S.A.” and “U.S.N.” markings on captured cotton as an acronym for “Cotton Stealing Association of the United States Navy.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

Under regulations issued in early 1864, U.S. Treasury agents could accept cotton brought from within Confederate lines, provided the Commanding General of the Military Department allowed it. After taking the oath of allegiance, the seller would receive a quarter of the proceeds immediately, and then the remainder after the conclusion of the war. Banks officially promulgated these regulations on April 28 to apply to the Department of the Gulf. One major cotton speculator, Benjamin F. Camp, claimed in early 1864 that his organization had found 500 to 700 planters in northern and western Louisiana willing to swear Union loyalty in return for selling their cotton. On April 3, Banks authorized a request to allow “good and loyal men” to “haul in their produce, principally cotton, and turn it over to the quartermaster.” Before this confirmation, Banks had already granted passes for civilians to leave Alexandria in order to return with their goods. “M. Turner, Esq.” received a one-man guard on March 29 “to go to his house a mile out on the River road below Alexandria to bring in the remainder of his goods.” Merceives Turner, a Rapides Parish merchant, took the amnesty oath on April 8.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The Red River campaign provided huge commercial possibilities for ambitious speculators. With the official approval of the Department of the Gulf, Wells engaged in extensive cotton and sugar speculation upon reentering the Red River country. After the war, he made a claim against the U.S. government for $450,658 in cotton, sugar, molasses, timber, and other supplies he alleged the Union army had taken. He testified that he purchased most of these supplies during the 1864 military expedition: “I borrowed money and went upon the expedition and went to purchasing right and left, everything I could get my hands on.”[[33]](#footnote-33)

Wells’ claim illustrated how even those others who refused to take the amnesty oath themselves could avoid confiscation, and “sell” their goods through an oath-taking intermediary. Not a sugar planter himself, Wells contended that he bought the sugar and molasses in his claim from Dr. John P. Davidson, who had taken the amnesty oath. Davidson in turn had bought them from Josiah Chambers, a major sugar planter who served as a lieutenant in the Confederate army. Neither Josiah Chambers nor his wife Frances swore the Union oath. At a congressional hearing in 1877, Josiah speculated that these goods were “probably sold to Mr. Davidson for safety, as he had taken the oath.” Frances later testified that, having “implicit confidence in Dr Davidson,” she “authorized him [Davidson] to sell the sugar and molasses.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

While in Rapides in 1864, Wells “advised” some planters to take the amnesty oath, as he did with Landry Baillio, a cotton planter who owned twenty-seven slaves in 1860, and declared himself a “farmer” on his oath form. Baillio was not a close acquaintance: Wells testified that his advice was the first conversation he had with Baillio since the outbreak of the war. Baillio, who filed an unsuccessful claim with the U.S. Claims Commission after the war, said he had, “never expressed myself,” and “remained neutral.” Though the claims commission rejected his assertion of wartime loyalty, Baillio’s case likely reflected many civilians’ pragmatic approach toward both Union and Confederate occupation. The behavior of Michael Le Gras, an Alexandria resident who served in the Confederate army, signed an oath of future allegiance to the Union in April 1864, and was parish recorder in Rapides during the 1868 congressional elections, highlighted the centrality of pragmatism to the actions of many Confederates during military occupation. Le Gras’s rationale was simple: “Whenever I got into a tight place where the Yankees were, I was a Yankee, and whenever the Yankees were gone, I was a confederate.” The commitment of civilians to the west of the Mississippi River to the Confederate war effort underwhelmed Confederate general E. Kirby Smith. They were “a lukewarm people… who [appeared] more intent upon the means of evading the enemy and saving their property than of defending their firesides.”[[35]](#footnote-35)

Numerous historians have questioned the extent of planters’ attachment to the Confederacy. Focusing on resistance to the Confederate government’s impressment policy of provisions and slaves, a law passed in March 1863, McCurry argued that slave owners “were more concerned with property than nation…. Everywhere in the C.S.A. the policy on slave impressment was resisted.” Central Louisiana was no exception. Writing in February 1864 to George Mason Graham, a prominent local planter and old Whig from Rapides, the Acting Assistant Adjutant General from the Confederate District of West Louisiana criticized planters’ lack of support for fortifying the Red River country, and their complicity in slave desertion from military work. He contended, “It is certainly not asking too much of the planters living in that Valley to aid in the construction of said works [at Fort DeRussy and lower on the Red River]…. The number of negroes that have runaway from Fort DeRussy & Sabine point… has been large, [and] in no instance have any of the negroes, been sent back by their owners, notwithstanding it is well known that in most instances the runaway negroes have gone directly home.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

In the *Louisiana Democrat*, Biossat pointedly criticized planters’ unwillingness to comply with impressment. A February 1864 editorial asked whether planters “expect that others will continue to submit to toil and suffering and even death to protect his lands and his negroes, while he sits down in inglorious ease at home, and is unwilling to furnish a portion of the sinews of war?” Non-slaveholding soldiers were “becoming dissatisfied and vexed to see planters staying at home, and unwilling even to contribute from their abundance to provide the necessary food.” Opposition to impressment was an “unjust” rationale for not supplying the government with necessities. Rather, “the abnegation of all sympathy, an utter disregard of the well being of the Confederacy, selfishness and extortion are the order of the day.” Given Biossat’s closeness to planting interests in Rapides—when he later served as Parish Treasurer, Thomas Moore, Lewis Texada, Evariste Archinard and Julius Levin (three planters and a coffee house keeper respectively) provided his bond, while Moore had a financial stake in the *Democrat*—such criticisms were revealing. Moore, in contrast, argued that the impressment law was “most unwise” and “should be repealed,” in his final January 1864 address.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Planter ambivalence toward self-sacrifice in the cause of the Confederacy continued in central and northern Louisiana after the Red River campaign. The letter book of Thomas Miller, an Alexandria-based cotton agent for the Confederate Quartermaster Department, illuminates the extent of non-cooperation in the region between planters and the Confederate authorities in the war’s final year. Though based in Alexandria, Miller’s comments were particularly applicable to the surrounding parishes of St. Landry and Avoyelles, since much of the government cotton in Rapides had been destroyed during the recent military campaign. Writing from St. Landry Parish in September, he argued: “The people here (nearly all foreigners) owning cotton cling with a death like to it and nothing but sharp measures will induce them to part with it. They hide it away[,] refuse to give any information and throw every obstacle in the way of the Govt getting it.” At the same time, the daily trade with the enemy in cotton “under some pass or other” continued, in amounts he believed greater than the passes allowed. Through the winter Confederate cotton agents encountered similar resistance to their purchasing efforts, alongside a repeated shortage of labor, owing to the frequent desertion of impressed slaves. For many planters in central Louisiana, the pursuit of profits came before a sense of Confederate attachment, or at least did not conflict with such perceived Confederate allegiance, especially by the final year of the war. As Powell and Wayne have argued, self-interest, and especially the capability of either Union or Confederate armies to provide adequate protection for civilians’ welfare were inextricably linked to manifestations of meaningful Confederate “nationalism” in this region.[[38]](#footnote-38)

The Red River campaign, with its extensive damage to civilian property and goods, left a bitter legacy for central Louisianans, as other military campaigns did on contested territory. The widespread cotton confiscation by Union troops during the campaign engendered resentment against the occupying army, and the retreat from Grand Ecore back to Alexandria, in particular, was characterized by widespread pillaging. General Orders No. 43, issued on 27 April 1864, denounced “indiscriminate marauding and incendiarism, disgraceful to the army of a civilized nation,” and offered $500 for evidence that would convict any accused parties of the crime before a general court-martial. During the army’s evacuation, Alexandria itself was burned, including the court house, an act widely attributed to Union troops.[[39]](#footnote-39)

A Confederate report compiled from sworn testimony after the campaign, examined “the conduct of federal troops in Western Louisiana, during the invasions of 1863 and 1864.” The commissioner compiling the testimony for Rapides, Thomas C. Manning, an associate justice of the state Supreme Court, offered a damning appraisal. Upon the arrival of troops in Alexandria from March 16, “license for unlimited pillage was either expressly given or tacitly permitted them.” Dr. John P. Davidson (whom Manning considered “one of our citizens” despite Davidson’s taking the Union oath) swore to the misdeeds of the Union Louisiana Cavalry Scouts, led by men “who burned with revenge against many of the loyal citizens of the parish.” These troops “entered the residences of planters, carrying off whatever they needed, or could appropriate, and in many instances offering violence and insults,” while in the countryside “they burnt the dwellings of those who were supposed to have been active in pointing out or aiding in arresting conscripts.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

Oath takers and non-oath takers alike suffered during the Union army’s retreat. Giles C. Smith, who took the amnesty oath, later swore that during the Union evacuation of Alexandria, troops burned his house after it had initially failed to catch fire from Robert Hynson’s nearby residence that was also destroyed. Hynson swore the amnesty oath. According to a report clipped from the St. Louis *Republican*, the fire destroyed “all the business part [of the town] and all the fine residences, the Ice House Hotel, the Court House, all the churches except the Catholic, a number of livery stables, and the entire front row of large and spending business houses.” Judge M.R. Ariail, a delegate at the 1864 Free State Convention, lost his “houses, his law office, his private and law library, and his household goods and effects” in the fire. The fire also burned property and possessions belonging to Elgee, Wells, and “hundreds” of other oath-takers.[[41]](#footnote-41)

After the Red River campaign, small-scale, “nasty contests” characterized fighting in Louisiana. Such behavior helped incubate numerous feuds that resulted in postwar score-settling. In one case, Margaret Texada alleged that Union cavalry scouts raided her house at midnight, “[put] their guns to my breast & demanded if there were any confederates in the house.” After the war, in September 1865 her husband Joseph Texada assaulted the captain of the scout company, Dennis Haynes. Compounding the disagreement, Haynes was a friend of Thomas Texada, Joseph’s brother. According to an army report, “on account of some political and family disagreements,” Thomas fired five shots at Joseph on May 19, 1866, even though the latter was unarmed. The military source was “informed that he [Thomas] regrets, [sic] that his brother is not likely to die.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

Alongside the widespread destruction of property and the enmities resulting from small-scale feuds, the Confederate reassertion of authority in Rapides from May 1864 ensured the loyalty of many lukewarm Confederates. Confederate authorities arrested numerous suspected Union oath takers in Alexandria. James B. Sullivan, who swore the oath, testified in 1869 that “after the federal army left, I was arrested by order of Dick Taylor, and I was put in one room in prison with two hundred and eighty-seven negroes and jayhawkers.” Under duress, amnesty oath swearers reaffirmed their allegiance to the Confederacy, the most prominent of whom was Lewis Texada. Governor Henry W. Allen, a personal friend, counseled Texada on May 22, 1864, that since “the people generally through the state will not know your excuses or justification for taking the oath,” Lewis should “join Joe’s [Joseph W. Texada, Lewis’s brother] company as quick as possible.” Lewis reenlisted in the Confederate army, and so required a presidential pardon after the war. His brother Joseph wrote to his wife that Lewis “is in a terrible state of mind I feel Hurt and melancholy when ever I look at him. He does not deserve the censure he has & is receiving… from men whom he has helped to put in places which gives them power to harass him.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

The case of William B. Hyman, a lawyer from Alexandria who subsequently fled to New Orleans offers a fascinating glimpse into military involvement in civilian affairs in Confederate Louisiana, and the extent to which the military quashed dissent. His story survived through letters written by his cousin and his nephews, all of whom served in the Confederate military. According to rumors, Confederate authorities arrested Hyman in Shreveport in January 1864 not “from any want of loyalty to the South,” but because he sued writs of *habeas corpus* for “jayhawkers” and “illegally conscribed persons.” In February, Hyman’s nephew alleged that “the heel of despotism seems gradually to become more firmly placed upon the inhabitants of the trans Mississippi Department, when persons are thus forcibly taken of[f] to exile without their crime being made known to them & without a trial.” After a brief exile in East Texas and Western Louisiana, Hyman returned to Alexandria, and was promptly arrested on General Taylor’s orders. In a meeting with the General, a friend of Hyman’s found Taylor “exceeding abusive, & [Taylor] said he would send the damned hound [Hyman] where Gov Allen & Genl Smith could not interfere. Also that Gov Allen should learn that the Bayonet was to rule in this Department.” Hyman was soon ordered to leave Confederate lines. He left for New Orleans, and refused to return, despite Governor Allen authorizing Hyman’s cousin to bring Hyman home, as a man “who has been wrongfully & illegally expelled from the state by order of Lt. Genl. R. Taylor.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Hyman, whom Governor Wells appointed Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court in March 1865, wrote in favor of Lewis Texada’s pardon application that Texada “attempted to shield me from the brutal and tyrannical violence of Genl Richard Taylor, and assisted me in saving the life of a citizen charged with Union sentiments, and condemned to be hung by a self constituted committee.” Texada, Hyman contended, “would have been murdered by the confederate military authorities” if he resisted conscription. In 1877, Hyman alleged that General Taylor had ordered Hyman’s own assassination in 1864. Taylor “was murdering men, and the secessionists knew it and I know it.” Hyman’s case demonstrated the extent to which Confederate military authorities would coercively stifle dissent. After May 1864, expressing Confederate, not Unionist, sentiment was safer in Rapides.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Many sincere Unionists left Alexandria with the retreat of the Union army after its 1863 and 1864 occupations of the town. Beyond this self-imposed exile, a campaign continued against the property and persons of those who had not abandoned the parish. In his December 1865 plea to President Johnson, Dennis Haynes, captain in a Union cavalry scout company formed in Alexandria, claimed that “every Union man who joined the Louisiana scouts, or who abandoned the country when the Federal Army retreated from the Red River, was to be shot if taken.” Consequently, “during the last two years of the war upwards of 100 Union men were murdered in the Calcasieu District of Louisiana, west of Alexandria,” while Haynes’ own Rapides home had been burned and his possessions taken. Correspondence between Confederate Colonel Louis Bringier and his wife corroborates Haynes’s allegations. Writing from Cheneyville, Rapides Parish, on April 23, 1864, Bringier boasted that a raid on J. Madison Wells’ Bayou Boeuf plantation “cleaned him out.” Bringier’s unit also “disposed of about 20 Jayhawkers.” Of 375 men who served in the Unionist Louisiana Cavalry Scouts between April and November 1864, 99 died. Rapides Unionists, a minority of the parish’s population before the Red River campaign, suffered severe numerical losses after the Union army’s occupation, which further eroded the meager base for securing white Republican support after the war.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Despite the expulsion or murder of dissenting elements, Confederates worried about disloyalty within their lines. Captain Joseph Texada’s letters to his wife in 1864 amply demonstrated his concerns. Writing from Pattersonville, in southeast Louisiana, he claimed “the Enemy have their spies all over the whole country and hold communication with them daily,” many of whom were “ladies or more properly women.” Some of these potential spies were close to home. He asked about the fate of “Miss Kate McLean, and upon what grounds was she released…. She I suppose will be set free to give whatever information she can gather. She ruined Tom [Thomas Texada] and I fear she may still remain with Martha [wife of Thomas Texada] and the children.” Kate McLean, whose loyalty was so suspect to Joseph, was a baptismal sponsor for one of Thomas and Martha Texada’s daughters in June 1864. In an October letter, Joseph again revealed fears of internal subversion, this time about the Alexandria saddler Jacob Spreigel, a German immigrant. “He must be working on the sly for ‘greenbacks.’ I expect he is. He belongs to the Piviledged [sic] class of [illegible] foreigners.[,] all of whom ought either to be put in the army or be made to leave our lines.” Spreigel signed the amnesty oath in April 1864, while testimony from his wife’s unsuccessful claim for war damages suggests Joseph’s claim of duplicity had merit.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The Texada brothers offer a microcosm for the responses of Rapides whites to Union occupation, and the bitterness the war engendered. Joseph, the unconditional Confederate; Lewis, initially acquiescent with Union control before returning allegiance to the Confederacy when Confederate forces retook Alexandria; Thomas, who signed the amnesty oath, but remained in Rapides after May 1864, and was a friend of the Unionist Scout Captain Dennis Haynes; and the final brother, Theodore, who also took the amnesty oath, before leaving with the Union army’s retreat. Theodore subsequently served as a landsman in the U.S. Navy, and died aboard the U.S.S. Randolph in April 1865. Although a cliché, the war divided families, and fostered lasting enmities.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Rapides was unfriendly terrain for Unionists immediately after the war, and the postwar Republican Party never succeeded in attracting a meaningful level of white support in the parish. Several Unionist civilians complained that they suffered personal insecurity on account of their political loyalties. Antal Vallas wrote to General Carl Schurz in September 1865, that “I found [in Rapides] the influential men of the Parish as hot rebels as they ever were during the rebellion…. The poor and foreigners…. could tell an awful tale of horrors, committed by the rebels, last year after the retreat of Gen. Banks; but…. They are overawed by the presence of the same persons who committed those outrages; nay, they see them exercising authority and power.” Haynes complained to President Johnson in December 1865 that “the most notorious of these traitors [Confederates]” in Rapides “became bolder, and publicly declared that as soon as the Federal Army, or as they expressed it, ‘the damned Yankees,’ are withdrawn, they intend to run off all the Union men, and more especially the scouts who took up arms against them.”[[49]](#footnote-49)

Local Union military officials agreed with these bleak assessments. A May 1866 military report from Alexandria noted that “Union men are not and will not be badly treated here so long as this is a military post, nevertheless is it is easy to be seen that their presence is distasteful to the Southern people. I think that without military protection this could hardly be a safe haven for a citizen of the north.” A similar situation prevailed in nearby Winn, a parish with a large cooperationist majority in 1861. The “Union men” suffering persecution in Rapides were not the largely pragmatic oath takers of 1864, but rather those who had long opposed the Confederacy, or had fought against it. Oath swearers like Gervais Baillio, a judge, planter, and self-declared “full-hearted Confederate,” did not suffer obvious physical retribution from angry neighbors. After the Union army’s retreat, Baillio, a neighbor of former Governor Moore, remained accepted (though considered less than generous) by the parish’s Confederate elite.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Many civilians in Rapides, like Baillio, had taken the amnesty oath under coercion or with mental reservations, and promptly disregarded it when Confederate forces reoccupied Alexandria in May 1864. Dissatisfaction with the Confederacy, war-weariness, or a loss of faith in the feasibility of Confederate independence was not synonymous with white Unionism. Rather than the 900 or so oath takers from Rapides, the roughly 300 men who voted at Alexandria in an April 1864 election for delegates to the Free State constitutional convention provide a more accurate measure of white support for an end to the war (if not positively for the success of the Union).[[51]](#footnote-51)

Nevertheless, of the white men who became active in post-war Republican politics in Rapides, many had taken the oath during the war. Several others who signed amnesty oaths served as commissioners of election in April 1864 or went as representatives of Rapides to the Free State Constitutional Convention. The Rapides example mirrored a general trend, where most postwar white Republicans had been wartime Unionists, or at least reluctant Confederates.[[52]](#footnote-52)

The November 1865 gubernatorial election, in which only whites voted, captured the continued bitterness in Rapides against avowed “Unionists” and offered a poor augury for the possibility of white support for a Union or Republican Party in the future. Upon becoming governor in March 1865, Wells pursued a remarkably conciliatory policy toward his former enemies. Alongside seeking to reduce Republican and non-southern influence in state politics, he named numerous ex-Confederates to appointive offices, and was active in securing presidential pardons for former rebels, including ex-Governor Thomas Moore and Lewis Texada. Reporting to Moore, then exiled in Cuba, the former Confederate Lieutenant Governor Henry Hyams noted Wells’s help in applying for Moore’s pardon, and claimed that Wells “bears the same happy relation to Louisiana that Pres. Johnson bears to the whole South.” Historian Dan Carter noted the irony that Wells, the only immediate postwar southern governor who could honestly take the “ironclad” oath (of having never aided the enemies of the Union), pursued “the most reactionary trend in postwar southern politics.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

Upon Wells’ return to Rapides in September 1865, a group of his friends (many of whom swore amnesty oaths in 1864) held a meeting, arranged a reception, and passed resolutions praising Wells’ work “to restore our beloved State to civil government, and to place her upon an equal footing with the enjoyment of the same privileges and rights as any other State in the Union.” The resolutions also praised Wells’ “efforts to reestablish civil government in Louisiana, and to secure to the white men of the State control of all affairs of policy and government.” Even Biossat, a friend of influential Rapides planters, had kind words for Wells. Tellingly, though, Biossat simultaneously questioned the legal basis of Wells’ gubernatorial tenure. He wrote “whether he [Wells] is in of right, or whether he is a mere squatter and trespasser… remain[s] a mystery.” He further bemoaned “the disfranchisement of her [the South’s] greatest men,” and that the southern states’ postwar representation had been “from the refuse of their population.” Upon Wells’s September 1865 call for an election, Biossat again noted that Wells “still has no other authority than that conferred by the bogus Constitution of 1864; and in lieu of a proclamation as authorised by the President, he has issued a proclamation for an election, *under the Constitution* of 1864.” The result of the November 1865 gubernatorial election showed that while local ex-Confederates might welcomed Wells’ attempts to secure Louisianan readmission to the Union, such gratitude stopped short of political support.[[54]](#footnote-54)

The *Louisiana Democrat* denounced Wells, the post-war Louisiana legislature, and the 1864 constitution. Biossat labelled the 1864 Free State convention and the Legislature “a disgrace to any civilized community… composed of Confederate deserters and jayhawkers, and of the dregs of the people.” He soon termed the 1864 constitution, a document he considered illegal, “the jayhawker’s Constitution,” and in October 1865 began referring to “‘governor’ Wells.” “Governor” Wells received the gubernatorial nomination from both the National Democratic and National Conservative parties, both of which opposed the political advancement of African Americans. Meanwhile, once Henry W. Allen’s name was forwarded for the governorship in October 1865, a move his own friends sought to quash, the *Democrat* endorsed Allen wholeheartedly. Lacking a presidential pardon and exiled in Mexico, Allen could not have assumed the governorship even if he had won. Biossat, however, alleged that Wells might be ineligible to hold office on account of a defalcation to the state made while Wells was sheriff in the early 1840s, a case that was never successfully prosecuted. He also decried Wells’s supposed closeness to General Banks, and invoked the memory of “that memorable campaign of rapacity and fugacity to the Red River valley in the Spring of 1864.” Wells won comfortably at the state level in November 1865, but was defeated 408 votes to 259 in Rapides. “The people of Rapides,” the *Democrat* remarked, “who have known him [Wells] so long, and who have grudges against him which time can never efface, determined that he should not receive a majority in his native parish, even if they had to beat him with blank tickets.” Wartime animosities died hard in Rapides.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Ultimately, the willingness of white civilians to yield to Union occupation in 1864 did not translate into a postwar moment where substantial white support for a Unionist or Republican Party was possible in Rapides, a situation that did not alter appreciably throughout Reconstruction. Though some oath takers were sincere Unionists, the great majority of Rapides signers were not. Many of those who swore amnesty oaths did so through either coercion or a desire to be able to receive aid or sell their goods, displayed little meaningful “loyalty” to the Union, and soon returned to their former allegiances (if they had ever left them) when Confederate forces reoccupied Rapides. The self-imposed exile of many Unionists after May 1864 and the subsequent campaign against Union scouts and other dissenters further shrank the potential pool of “pro-Union” voters after the war. Meanwhile, the widespread destruction of property in the parish and the guerrilla nature of many local conflicts encouraged the persistence of enmities beyond the war’s end, and diminished potential support for reconciliationist policies, such as those Wells pursued as governor in 1865.

Confederate morale in Louisiana was low in 1864. Conscript evasion, jayhawking, and dissent against the demands of Confederate citizenship in Rapides and the surrounding parishes became pronounced as the war progressed, while many civilians sold their goods across Union lines rather than have them impressed by Confederate authorities. Poor morale, however, did not make defeat inevitable, as the successful reassertion of Confederate control in central Louisiana from May 1864 demonstrated. Rather, the behavior of Rapides whites demonstrated the centrality of immediate personal security and commercial considerations to declarations of allegiance. Despite the censure various Confederates accorded to false oath swearers, when faced with the “manly” choice of evacuating their homes, or tacitly acknowledging Union authority within Union lines, many civilians took the personal security the oath offered. For most, however, this choice coincided with continued sympathy to the Confederacy, even as they chafed against the increasingly strenuous demands of Confederate citizenship.

1. Cited in Jefferson Davis Bragg, *Louisiana in the Confederacy* (2nd ed.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1969), 259-60. Bragg considered this figure “probably an exaggeration.” See *ibid*, 259. National Archives (hereafter NARA), Record Group 393, Pt. 1, Entry 1878, Boxes 1-3 (hereafter RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1878). Subsequent references to oath signers in the text are taken from this source unless cited otherwise. In my dataset, 338 oaths were recorded on or before 8 April 1864. Though the oath signers were overwhelmingly white, free people of color took a handful of these oaths. According to the manuscript returns, 1188 people voted in the January 1861 election in Rapides. See Charles B. Dew, “Who Won the Secession Election in Louisiana?” *Journal of Southern History* 36 (Feb. 1970): 18-32, at 27. Elgee was elected from the Rapides senatorial district, while Texada, William W. Smart, and Thomas C. Manning were elected as parish representatives. See Dew, “The Long Lost Returns: The Candidates and Their Totals in Louisiana’s Secession Election,” *Louisiana History* 10 (Autumn 1969), 353-69, at 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For instance, Alphonse Cazabat and James Madison Wells left Rapides at different points in 1863. For Cazabat’s definition of his Unionism, see Cazabat, testimony, U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Elections, 41 Cong., 1 Sess., *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]* May 8- June 14 (Washington, D.C., 1869), 702-3 (hereafter *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]*). On Wells’s wartime Unionism, see Walter McGehee Lowrey, “The Political Career of James Madison Wells,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 31 (Oct. 1948): 995-1123, esp. 1006-24. Thomas O. Moore to James C. Wise, June 26, 1864, James Calvert Wise Papers, Mss. 3239, Box 1, Folder 7, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge (hereafter LLMVC). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. There are numerous studies of loyalty and oath-taking during the Civil War era. See especially Harold M. Hyman, *Era of the Oath: Northern Loyalty tests during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1954); William A. Blair, *With malice toward some: treason and loyalty in the Civil War era* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2014); Carole Emberton, “Reconstructing Loyalty: Love, Fear, and Power in the Postwar South,” in Paul A. Cimballa and Randall M. Miller (eds), *The great task remaining before us: Reconstruction as America’s continuing Civil War* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010), 173-82. For Louisianan studies, see particularly Lawrence N. Powell and Michael S. Wayne, “Self-Interest and the Decline of Confederate Nationalism,” in Harry P. Owens and James J. Cooke (eds), *The Old South in the Crucible of War* (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1983), 29-46; Stephen Michot, “‘War is still raging in this part of the country’: Oath-taking, conscription, and guerrilla war in Louisiana’s Lafourche Region,” *Louisiana History* 38 (Spring 1997): 157-84. On post-war white southern Republicans, see especially James Alex Baggett, *The Scalawags: Southern Dissenters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2003). For a study of Louisiana scalawags, see Frank J. Wetta, *The Louisiana Scalawags: Politics, Race, and Terrorism during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ted Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana 1862-1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1992 edn.), 16. Robert Tracy McKenzie, *Lincolnites and Rebels: A divided town in the American Civil War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 140. Donald W. Davis, “Ratification of the Constitution of 1868-Record of Votes,” *Louisiana History* 6 (Summer 1965): 301-305, at 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For works that emphasize the Confederacy’s internal weaknesses, see, for instance, Frank Owsley, *State Rights in the Confederacy* (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1925); Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010); Paul Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1978); Richard E. Beringer et al., *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986); Drew Gilpin Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War,” *Journal of American History* 76 (March 1990): 1200-1228. For those who contend that military defeat alone brought the fall of the country, see especially Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997). See also James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988). Jarret Ruminski, “‘Tradyville’: The Contraband Trade and the Problem of Loyalty in Civil War Mississippi,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (Dec. 2012): 511-537. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See, for instance, Erik Mathisen, “‘It Looks Much Like Abandoned Land’: Property and the Politics of Loyalty in Reconstruction Mississippi,” in *After Slavery: Race, Labor, and Citizenship in the Reconstruction* *South*, eds. Bruce E. Baker and Brian Kelly (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 77-97, at 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Whittington, “Rapides Parish: A History,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 15 (Oct. 1932): 567-80, at 568-9. U.S. Census Office, *Population of the United States in 1860; compiled from the original returns of the eighth census* (Washington, D.C., 1864), 189-193. William E. Highsmith, “Some aspects of Reconstruction in the Heart of Louisiana,” *Journal of Southern History* 13 (Nov. 1947): 460-91, at 466. Excluding Orleans and Jefferson parishes, both of which contained an unusually high percentage of non-natives, 5.3 percent of free Louisiana residents were foreign-born in 1860. The figure for Rapides was 6.6 percent. U.S. Census Office, *Population of the United States in 1860*, 196. See also Gary B. Mills, “Alexandria, Louisiana: A ‘Confederate’ City at War With Itself,” in Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr. (ed.), *The Civil War in Louisiana: Part B: The Home Front* (Lafayette: Univ. of Louisiana, 2004), 175-87, at 176. Perry H. Howard, *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1971), 59-61, 88, 442. Dew, “Secession election,” 24-5, 27, 30. J. Madison Wells, sworn & examined, 26 October 1877, National Archives Records of the United States Court of Claims, Congressional Jurisdiction Case No. 435, (Washington, 1947), James Madison Wells Southern Claim Commission Papers, Mss. 806, Microfilm, LLMVC (hereafter Wells Southern Claim Papers), Thomas Moore to Thomas C. Manning, 29 September, 1860, Manning-Compton Collection, MS01.2008, SI F3L Documents & Letters, Louisiana State University-Alexandria Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1963), 76; Bragg, *Louisiana in the Confederacy*, 60. Deposition of Lewis E. Texada, February 3, 1876, Case of John Bogan, Jr., Claim No. 9555, Barred and Disallowed Case Files of the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, NARA, RG 233, M1407, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/34/614867/>. Deposition of Ex-Gov. J. Madison Wells, January 23, 1875, Case of Thomas Woodard, Claim No. 18541, Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871-1880, NARA, RG 217, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/34/263683409/>. Numerous other witnesses for Rapides claimants also argued that expressing open Union sentiments had fatal consequences. See, for instance, Deposition of A. Cockerille, February 1, 1876, Deposition of W.T. Stanley, February 7, 1876, Case of John Bogan, Jr.; Testimony of J.F. Schue, December 11, 1878, Case of Elizabeth Spreigle [sic], Claim No. 21620, NARA, M1407, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/34/567107/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Powell and Wayne, “Self-Interest,” 31. Wells to President of the Board of the Claims Commission, October 28, 1871, Wells Southern Claim Papers. Original emphasis. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Vallas to G. Mason Graham, November 22, 1859, February 22, 1860, July 16, 1860, Walter L. Fleming Collection, Mss. 890, 893, LLMVC, Box 1, Folder 10. [Antal Vallas], “History of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy,” [1864], Vallas, Antal and Family Papers, Mss. 4439, LLMVC, Box 1, Folder 55; *Official journal of the proceedings of the Convention for the revision and amendment of the constitution of the state of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1864), 95-6 (hereafter *Official Journal*). James H.C. Barlow, testimony, *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]*, 589. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Henry W. Allen to James A. Seddon, October 12, 1863, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (70 vols. in 128; Washington, 1880–1901), Ser. 1, Vol. 53, supplemental, p. 901 (hereafter *OR*). E. Surget to R.E. Wyche, February 4, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 2, p. 944. T.O. Moore’s final address to General Assembly, January 18, 1864, Thomas O. Moore papers, Mss. 305, 893, 1094, LLMVC, Box 1, Folder 13. Bragg, *Louisiana in the Confederacy*, 258-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For local Confederate recollections of the faithful slave, see, for instance, *Official Report relative to the conduct of federal troops in Western Louisiana, during the invasions of 1863 and 1864. Compiled from Sworn Testimony, under direction of governor Henry W. Allen. Shreveport, April 1865* (Shreveport, 1865), 67 (hereafter *Official Report*); Margaret Texada, “Reminiscences of the C. War,” n.d., Texada Family Papers, Mss. 5119, Box 1, Folder 65, LLMVC; Carol Wells (ed.), *War, Reconstruction and Redemption on Red River: The Memoirs of Dosia Williams Moore* (Ruston, La: McGinty Publications, 1990), esp. 16-17, 24, 29-30. John H. Ransdell to Moore, May 24, 1863, John Hickman Ransdell Papers, Mss. 5, Folder 1, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection. For references to rebellious slaves as “deluded,” see for instance, *Louisiana Democrat*, June 3, 1863, cited in Whittington, “Concerning the loyalty of slaves in North Louisiana in 1863,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 14 (Oct. 1931): 487-502, at 488-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Official Report*, 67. On planters’ losses of slaves, see, for instance, Robert C. Hynson to Wise, May 21, 1864, Wise Papers, Box 1, Folder 7. Winters, *Civil War in Louisiana*, 314, 333. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Mark L. de Vries, *The Politics of Terror: Enforcing Reconstruction in Louisiana’s Red River Valley* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2015), 63-4. On troops stationed at Alexandria, see A.D. Nelson, Inspection Report, February 25, 1866, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 4495, Box 2. Mathisen, “Freedpeople, Politics, and the State in Civil War in America,” in *Reconfiguring the Union: Civil War Transformations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), eds. Iwan W. Morgan and Philip John Davies, 59-76, at 70-72. See also Mathisen, “‘It Looks Much Like Abandoned Land,’” esp. 85-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. At least 323 men and women from Winn, Catahoula, Natchitoches, Calcasieu, Avoyelles, Sabine, Caldwell, Claiborne, Carroll, Pointe Coupee, and St. Landry Parishes took these oaths in Alexandria in 1864. Of these, 130 were from Winn, 61 from Catahoula, 33 from Avoyelles, 32 from Calcasieu, 25 from St. Landry, and 21 from Natchitoches. See NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1878, Boxes 1-3. *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 30, Pt. 2, pp. 732-3. John M. Sacher, “‘A Very Disagreeable Business’: Confederate Conscription in Louisiana,” *Civil War History* 53 (June 2007): 141-69, at 149. Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who served in organizations from the state of Louisiana, First Battalion, Cavalry Scouts, National Archives Microfilm Publications, RG 94, M396, Roll 11, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/272/260403895/>; (hereafter Louisiana, First Battalion, Cavalry Scouts). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Lawrence Van Alstyne, *Diary of an enlisted man* (New Haven, Conn.: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1910), 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Louisiana, First Battalion, Cavalry Scouts. Dennis E. Haynes, *A thrilling narrative of the sufferings of Union refugees, and the massacre of the martyrs of liberty of Western Louisiana: together with a brief sketch of the present political status of Louisiana, as to her unfitness for admission into the Union. With letters to the Governor of Louisiana and noted secessionists in that state, and a letter to President Johnson on Reconstruction* (Washington: McGill & Witherow, Printers and Stereotypers, 1866). *Louisiana Democrat*, November 19, 1862, cited in Whittington, “Rapides Parish, Louisiana—A History, Ninth Installment,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterl*y 17 (Oct. 1934): 737-50, at 743. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Of 647 oaths signed by men with age information provided, 484 were aged 17-50; of these 17 were aged 17, 374 were aged 18-45, and 93 were aged 46-50. “Surrounding parishes” here are defined as Avoyelles, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Carroll, Catahoula, Claiborne, Natchitoches, Pointe Coupee, Sabine, St. Landry, and Winn, although a majority of the oaths were taken by Winn parish residents. Of 291 cases containing the male signer’s age, 6 were aged 17, 201 were aged 18 to 45, and 35 were aged 46 to 50. In Rapides, 88 of 484 male signers aged 17 to 50 had foreign nativity recorded; in the surrounding parishes, the figure was 14 of 242 male signers of conscription age. On the conscription of foreigners in Louisiana, see Sacher, “‘A Very Disagreeable Business,’” esp. 157-9. Dew, “Secession election,” 26-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 28-29. In Rapides, 335 of 628 signers with listed occupations were “farmers,” versus 236 of 284 signers with occupations listed for oath-takers from the surrounding parishes. The vast majority of signers with occupations listed were male. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For instance, according to the 1860 federal slave schedule, Meredith Calhoun owned 709 slaves, James Bailey Sullivan, 121, Thomas Neal, 61, Lewis Texada, 61, Henry Boyce, 274, Robert C. Hynson, 122, William Bailey, 121, and Gervais Baillio, 107. See *1860 United States. Federal Census, Slave Schedule*, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, NARA, M653, Roll 430, Ancestry.com, <http://interactive.ancestry.com/7668/LAM653_430-0149?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d7668%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=LAM653_430-0149>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 114. On the shift toward a harder war, see, for instance, Blair, *With malice toward some*, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Margaret Texada, “Reminiscences of the C. War,” Texada Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 65. Margaret Creighton, “Gettysburg Out of Bounds,” cited in Blair, *With malice toward some*, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hyman, *Era of the Oath*, 36, 152. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), 34, 56. Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees came: conflict and chaos in the occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995), 72-3. Michot, “‘War is still raging,’” 165. For Union army perceptions of Confederate oath-taking see also Blair, *With malice toward some*, esp. 137-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2005), 95-96. L.A.B. to “Stel,” April 23, 1864, Louis A. Bringer and Family Papers, Mss. 43,139, 544, LLMVC, Box 2, Folder 18, March-May 1864 Personal Correspondence. Original emphasis. “Never” was double underscored in the original. J.R. Mainor to Moore, July 7, 1864, Moore papers, Box 1, Folder 14. T.O. Moore’s final address to General Assembly, January 18, 1864. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. George B. Drake, Assistant Adjutant General, to Alexandria Provost Marshal, March 23, 1864, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1738, Vol. 7. RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1878, Box 2. Biossat took the special oath on March 24, and the standard oath on April 3. *Louisiana Democrat*, February 28, 1877, p. 2. See also *Louisiana Democrat*, December 27, 1865, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Nathaniel P. Banks to Brig. Gen. Cuvier Grover, March 29, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 2, pp. 796-7. Wells, testimony, *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]*, 580-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See Depositions of Ralph Marcus, January 16, 1895, and Frances Chambers, August 23, 1894, Wells Southern Claim Papers. Deposition of Wells, October 26, 1877, *ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Blair, *With malice toward some*, 137. See also, for example, *Era of the Oath*, 152; Michot, “War is still raging;” McKenzie, *Lincolnites and Rebels*; Mathisen, “‘It Looks Much Like Abandoned Land,’” esp. 78-82. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 127-8. Drake to Alexandria Provost Marshal, March 24, 1864, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1738, Vol. 7. See Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 138-9. See Ash, *When the Yankees came*, 177-9, for a discussion of the role played by economic hardship in southern “plain folk” swearing allegiance to the Union. *1860 United States Federal Census*, Pineville, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, NARA, M653 Roll 423, Ancestry.com, <http://interactive.ancestry.com/7667/4231234_00001?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d7667%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=4231234_00006>. The signers listing “nothing” were James Burle, and Marche Hillard. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Banks to General Grover, April 2, 1864, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1738, Vol. 7. Charles P. Stone to U.A.M. Dudly, March 23, 1864, *ibid*. For the cotton sale to the Confederate government, see Case of Frances Sprigg, Claim No. 18535, NARA, M1407, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/34/2224499/>. Drake, March 28, 1864, “Mr Davidson, Physician,” NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1738, Vol. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. SenateReports, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 142: *Report of the Joint Committee on the conduct of the war, at the second session thirty-eighth congress; Red River Expedition* (Washington, 1865), iv, xiv. See also Henry O. Robertson, *The Red River Campaign and its toll: 69 bloody days in Louisiana, March – May 1864* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2016), esp. 68-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. David Hunter to Ulysses S. Grant, May 2, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 3, p. 390. Ludwell H. Johnson, *Red River Campaign: politics & cotton in the Civil War* (Kent, Oh.: Kent State Univ. Press, 1993), 101-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Johnson, “Contraband Trade During the Last Year of the Civil War,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49 (March 1963): 635-52, at 636. Banks to Samuel B. Holabird, April 28, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 3, p. 317. Johnson, *Red River Campaign*, 75-6. J.H. McKee to Frank E. Howe, April 1, 1864, N.P. Banks [Indorsement], April 3, 1864, *OR*,Series 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 3, p. 12. “GNL” to Provost Marshal Alexandria, March 29,1864, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1738, Vol. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Grover to Captain Welch, April 23, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Part 3, p. 269. Testimony of J. Madison Wells, October 26, 1877, Wells Southern Claim Papers. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Deposition of J. Madison Wells, January 16, 1895, Wells Southern Claim Papers. Josiah Chambers, testimony, January 12, 1877, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Recent Election in Louisiana, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., *Recent Election in Louisiana* (Washington, D.C., 1877), 453 (hereafter *Recent Election in Louisiana*). Deposition of Frances A. Chambers, August 23, 1894, *ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Wells testimony, February 6, 1875, Landry Baillio response to interrogatories, April 22, 1872, Case of Landry Baillio, Claim No. 9329, NARA, M1407, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/34/691279/>. Michael Le Gras, testimony, *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]*, 229. Powell and Wayne, “Self-Interest,” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 285. A.H. May to G. Mason Graham, February 2, 1864, in Ira Berlin et al. (eds.), *Freedom: A documentary history of emancipation; 1861-1867; Selected from the holdings of the national archives of the United States*, *Series I, Volume I, The destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 719. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Louisiana Democrat*, February 10, 1864, p. 2. James R. Andrews vs. E.R. Biossat et al, Case No. 6177, Supreme Court of Louisiana, Filed February 15, 1876; *1860 United States Federal Census*, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, NARA, M653 Roll 423, Ancestry.com, <http://interactive.ancestry.com/7667/4231234_00001?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d7667%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=4231234_00121>; Whittington, “Rapides Parish: A History; Eighth Installment,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 17 (July 1934): 537-555, at 545. T.O. Moore’s final address to General Assembly, January 18, 1864. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Thomas D. Miller to W. C. Black, May 19, 1864, Miller (Thomas D.) Letter Book 1864-1874 Mss. 638, LLMVC. “Unofficial,” Miller to Black, September 21, 1864, *ibid*. See also Miller to Black, August 22, 1864, *ibid*. See, for instance, H. M. Vance to J.W. Hays, October 17, 1864, Miller to Lieutenant Taylor, October 17, 1864, Miller to G.E. Louallier, January 27, 1865, *ibid*. Powell and Wayne, “Self-interest,” 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See, for instance, Blair, *With malice toward some*, 132. General Orders, No. 43, Headquarters Nineteenth Army Corps and U.S. Forces in West Louisiana, April 27, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 34, Pt. 3, p. 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *Official Report*, 64, 76, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *Ibid*, 80. On the extent of the fire, see also *Louisiana Democrat*, October 11, 1865, p. 2, Mills, “Alexandria,” 183. *Official Report*, 86-8, also cited in Whittington, “Rapides Parish, Louisiana—A history; tenth installment,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 18 (Jan. 1935): 5-39, at 27-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Donald S. Frazier, “‘Out of Stinking Distance’: The Guerrilla War in Louisiana,” in Daniel E. Sutherland (ed.), *Guerrillas, Unionists, and Violence on the Confederate Home Front* (Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 1999),151-70, at 167. Margaret Texada, “Reminiscences of the C. War.” Haynes to Andrew Johnson, December 30, 1865, Texada Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 15. Haynes to “Friend [Thomas] Texada,” May 21, 1866, *ibid*, Box 1, Folder 14. Webber, “Reports condition of affairs in and around Alexandria,” May 15, 1866, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E4495, Box 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. James B. Sullivan, testimony, *Testimony Taken in Louisiana [Part 1]*, 596. See also Wells, testimony, *ibid*, 581. Henry W. Allen to Lewis Texada, May 22, 1864, Lewis Texada and Family Papers, Mss. 2985, LLMVC, Box 1a, Folder 4. Lewis Texada, Amnesty Papers, NARA, M1003, Roll 0029, Louisiana, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/249/20075646/> (hereafter Texada Amnesty Papers). Joseph W. Texada to Mag Texada, n.d., Texada Family papers, Box 1, Folder 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Barnes F. Lathrop, “Disaffection in Confederate Louisiana: The Case of William Hyman,” *Journal of Southern History* 23 (Aug. 1958): 308-18, at 309-16 (quotations on 310, 312, 314, 316). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. W.B. Hyman to Johnson, 28 June 1865, in Texada Amnesty Papers. W.R. [sic] Hyman testimony, January 13, 1877, *Recent Election in Louisiana*,486. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Dennis Haynes contended that the murder of Rapides Unionists began as early as June 1863. See Bergeron, “Dennis Haynes and His ‘Thrilling Narrative of the Sufferings of… the Martyrs of Liberty of Western Louisiana,” *Louisiana History* 38 (Winter 1997): 29-42, at 32. Haynes to Johnson, December 30, 1865. L.A.B. to “Stel,” April 23, 1864, Bringier and Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 18. Louisiana, First Battalion, Cavalry Scouts. The battalion was mustered out of service in November 1864. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. On Confederate Louisianan concerns about wartime internal subversion, see Ethel Taylor, “Discontent in Confederate Louisiana,” *Louisiana History* 2 (Autumn, 1961): 410-428. Joseph Texada to Mag Texada, June 20, 1864, Texada Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 23. “Letters from Joseph Welsh Texada to His Wife, Margaret (Mag) Ker Davidson Texada April-November 1864; Transcribed by Mary David Baker,” 16, *ibid*, Box 1, Folder 67. The surname may have been “McLeon.” Joseph Texada to Mag Texada, October 22, 1864, *ibid*, Box 1, Folder 24. See Deposition of John De Lacy, January 30, 1879, Deposition of A.H. Mason, January 7, 1875, Case of Elizabeth Spreigle [sic], Claim No. 21620. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Navy casualties: deaths due to enemy action, 1776-1937, Navy Department Library, D25.5 .N38E 1937, 40, Fold3.com, <http://www.fold3.com/image/296187558/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Vallas to Carl Schurz, September 7, 1865, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E 1757, Box 4. Haynes to Johnson, December 30, 1865. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. A.W. Webber, “Reports condition of affairs in and around Alexandria, feeling of citizens toward the government freedmen &c &c Old feuds being fought out among the citizens,” May 15, 1866, NARA, RG 393, Pt. 1, E4495, Box 3. See also Webber, “Reports state of feeling against loyal citizens in his vicinity – a U.S. I. R. Assessor was driven from a small town in one of the Parishes,” April 30, 1866, *ibid*. Matt Ussery and Wm Thornton to “Bvt Major,” August 18, 1866*, Louisiana Freedmen’s Bureau Papers*, NARA, M1905, Reel 53, Archive.org, <https://archive.org/stream/recordsoffieldoo0053unit#page/n1023/mode/1up>. Gervais Baillio, Deposition, Wells Southern Claim Papers, July 12, 1878. See Manning to Moore, December 27, 1864, Moore Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Bartholomew Egan to Moore, May 25, 1866, Moore Papers, Box 2, Folder 16. See also A. Miltenberger and John F. Pollock to Moore, December 11, 1869, Moore Papers, Box 2, Folder 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See Banks to Grover, April 2, 1864, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 24, Pt. 3, pp. 19-20; Bragg, *Louisiana in the Confederacy*, 289. Mills places the number of Unionists in Rapides Parish even lower. See Mills, “Alexandria,” 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. For instance, James H.C. Barlow, John De Lacy, William Smith Calhoun, Charles V. Ledoux, William Morris, and Daniel W. Shaw held offices as Republicans in either Rapides or Grant parishes. (Grant Parish was created in 1869, partly out of land previously in Rapides.) Ivres J. Howard, a declared Republican, served as a commissioner of election in Rapides in 1868. See Ivres J. Howard testimony, U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Elections, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., *Testimony [Part 2]* (Washington, D.C., 1869), 142. Tilghman G. Compton was a self-declared “conservative member of the Republican party” and edited the *Rapides Gazette* from December 1871.See *Rapides Gazette*, December 23, 1871, p. 2.The 1872 Rapides Parish Republican Convention nominated Jessie Clifton as an alternate. See *Rapides Gazette*, August 3, 1872, p. 2.In addition, the *Louisiana Democrat* listed P. Bax and Alphonse Baillio, both free people of color, as members of a radical Rapides parish organization in 1868. See *Louisiana Democrat*, April 15, 1868, p. 2. The commissioners of election were H. T. Burgess, and Nelson Taylor. The Rapides delegates to the Constitutional Convention were M. R. Ariail (who signed an amnesty oath), A. Cazabat, J. H. Newell, and Thomas M. Wells. See *Official Journal*,5. Tunnell, *Crucible of Reconstruction*, 9; Baggett, *The Scalawags*, esp. 262-4, 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Lowrey, “James Madison Wells,” 1061; Texada Amnesty Papers. See also David F. Boyd to William T. Sherman, September 22, 1865, William Tecumseh Sherman Papers (Washington: Library of Congress, 1976, accessed at Lamont Library, Harvard University), reel 10; Lowrey, “James Madison Wells,” 1024-51. H.M. Hyams to Moore, September 10, 1865, Moore Papers, Box 1, Folder 15. Dan T. Carter, W*hen the war was over: the failure of self-reconstruction in the South, 1865-1867* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1985), 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Louisiana Democrat*, September 6, 1865, p. 2. On Biossat’s friendship with local planters, see for instance Thomas Moore to James Wise, May 29, 1866, Wise Papers, Box 2, Folder 13.  *Louisiana Democrat*, September 6, 1865, p. 2. *Ibid*, September 27, 1865, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Louisiana Democrat*, August 2, 1865, p. 2. *Ibid*, September 27, 1865, p. 2; October 4, 1865, p. 2. Lowrey, “James Madison Wells,” 1055-7. Sarah A. Dorsey, *Recollections of Henry Watkins Allen, Brigadier-General Confederate States Army[;] Ex-Governor of Louisiana* (New York and New Orleans: M. Doolady, and James A. Gresham, 1866), 346. *Louisiana Democrat*, October 25, 1866, p. 2. On the alleged defalcation see Lowrey, “James Madison Wells,” esp. 1001-3; or Judge E. North Cullom testimony, January 12, 1877, Thomas C. Manning testimony, January 15, 1877, *Recent Election in Louisiana*, 454-5, 507-8. *Louisiana Democrat*,October 25, 1865, p. 2. *Ibid*, 15 November 1865, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)