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The Governor's Guards: Militia, Politics, Social Networking, and Manhood in Columbia, South Carolina, 1843-1874

Justin Harwell

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The Governor's Guards: Militia, Politics, Social Networking, and Manhood in Columbia,
South Carolina, 1843-1874

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, and support throughout my time in graduate school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people that shaped this thesis into a final product. To my academic advisor, Dr. Thomas Brown, thank you for your mentorship, time, numerous critiques, and encouragement to push the boundaries of this study. I would like to also thank Dr. Joseph November whose Hist. 800 class served as the initial research laboratory for my thesis. To Dr. Fritz Hamer, thank you for reading several drafts and providing numerous suggestions to further develop my thesis.

Gratitude should also go out the archivists at the South Caroliniana Library for finding the John Samuel Leaphart Papers. Telling the story of later members of the Governor's Guards would have been nearly impossible without this important find. I am also grateful to Molly Silliman at the South Carolina Historical Society whose efforts introduced me to a broadside with names and ranks of men in Company A, Second South Carolina Infantry Regiment. Lastly, I would like to thank the staff at the South Carolina Department of Archives for directing me to their online archives database rich with petitions to the General Assembly of South Carolina.

ABSTRACT

This paper reconstructs the history of the Governor's Guards in Columbia, South Carolina from 1843 to 1874. In addition to examining the conditions that influenced the formation of the company, this paper analyzes the ages, wealth, class, and occupations of the men that served in the company before, during, and after the Civil War. Specifically for white men of Columbia's fledgling middle and upper classes, the Governor's Guards facilitated opportunities to network, climb the social ladder, seek political advancement, and influence the social, political, and economic landscape of Columbia.

This work also illuminates the company's involvement in numerous local, state, and out-of-state militia excursions like parades, banquets, holiday celebrations, and anniversaries. The company's participation in these events not only shaped Columbia's community life, but enabled men to publicly display their masculinity and affirm antebellum hierarchies of race, gender, and class. Furthermore, militia excursions likely enabled men to discuss and establish political and economic opportunities between cities, transforming certain members, like merchants and politicians, into quasi-emissaries.

Lastly, this paper discusses the impact of the Civil War on volunteer militia companies like the Governor's Guards. Despite South Carolina's ban on volunteer militia companies after the war, men found ways to circumvent the law by forming rifle clubs that nearly mirrored the purpose of pre-war volunteer companies. In addition to forming rifle clubs, pre-war militia members created politically influential and powerful Civil War survivor associations that worked to elevate and promulgate the Lost Cause narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1843, fifty-four residents of Richland County, South Carolina petitioned the state's General Assembly to approve and incorporate a new a volunteer company called the Governor's Guards into South Carolina's militia. Most of what is known about the Governor's Guards is detailed in John Bateman's (1914) *Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*. Using oral histories from surviving members, Bateman identifies the founding members of the company and briefly examines how members supported the Mexican War and Civil War. His work largely discusses the company's transformation from a militia company to a rifle club and covers the company's activities after the 1870s. However, Bateman's account is limited in several areas.

He neglects to describe how and why the Guards formed in 1843. His account lists members' names but ignores their ages, occupations, wealth, and birthplaces. Due to his reliance on oral histories from later company members, early activities like parades, banquets, and militia excursions are missing from his account. Bateman also avoids describing how men benefitted from joining the volunteer company. Most importantly, he neglects to consider the relationship between: the militia and community, the militia and politics, and the militia and masculinity.¹

¹ Harry S. Laver, *Citizens More than Soldier: The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 3.

This paper reconstructs the history of the Governor's Guards from 1843 to 1874. It explains how national and state militia reform influenced the formation of the Guards in 1843. Additionally, this paper argues that the Governor's Guards fostered fraternal relationships and facilitated social networking opportunities. The company brought together a class of prominent merchants and local politicians that discussed local issues and devised plans to influence the political, economic, and social landscape of Columbia, South Carolina. The antebellum militia company also provided opportunities for political advancement. Before the Civil War, many members of the Governor's Guards served in a variety of local civic positions like mayor, alderman, and district officer.

Bateman neglects to record the early activities of the Governor's Guards. As a result, the company's influence on community life in Columbia is lost. This paper reconstructs early activities like militia parades, banquets, and excursions to highlight how men of the Governor's Guards influenced social and community life in Columbia. These events typically occurred around holidays or celebrations like the fourth of July. No community celebration occurred without the presence of Columbia's volunteer companies. Residents lined the city's streets to watch the Governor's Guards parade and perform drill. Parades also reiterated antebellum gender roles. Men often joined volunteer companies to display their masculinity in front of public audiences. Newspapers commonly highlighted the presence of women at militia parades, suggesting their presence was necessary to validate the masculine role of the volunteer company and its men.

Lastly, this paper highlights the rise of Reconstruction rifle clubs and Civil War survivor associations. At the start of the Civil War, the Confederate army was primarily

comprised of volunteer militia companies. After the Civil War, state officials banned volunteer companies to ensure southern men did not raise arms against the state. Without the volunteer company, younger men in the Columbia found limited social groups to display their masculinity. Simultaneously, former volunteer members and Confederate veterans lacked institutions to network and influence politics. As a result, men circumvented state law to create survivor associations and rifle clubs that nearly mirrored antebellum volunteer companies and enabled men to display their masculinity and shape the political, economic, and social landscape of Columbia, South Carolina after the Civil War.

CHAPTER 1

MILITIA REFORM: CREATING SPACE FOR VOLUNTEER COMPANIES

Following the death of Governor Patrick Noble in 1840, Barnabas Henagan became South Carolina's 33rd governor. Standing before the General Assembly for the first time, Henagan committed to maintaining a well-functioning state militia. He announced that "it is one of your highest and most sacred duties, to maintain an efficient militia organization, as in the rapid current of events, no one can tell how soon we may be called upon, to exert our whole power in defense of our altars and firesides."² Since its earliest years, the United States depended on a decentralized defense system through state-controlled militias rather than a large federally controlled army. In 1808, the President of the United States required states to organize, train, and equip their portion of the militia.³ The federal government agreed to provide states with the appropriate equipment based on each state's annual militia reports. In the event of insurrections or invasions the President was authorized to call on state militias to support military operations for a limited time. However, by the early 1820s, even avid supporters of the militia system acknowledged several flaws. In 1826, Secretary of War, James Barbour, commissioned military officers to study the conditions of the national militia system. The

² Barnabas Kelet Henagan, Governor's Message, November 24, 1840, South Carolina State Library Digital Collections.

³ Paul Smith, "Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 15, no. 1 (1919): 21.

Barbour Board gathered testimonies from across the nation and concluded that the militia system required reform.

The board presented James Barbour with six improvements. The first was to cut the active militia down to 400,000 men to effectively train and equip a smaller force. In previous years, the U.S. had an active militia of roughly 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 able-bodied men. The Barbour Board suggested that this was too many men to possibly arm and train. The board also argued for the 400,000 troops to be divided amongst states based on population. Thirdly, the board suggested that an adjutant general for militia affairs be placed in the War Department. Fourth, states required a standardized command structure. Next, the board suggested that the federal government provide militias with drill manuals. Lastly, board officers advocated for a ten-day training camp in every state at the expense of the federal government. According to historian John Mahon, not a single proposed reform was ever implemented. A decade later, “when a substantial surplus built up in the United States Treasury, the government spent no part of it to improve the condition of the militia.”⁴

With no federal militia reform or improvements, militia members increasingly arrived at annual musters with “cornstalks and brooms” in place of firearms.⁵ However, part of the blame must be placed on the states. State adjutant generals often failed to return annual militia reports to the federal government. As a result, states did not receive the necessary funds to train and equip its militia forces. The system was also burdensome. Men were fined for being absent to militia musters. The system of fines was a lose-lose

⁴ John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the Nation Guard* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 81.

⁵ Mahon, *History of the Militia and the Nation Guard*, 81.

situation for many men. Men had to weigh the cost of missing a day of work plus travel or pay fines for their muster absence. When men participated in musters, officers were often late, delaying training. Some even argued that the militia was unnecessary since the United States was not at war nor had an immediate adversary.⁶ By 1840, the national militia system was failing.

Alarms of systematic disarray drove Congress to establish a committee to analyze the condition of the militia and determine proposals to uplift the national militia strategy and system from impending failure.⁷ The committee suggested Congress repeal part of the 1792 militia law that required all able-bodied men between the age of eighteen and forty-five to serve in the militia. Instead, the committee advocated for a drafting or volunteer enlistment system that trained men for thirty days and placed them under the control of the President.⁸ The report also encouraged states to divide men into four classes with varying enlistment lengths and argued for younger men to be called out first during insurrections or invasions. If instituted, the federal government agreed to provide militiamen with regular army pay and uniforms, while the state furnished arms and equipment.⁹ According to historian Paul Smith, the “Secretary of War disapproved of the plan because it did not furnish enough drill days, although it was much better than anything in the past.”¹⁰

The federal government failed to pass militia reform, but after the report, many states remodeled their militia systems. South Carolina’s legislature passed *An Act to*

⁶ Smith, “Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860,” 22.

⁷ Smith, “Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860,” 24.

⁸ Smith, “Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860,” 24.

⁹ Smith, “Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860,” 25.

¹⁰ Smith, “Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860,” 25.

Reduce All Acts and Clauses of Acts in Relation to the Militia of this State, to one Act, and to Alter and Amend the Same. Afterwards, Governor Henagan appointed a Board of Commissioners to create a Digest of the Militia and Patrol Laws. The 1841 Digest of the Militia and Patrol Laws outlined the militia's command structure, organization, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each militia member. Some portions of the law did not change from previous militia law: every male resident between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to join either the compulsory—commonly referred to as beat companies—or a volunteer company. However, after the 1841 militia statute, South Carolina significantly increased its number of militia divisions, brigades, and regiments.

After the first Congressional Militia Act of 1792, in 1794, South Carolina's legislature passed, *An Act to organize the Militia throughout the State of South Carolina in conformity with the Act of Congress*, organizing the state's militia into two divisions, nine brigades, and thirty-nine regiments. The 1841 militia statute increased the state's militia to five divisions, ten brigades, and forty-six infantry regiments. While South Carolina increased its compulsory militia system, states in the northeast took a different approach to militia reform. States like Massachusetts, Delaware, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, and New York abolished mandatory militia service, instead opting for an all-volunteer force through the use of volunteer militia companies.¹¹

Across the nation, militia reform depended on regional and local concerns. After 1830, New England wrestled with rapid industrialization and urbanization. The region

¹¹ Michael J. Golden, "The Dormant Second Amendment: Exploring the Rise, Fall, and Potential Resurrection of Independent State Militias," *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 21, no. 4 (2013): 1028.

experienced riots, mobs, and violence related to “issues of race, slavery-anti-slavery, and ethnic antipathies.”¹² With a limited police presence, many New England states turned to voluntary organizations like volunteer militias to maintain law and order.¹³ Southern cities like Columbia and Charleston in South Carolina also used volunteer companies to quell riots and mobs. However, unlike New England states, South Carolina depended on its compulsory militia to conduct slave patrols.

South Carolina’s militia and patrol systems were influenced by fear. The unforgotten memories of Haitian Independence (1804), the insurrection plot by Denmark Vesey (1822), and Nat Turner’s rebellion (1831), cemented anxiety and suspicion of South Carolina’s enslaved population. By 1840, in Richland County, South Carolina, the black population was three-times higher than the white population.¹⁴ Responding to an emerging black majority, state officials passed the 1839 Slave Patrol Act. Two years later, the state reformed its militia system by passing the 1841 militia statute. With the two systems in place, South Carolina created a robust defense system to maintain enslaved labor and deter insurrections.

In South Carolina, all able-bodied white men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to perform slave patrol duty. During petty musters—not annual musters with the battalion, beat officers or captains selected white men from beat companies to serve on the slave patrol until the next petty muster.¹⁵ Beats represented a

¹² Robert Reiders, “Militia and Public Order in Nineteenth Century America,” *Journal of American Studies* 11, no. 1 (April 1977): 88.

¹³ Mahon, *History of the Militia and the Nation Guard*, 85.

¹⁴ John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 119.

¹⁵ Thomas Cooper and David James McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 11 (Columbia, 1873), 65.

geographic area where men performed militia and patrol duty. The term “beat” is associated with the line or ordinary militia. The majority of the population served in beat companies. However, some men—wealthy and prominent members of a community—served in volunteer companies that operated relatively autonomous from the ordinary militia. Although considered semi-independent organizations, members of volunteer companies were expected to perform patrol duty unless they fell into a position or category that exempted them from ordinary militia responsibilities.¹⁶ If not, all “officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, of volunteer companies” were required to “perform the same duties, and liable to the same fines and penalties, as other officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the militia.”¹⁷ Volunteers did not perform

¹⁶ Cooper and McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 220-221. The following positions were exempt from militia duty and likely patrol duty: “The members of both branches of the General Assembly, and their respective officers, for fifteen days before the sitting, during the session, and fifteen days after the adjournment thereof; all regularly officiating clergymen; all regular licensed practicing physicians; the Faculty and Officers in the South Carolina College; Professors in Theological Schools; Schoolmasters having their tuition not less than fifteen scholars, and all students at schools, academies and colleges; all Branch Pilots; one white man to each established Ferry Toll Bridge, and Toll Grain Mill, if actually kept by such white man; the Toll-keepers and Lock-keepers of the Santee Canal; the President, Cashier, and Teller of the several Banks of this State; the officers and men of the City Guard and Fire Department of Charleston, and the Charleston Neck; the officers of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company...; the Superintendent and Keepers of the Lunatic Asylum; the Superintendent of Public Works; the Toll-collectors of the State Road; the Lock-keepers of the State Canals; the Keepers of the Arsenals at Charleston and Columbia; the officers and men of the Citadel and Magazine Guard at Charleston, and the Arsenal and Magazine Guard at Columbia; all persons holding office under the United States; all officers who have held, or shall hold commissions in the militia of this State, for the term of seven years consecutively, and all personal under the age of eighteen and over the age of forty-five years.”

¹⁷ Cooper and McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 209.

patrol duty as a company, but within a beat patrol.¹⁸ Beat officers placed all residents within a beat on a patrol roster, to include volunteer members.

Commanders or officers of South Carolina's slave patrols were given considerable power. They were authorized to "take up all slaves who may be found without the limits of their owner's plantation, under suspicious circumstances, or at a suspicious distance therefrom, and to correct all slaves by a moderate whipping with a switch or cowskin, not exceeding twenty lashes."¹⁹ Patrols were also given the authority to "enter into any disorderly house, vessel, or boat, suspected of harboring, trafficking, or dealing with negroes, whether the same be occupied by white persons, free negroes, mulattoes, mustizoes, or slaves."²⁰

South Carolina's second reason for increasing its militia was likely related to the 1833 Tariff Compromise. In 1819, the nation experienced a financial crisis. Northern manufactures responded by advocating for federal policies to protect fledgling industries from foreign imports. John Moore explains that "the federal tariff, which averaged 25 percent of the value of imported goods in 1816, rose to about 33.3 percent in 1824 and to 50 percent in 1828."²¹ As a result, the cost of imported goods increased and southerners feared that manufacturers in places like Great Britain would buy less southern grown cotton. Some irate southerners believed these tariffs to be a discriminatory and tyrannical

¹⁸ Michael Stauffer, "Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 88, no. 2, (1987): 111.

¹⁹ Cooper and McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 65.

²⁰ Cooper and McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 65.

²¹ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 93.

effort to diminish southern income and disrupt the South's dependency on enslaved labor. Radical South Carolinians suggested that northern protectionist policies were unconstitutional. State Unionists, however, urged restraint and advocated to work within the system to reduce foreign tariffs.

In 1832, Congress passed another tariff Act to slightly lower previous levies. However, many South Carolinians did not accept this compromise. On October 22, 1832, Governor James Hamilton, Jr. of South Carolina argued that "the Tariff Act of 1832, by perversion of every principle of common sense and common justice, has been called a compromise between the conflicting interests of manufacturing and plantation States, on principles of equivalent benefit to both."²² Hamilton's remarks were certainly influenced by Vice-President John C. Calhoun. Calhoun—a South Carolinian—wrote to Hamilton several times in the fall 1832, expounding the concept of nullification. According to Calhoun, if a state disagreed on a law passed by the federal government, states had the authority to call a convention to dispute federal laws. Thus, if South Carolina called a convention and determined the tariffs to be unconstitutional, the state could nullify the tariff.

In 1828, the majority of representatives in South Carolina's General Assembly were not advocates for nullification. This changed in 1832, when proponents of nullification, called Nullifiers, claimed a majority of house and senate seats. Soon after the 1832 election, Governor Hamilton urged members of the General Assembly to form a convention to consider a response to the Tariff Act of 1832. Hamilton stated, "I cannot

²² James J. Hamilton, "The Governor's Message: Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives, reconvention to debate S.C.'s response to the Tariff Act of 1832," University of South Carolina: Digital Collections.

but look forward to the deliberations and final decision of this high and authoritative body, as the blessed means, not only, of finally redressing our wrongs but of uniting our whole people in one common mode and purpose of resisting oppression, and in patriotic and fraternal bonds of concord.”²³ Furthermore, according to Hamilton, the 1832 tariff resembled “the impress of the legislation of an independent sovereignty to a feeble and distant colony, and establishes the revolting discrimination that the labour of the South is less entitled to the paternal regard of this Government, than that of a more favored section of the Union.”²⁴ Heeding the governor’s call, on November 24, 1832, a convention of delegates produced, *An ordinance to nullify certain acts of the Congress of the United States, purporting to be laws laying duties and imposts on the importation of foreign commodities*. Delegates declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 to be unconstitutional. After February 1, 1833, state and federal officials were prohibited from collecting taxes.

In December 1832, South Carolinians were surprised by President Andrew Jackson’s response to nullification. The president ordered federal troops and revenue collectors to Charleston. If required, he intended to enforce the law through military force. As senator, Calhoun urged South Carolinians to lower their temper and disunion rhetoric. In the early part of 1833, Calhoun prevented the state from implementing the Nullification Ordinance by securing a compromise to gradually reduced tariff rates to 1816 levels. However, many South Carolinians believed if the federal government

²³ Hamilton, "The Governor's Message: Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives, reconvention to debate S.C.'s response to the Tariff Act of 1832," University of South Carolina: Digital Collections.

²⁴ Hamilton, "The Governor's Message: Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives, reconvention to debate S.C.'s response to the Tariff Act of 1832," University of South Carolina: Digital Collections.

renege on the tariff compromise, it would blatantly violate the Constitution and further embroil the nation in sectional political and possibly military conflict.

Under Governor Henagan's governorship in 1842, tariffs placed on foreign imports were set to expire. Henagan's inaugural speech captures the feeling of cynicism towards northeastern states like Connecticut that wavered on committing to the tariff compromise. The new governor began with, "it becomes my duty to transmit to you a copy of the Preamble and Resolutions of the State of Connecticut, in favor of the Protection policy."²⁵ He continued saying:

To this violation of the Constitution, this act of wanton, deliberate injustice, aggravated by the recollections of our former arduous struggles against it, South Carolina will never consent. When that day arrives, if it should, I trust we will be found contending against a common enemy with all the means which God and nature have placed in our hands.²⁶

South Carolina's politicians took a defensive stance against northern policies that threaten the South's dependency on enslaved labor and the exportation of cotton. If the federal government failed to ensure northern states upheld the compromise, Henagan was prepared to respond by all means necessary, including defending the state through military force.

South Carolina's dependence on a large compulsory militia system continued in 1842 when James Henry Hammond replaced Henagan as governor of South Carolina. While speaking to the General Assembly, Hammond voiced frustration over failed federal financial policies and "many instances of unjust and unconstitutional

²⁵Barnabas Kelet Henagan's Governor's Message, November 24, 1840, Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina State Library: Digital Collections, 10.

²⁶ Barnabas Kelet Henagan's Governor's Message, November 24, 1840, Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina State Library: Digital Collections, 10.

legislation.”²⁷ It is no coincidence that the governor opened his speech by mentioning his support for the state Constitution before the Constitution of the United States. Hammond found solutions to wanton federal violations in the people and institutions of South Carolina. Hammond argued that “an enlightened and patriotic people will rally to support, until industry, economy and time shall remove every financial difficulty, and the ballot box, or in the last resort, State Interposition, shall restore the Constitution.”²⁸

Again, as Henagan previously alluded, that the state’s preparedness to counter federal abuses and restore the Constitution depended on a robust state militia. Later in his speech, Hammond stated, “we must be prepared at all times, and under all circumstances, and at whatever cost, fully and promptly to maintain her [South Carolina] principles and her integrity.”²⁹

Hammond was no stranger to the militia system in South Carolina. During the Nullification Crisis of 1832, “militia musters and regimental reviews became a key site of popular political mobilization, especially for radical politicians.”³⁰ As an aide-de-camp for Governor Hamilton Jr., Hammond observed Hamilton’s use of militia inspections as Nullifier rallies.³¹ In this environment, Hammond “quickly recognized the relationship between martial display, local influence, and political authority.”³² In his diary,

²⁷ James Henry Hammond’s Inaugural Address, December 10, 1842, Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina State Library: Digital Collections.

²⁸ James Henry Hammond’s Inaugural Address, December 10, 1842, Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina State Library: Digital Collections.

²⁹ James Henry Hammond’s Inaugural Address, December 10, 1842, Columbia, South Carolina. South Carolina State Library: Digital Collections.

³⁰ Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 265.

³¹ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 334.

³² Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 266.

Hammond's most desired positions included governor, brigadier general, and U.S. senator.³³ By 1841, Brigadier General Hammond led South Carolina's Third Militia Brigade. As governor, Hammond advocated for a robust compulsory militia system. In 1844, Hammond's adjutant general reported that "there was never a time within my experience when it [militia] had attained to a higher degree of perfection, or when it could have been employed more effectively in any of those emergencies which a knowledge of Military affairs is designed to meet."³⁴

Despite militia reform in 1841 and Adjutant-General J. W. Cantey's reassurances of a robust militia system to Governor Hammond, South Carolina's militia system degraded throughout the next twenty years and was unlikely prepared to repel a large federal force. First, the state did not have a professionally trained officer corps to lead the state militia. In 1842, South Carolina created two military colleges: the Arsenal in Columbia and the Citadel in Charleston. Yet, in 1844, South Carolina "issued a report showing that none of the eighty-seven graduates of the two military academies had become a professional soldier."³⁵ Secondly, the state's militia was likely poorly equipped. Federal allocation of arms and equipment were based on annual militia reports submitted by the states. From 1846 to 1860, South Carolina sent only four militia reports to the federal government.³⁶ The state's returns mirrored similar trends around the south.

³³ Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*, 150.

³⁴ Adjutant-General J. W. Cantey to Governor James H. Hammond on the state of the militia, October 29, 1844, series number S165009, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

³⁵ Higginbotham, "The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context," *The Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 1 (February 1992): 19.

³⁶ Smith, "Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860," 23.

According to Don Higginbotham, “during the antebellum period, all the New England states, save one, submitted annual militia returns 65 percent or more, whereas only three southern states issued reports at least 50 percent of the time, and then other states from Dixie did so no quite a third of the time.”³⁷ In March 1860, South Carolinian James Johnson Pettigrew—former officer of the Washington Light Infantry and future Confederate general—agreed that “the military spirit is more generally diffused in this State than any other, and the system is quite, perhaps superior, in efficiency to that of any of its compeers.”³⁸ However, he argued that the militia system—even if one of the best—had “become defective and inapplicable to the changing necessities of the times.”³⁹ According to Pettigrew, South Carolina’s militia was incapable of amassing and responding rapidly to a crisis or insurrection. He asserted that the “present system, as a whole, has lost its influence” and in “the city it is almost defunct, and in the country its yoke is borne with infinite restlessness.”⁴⁰ Pettigrew suggested that officers lacked proper training and military knowledge, militiamen of the lower ranks were lazy, required modern arms, and lacked the fortitude to withstand battle fatigue, and fatigue men were incapable of digging fortifications and clearing paths for logistical support.⁴¹ According to state officials, militia reform effectively addressed growing concerns of insurrections and federal abuses. Speeches by state officials seeking re-election, fourth of July orators, and antebellum newspapers likely projected a false sense of militia preparedness.

³⁷ Higginbotham, “The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context,” 14.

³⁸ James Johnson Pettigrew, “The Necessity for Improved Military Defenses Considered,” *Russell’s Magazine*, March 1860, 6, 529.

³⁹ Pettigrew, “The Necessity for Improved Military Defenses Considered,” 530.

⁴⁰ Pettigrew, “The Necessity for Improved Military Defenses Considered,” 531.

⁴¹ Pettigrew, “The Necessity for Improved Military Defenses Considered,” 533.

However, at the local level, in particular militia officers like Pettigrew, challenged notions that South Carolina's militia system was prepared to exert the state's "whole power in defense of [the state's] altars and firesides."

Even with apparent flaws, early militia reform enlarged the compulsory militia system and opened space for new volunteer companies. Between 1840 and 1845, 19 new volunteer companies were incorporated into South Carolina's militia system.⁴² However, state officials remained dependent on a compulsory militia system and placed several restrictions and limitations on volunteer companies. First, the 1841 militia statute limited two volunteer companies per regiment to ensure volunteer companies did not outnumber beat companies. Men of volunteer companies were also required to carry a certificate of membership. If men presented a false certificate, they faced court martial, conviction, and a permanent ban from future membership in a volunteer company. Furthermore, if the raising of a new volunteer company reduced the size of a beat company to less than forty men, the volunteer company commander was required to transfer a sufficient number of men to reconstitute the beat company.⁴³ Lastly, volunteer companies were expected to muster with beat companies twice a year: once with the battalion and another with the regiment.⁴⁴

Limitations and restrictions did not hinder volunteer companies from becoming semi-independent organizations. They created their own By-Laws and Constitutions, and

⁴² Stauffer, "Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859," 114-116.

⁴³ Cooper and McCord, *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina: Acts from 1838-1849*, 208-209.

⁴⁴ Stauffer, "Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859," 111.

elected their own officers. To ensure its members were of a particular social background, volunteer companies were also highly selective organizations. Its members were often lawyers, physicians, planters, local politicians, and merchants. Unlike the beat militia, they furnished their own uniforms, arms, and equipment, and paid monthly dues and travel expenses. Thus, volunteer members had the “affluence, time, and social prestige to devote to soldiering.”⁴⁵ As affluent members of society, they held extravagant banquets which included state officials, dignitaries, and members from other volunteer companies. During George Washington’s birthday and fourth of July celebrations, volunteer companies paraded in gaudy and flamboyant uniforms to distinguish themselves from beat companies. After parades, members often competed in friendly shooting competitions at local shooting ranges. However, despite all their drilling, parading, and specializing in infantry, artillery, or calvary, volunteer companies were not elite military units. According to James Pettigrew, “volunteer units were elitist and social in nature, hardly a source of state security.”⁴⁶

While volunteer companies were elitist and social in nature, they were critical to the fabric of antebellum communities. Across the nation, no social activity was complete without the presence of volunteer companies. According to historian John Mahon, “festivals would have been a drab without the volunteer militia, the units of which were easy to involve in public appearances.”⁴⁷ When volunteer companies paraded during

⁴⁵ Reiders, “Militia and Public Order in Nineteenth Century America,” 86.

⁴⁶ Higginbotham, “The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context,” 18.

⁴⁷ Mahon, *History of the Militia and the Nation Guard*, 85.

annual events and company anniversaries, residents lined town and city streets to catch a glimpse.

Antebellum militia reform and political concerns enabled the growth of volunteer companies in South Carolina. But men joined volunteer companies for reasons beyond the fears of insurrections and federal abuses. Volunteer companies provided political advancement, networking, prestige, and opportunities to display masculinity in public places. For these reasons, in 1843, men in Columbia, South Carolina formed the Governor's Guards.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDING THE GOVERNOR'S GUARDS

During the summer of 1843, James D. Tradewell, William W. Eaton, Michael Clark, Joseph Cooper and 50 other Richland County residents petitioned the General Assembly to incorporate a new volunteer militia company called the Governor's Guards into South Carolina's Twenty-Third Militia Regiment. However, to maintain the integrity of Columbia's beat companies, the 1841 militia law allowed only two volunteer companies per regiment. In 1843, the Richland Guards and the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company were attached to the Twenty-Third Regiment, preventing further volunteer companies from joining the regiment. Well versed in the 1841 statute, petitioners for the Governor's Guards argued that the Richland Guards had consistently failed to retain the number of members required, per law, to maintain a company. Pressing the issue further, the petition stated:

Members of the Richland Guards are drawn from the county beyond the limits of the Town of Columbia, which your petitioners, with two exceptions only, are residents of the town, the population of which has now become so large, as to admit of the raising of a third Volunteer Company in the Regiment, without the slightest injury to any of the Beat Companies, or to either of the Volunteer Corps already in existence.⁴⁸

Perhaps expecting their official recognition in the coming months, the Governor's Guards held their first public parade on October 7, 1843. Captain James Tradewell, First

⁴⁸ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1843, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 00118.

Lieutenant William Eaton, Second Lieutenant Joseph Cooper, Third Lieutenant Michael Clark, and First Sergeant Charles B. Hubbell led the company through the town of Columbia. Blue with yellow facings, the Guards' dress uniform equaled the style of older uniformed or volunteer companies like the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company of Columbia and the Washington Light Infantry of Charleston, South Carolina. Unlike men in the compulsory beat companies, all members of volunteer companies wore dress uniforms. This distinction was necessary to distinguish volunteer companies from beat companies. One Columbia resident later reflected that white males between the ages of 18 and 45 were required to serve "military duty, either in uniformed companies or the 'Beats,' as those God-forsaken-looking soldiers used to be called."⁴⁹ In Charleston, volunteer members could spend between ten and fifty-dollars on a uniform in 1849.⁵⁰ The cost alone narrowed the demographics of men capable of joining a volunteer company. As a result, the Governor's Guards became a selective organization, primarily open by invitation only to white men of the fledgling middle and upper social classes.

The Guards' new uniform symbolized social status and wealth, but also masculinity. Beyond the confines of war, drill and parade enabled men to demonstrate their masculinity to a public audience. Following the Guards' first parade, the *Columbia Chronicle* reflected on the Guards' martial discipline, stating that "their deportment was very soldier-like, and their evolutions...performed with great accuracy, indeed very

⁴⁹ Julian A. Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C., and Incidents Connected Therewith* (Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1905), 129.

⁵⁰ Michael Stauffer, "Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859," 110.

superior to many older companies.”⁵¹ The *Columbia Chronicle* captured the first moment in which the men of the Guards “subjected themselves to martial discipline” and demonstrated “not only masculinity, but adult masculinity.”⁵² Months after the Governor’s Guards’ first parade, the General Assembly convened to consider a number of laws and petitions, including the incorporation of the Guards into the South Carolina militia. And on December 19, 1843, the Governor’s Guards were incorporated and attached to the Twenty-Third Regiment, Fifth Brigade, and Third Division of the South Carolina Militia.⁵³

Members of the new Governor’s Guards were different ages and came from different parts of the country, but many shared similar occupations. They were lawyers, merchants, planters, shop keepers, elected officials, war veterans, and skilled artisans. Of the original members for whom detailed information is available, nearly half (10) were from free states like Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Maine, while the other half (11) were born in South Carolina. When Connecticut-born Amos Bostwick arrived in Columbia in the early part of 1844, he was invited to observe the Guards’ occasional drills at the town hall. During one drill, Bostwick noticed that the Governor’s Guards’ uniform resembled the uniforms worn by the New Haven Grays in

⁵¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, October 7, 1843 (Charleston, South Carolina), reprinted the event based on original reporting on the parade by the *Columbia Chronicle* (Columbia, South Carolina).

⁵² Mark Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1983-1858,” PhD diss., (Ohio State University, 1995), 342.

⁵³ Stauffer, “Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859,” 115.

Connecticut, perhaps because several members of the Guards, like Thomas E. Clarke, were former volunteer members in the New Haven Grays.⁵⁴

Bostwick was eager to join the new volunteer company. As a former member of Connecticut's Governor's Foot Guards, he understood that membership in the Governor's Guards meant an opportunity to display his masculinity through martial discipline. Additionally, as a merchant, the Governor's Guards enabled Bostwick to network with other merchants in the company. As a new member, Bostwick likely met Robert C. Anderson, a native of New Jersey and a member of Columbia's fledgling merchant class. Anderson joined the Governor's Guards at the age of 22, and by 1850, he owned and operated a thriving clothing store on Main Street called R. C. Anderson & Company. He travelled often during the 1840s and 1850s, stopping briefly at the Charleston Hotel to catch some rest before departing the Charleston port for places like New York. Anderson's thriving business was destroyed by fire after General Sherman's army entered the city of Columbia in February 1865.

Another merchant and northern-born Governor's Guards member was Asher Palmer. Palmer was born in Bangor, Maine about 1815, and opened a plumbing and tinning establishment in Columbia. One newspaper advertised that Palmer was the "sole agent for half" of South Carolina's tinning and plumbing.⁵⁵ Despite his northern roots, locals considered him a "warm friend of the soldiers, and assisted them in many ways."⁵⁶ During the Civil War, Palmer was an agent for South Carolina's Central Association for

⁵⁴ John Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898* (Columbia: R. L. Bryan Company, 1914), 6. Bateman's work is available at the South Caroliniana Graniteville Room at the University of South Carolina.

⁵⁵ *The Newberry Weekly Herald*, March 17, 1869 (Newberry, South Carolina).

⁵⁶ *The News & Courier*, May 24, 1886, Findagrave.com (accessed February 7, 2021)

Relief. He transported articles of food, clothing, and other supplies to trains bound for different Confederate commands.⁵⁷ After the war, his wife Georgianna and two sons continued to live in Columbia, selling stoves and tinware, which became a family business. Palmer was accepted into southern society because of his actions during the Civil War, but was perhaps trusted as an agent due to his association with the Governor's Guards and his political affiliation. According to his obituary, Palmer was a "sterling Democrat" and "respected as a man of character."⁵⁸

It was not uncommon for these northern expats to have leanings towards the Democratic party. William W. Eaton, a charter member and First Lieutenant of the Guards, was an avid Democrat. Eaton spent roughly four years in Columbia as a merchant before returning to his home state of Connecticut to campaign for a seat in the state's House of Representatives. By 1859, he was elected to the state Senate. He strongly defended the southern view of expanding slavery into the United States' territories. Despite failing to win the Democratic seat for the U.S. Senate in 1860, he won the seat in 1875.⁵⁹

While the Governor's Guards welcomed northern men, the majority of the original cohort were born in South Carolina. Perhaps the state's most notable original member was James D. Tradewell. Tradewell was the son of Rev. Benjamin Tradewell, a well-known Methodist preacher and Richland County tax collector. After graduating from South Carolina College, Tradewell entered the workforce as a junior attorney in

⁵⁷ Edwin J. Scott, *Random Recollection of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876* (Columbia: C. A. Calvo, Jr., 1884), 169.

⁵⁸ *The News & Courier*, May 24, 1886, Findagrave.com, accessed February 7, 2021.

⁵⁹ "William Wallace Eaton," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present, accessed February 7, 2021.

1830. Shortly thereafter, Tradewell found a knack for politics. In 1834, he was elected as a reading clerk in South Carolina's House of Representatives.⁶⁰ Six years later, he was elected to the state's House of Representatives for Richland County during a hotly contested Presidential election.⁶¹

The 1840 Presidential election between Democratic nominee, Martin Van Buren, and Whig nominee, William Henry Harrison, was an exciting and almost violent event in Columbia, South Carolina, equally dividing Richland's leading men. As a Whig supporter, Tradewell stood at the opposite political spectrum of his future First Lieutenant and co-founder of the Guards, William W. Eaton. Despite intimidation tactics, threats, and calls to brawl in the streets, the election passed with Tradewell being elected on the Whig ticket. Tradewell served in numerous civic positions before the war, but later resumed practicing law in Columbia.

Other lawyers in Columbia joined the Governor's Guards to network with prominent men and pursue future local political positions. Edward J. Arthur was born in South Carolina and became a well-known lawyer in the town. Before joining the Guards, Arthur surveyed much of the land around Richland County, and at the founding of the Guards, he served as the Commissioner of Equity for Columbia from 1843 to 1844. Nearly a decade later, Arthur became Columbia's mayor from 1855 to 1857.⁶²

By the founding of the Guards in 1843, northern and southern-born men were slowly carving a path of influence in Columbia's social, political, and economic

⁶⁰ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, November 28, 1834 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁶¹ *Illinois State Register*, November 6, 1840 (Springfield, Illinois).

⁶² Mayors of Columbia, Richland County Library, The Walker Local and Family History Center Digital Collections, accessed April 2, 2021, <https://localhistory.richlandlibrary.com/digital/collection/p16817coll10>.

landscape, all at a rather young age. The average age of members in the new volunteer company was 26 years old. The oldest member was Elias Pollock. Born in 1806, Pollock arrived in Columbia in 1825 from England. Pollock was presumably the only practicing Jew in a predominately group of men that professed Christianity. However, Pollock had no difficulties practicing his faith in a town that had the second largest Jewish population in South Carolina. In 1846, Pollock, along with several others like Henry Lyons—Columbia's second Jewish intendent from 1850-1851—petitioned the General Assembly to incorporate the Darech Amet (Path of Truth) Jewish synagogue. He spent most of his life as a bookkeeper in Columbia before and after the Civil War. Pollock shared his foreign background with Irish-born John Meighan. As the youngest member, at the age of 18, Meighan found the Guards as a suitable organization to exercise his rights as a new American citizen, express his masculinity, and connect with some of Columbia's rising political and social influencers. By 1850, Meighan sold boots and shoes as a merchant for the G. M. Thompson & Company. After G. M. Thompson's death in 1859, Meighan assumed more responsibility as a shoe trader, amassing a personal wealth of \$10,000.⁶³

Scholarship often portrays volunteer companies as social clubs for elite men, while failing to consider how men used volunteer companies as vehicles to network, influence the local economy, and accumulate personal and real estate wealth. The Guards' armory in Columbia's town hall provided a meeting place for merchant members to discuss economic issues, devise solutions, and consider political options to advocate for change. Members of the Guards often advocated for change by petitioning the state's

⁶³ Data retrieved from 1850 United States Federal Census, 1860 United States Federal Census, and 1859 Columbia, S.C. City Directory; Bateman, 11.

General Assembly. Joseph Cooper—Second Lieutenant of the original Guards and clockmaker—petitioned the General Assembly to extend the Columbia canal to better serve the merchants of Columbia and offset the costs required to ship goods from the Granby Ferry.⁶⁴ William W. Eaton petitioned to repair the Columbia Canal to allow citizens to transport cotton by rail or boat.⁶⁵ When the canal bridge failed to operate, William B. Stanley, Amos Bostwick, and Jesse E. Dent—all original members of the Guards—petitioned to repair the broken bridge.⁶⁶ In 1856, Asher Palmer and Samuel Beard—merchant and original member—petitioned for aid in clearing the Congaree for steamboat navigation.⁶⁷ In the same year, John Meighan and James T. Sims—a planter and later member of the Guards—petitioned the General Assembly to allow the Columbia Steamboat Company to run between Columbia and Charleston.⁶⁸ Although the railroad connected Charleston to Columbia in 1842, many city merchants depended on river navigation to transport and receive goods.

Improvements to Columbia’s economic landscape directly enabled members of the Guards to generate personal and real estate. By 1860, founding members averaged a personal wealth of roughly \$8,000 and a real estate wealth of \$4,500.⁶⁹ However, wealth

⁶⁴ Petitions to the General Assembly, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 03171.

⁶⁵ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1840, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 00062.

⁶⁶ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1840-1843, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 03012.

⁶⁷ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1856, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 03542.

⁶⁸ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1856, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 00021.

⁶⁹ Research is based on available data from 14 members of the original Guards. However, two outliers were removed to maintain integrity of the data. One member had a personal

was also generated by enslaved labor. A majority of original members were not planters, but several generated wealth through enslaved labor. By 1850, seven members of the original cohort enslaved a total of 52 individuals. James A. Kennedy, who was a merchant in Columbia, enslaved 25 individuals. Kennedy would later become an alderman for Columbia's Ward 4. Like Kennedy, Edward J. Arthur enslaved 16 individuals before securing a political position, later becoming mayor of Columbia.⁷⁰

Another slave owner in the original cohort was Robert C. Anderson. As one of Columbia's most prominent merchants, Anderson enslaved two individuals.⁷¹ In 1851, Anderson attempted to reclaim an enslaved man named John Bolding. In July 1847, Bolding escaped bondage and fled to New York. However, after Congress passed the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Anderson submitted an affidavit to a New York court to retrieve Bolding. Bolding was found and arrested. During his court hearing, Bolding's mother-in-law and wife anxiously awaited the verdict in the crowded courtroom. Their fears were confirmed after hearing the New York court commissioner order U.S. Marshalls to transport Bolding back to South Carolina.⁷²

By 1860, a new group of men formed the ranks of the Governor's Guards, but at least five members of the original cohort still generated wealth through enslaved labor. Walter Van Woert was one of the five. Woert was born in New York about 1821. In 1850, he was a police officer in Columbia. It is unclear if he owned individuals as a

wealth of \$64,000 while another only had \$100. Those data points were removed from the average. All data is based on the 1860 Federal Census.

⁷⁰ 1850 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules.

⁷¹ 1850 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules.

⁷² *Poughkeepsie Journal*, September 6, 1851 (Poughkeepsie, New York); *The Evening Post*, September 1, 1851 (New York, New York).

police officer, but in 1860, he became a clerk and owned 11 enslaved individuals.⁷³ Irish-born John Meighan also enslaved at least one individual.⁷⁴ This individual likely labored in the shoe trade or was hired-out to support other industries in Columbia. Whether petitioning to repair transport for cotton sales or enslaving individuals, foreign, northern, and southern-born members of the Governor's Guards benefited from and participated in southern slavery.

⁷³ 1860 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules.

⁷⁴ 1860 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules.

CHAPTER 3

PARADES, BANQUETS, AND WAR FROM 1844 TO 1859

Volunteer companies across the nation commonly participated in “militia excursions”: state-wide parades, drill and shooting competitions, banquets, and inaugurations.⁷⁵ Most militia excursions coincided with popular celebrations like George Washington’s birthday, Independence Day, and the anniversaries of volunteer companies. As community events, annual celebrations were highly publicized in antebellum newspapers. The presence of volunteer companies at celebrations was not only required, but drove community participation. One Kentucky newspaper advertised that a large Independence Day celebration would involve volunteer companies from Kentucky and Ohio. The celebration attracted nearly 800 militia members and “three to four thousand civilian spectators.”⁷⁶

Celebrations often followed similar blueprints. Volunteer companies paraded through the town, displayed their expert drill and skirmishing skills, and concluded their parade at a local church or government building to hear a sermon accompanied by patriotic speeches. In some cases, companies separated from the general celebrations to participate in shooting competitions. However, most militia excursions ended with an evening banquet where speeches and proper courtesies were abundant.

⁷⁵ Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1983-1858,” 348.

⁷⁶ Harry S. Laver, *Citizens More than Soldier: The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 780.

When celebrations began, residents of the local community lined the streets to witness the performance of martial discipline displayed by the parading volunteer companies. Newspapers often highlighted the presence of women in the audience, suggesting that celebrations facilitated the expression of gender roles. Historian Mark Pitcavage argues that “members of the militia desired the presence of women on most occasions, for the admiration and recognition of women was a confirmation of the manly role in which militiamen were engaged.”⁷⁷ In addition to validating masculinity, the presence of volunteer companies at community celebrations reinforced the “social hierarchies of race, class, and gender, while maintaining the cross-hegemony of white males.”⁷⁸ Thus, militia excursions provided white men of the fledgling middle and upper classes the opportunity to network, fill their stomachs, display their oratorical skills with flattering and patriotic speeches, and display their masculinity in a public forum. Columbia residents watching the Guards’ first parade on October 7, 1843, witnessed a distinct class of white men performing a socially approved masculine activity.⁷⁹

In addition to showcasing their masculinity, the Guards’ first parade was perhaps the initial step towards becoming an officially recognized volunteer company in the world of martial discipline. To gain notoriety and recognition, the Guards needed to maintain membership numbers and participate in events held by older, more established companies. Thus, after their first parade, the Guards continued to hold meetings and maintain the required membership per law. Perhaps their commitment to martial

⁷⁷ Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1983-1858,” 351.

⁷⁸ Laver, *Citizens More than Soldier: The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic*, 780.

⁷⁹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, October 7, 1843 (Charleston, South Carolina).

discipline caught the attention of older volunteer companies like the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company. In September 1844, the Guards were invited to attend the Rifle's 28th anniversary banquet. Like most volunteer banquets across the nation, the banquet included food, drinks, speeches, and toasts. Speakers from each company addressed the crowd, exchanging reciprocating courtesies.

It was not uncommon for banquets to turn political. When Captain James Tradewell—a previous state legislator—addressed the banquet's audience, he tackled the state's dismay with the federal government. In the 1830s, Tradewell identified as a Nullifier, but by the 1840s, he supported the Whig party.⁸⁰ As a result, his speech advocated for cooperation, rather than disunion. The *Charleston Daily Courier* reflected on his speech, commenting, “at this season of openly avowed disaffection to the Union, and evident longings and pantings after a Southern confederacy, it is refreshing indeed to the patriot heart to read speech so redolent of the spirit of the Union.”⁸¹ Impassioned, Tradewell motioned:

If this be an occasion when the expression of the sentiments of my own bosom on this subject may be indulged with propriety, permit me to say that if there ever was a time when I could have brought myself to the task of calculating the value of the Union, that time was not now; and I think I may say that it becomes all to re-ignite in our bosoms the fires of a patriotic devotion to the proud and glorious Union of these States.⁸²

Nearly three-months after the banquet, the Guards were on the streets of Columbia parading alongside the students' company of South Carolina College for the inauguration of Governor Aiken. The December 10, 1844 inauguration was attended by

⁸⁰ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, September 16, 1844 (Charleston, South Carolina); Scott, *Random Recollection of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876*, 163.

⁸¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, September 16, 1844 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁸² *The Charleston Daily Courier*, September 16, 1844 (Charleston, South Carolina).

residents of Columbia and dignitaries from across the state. Again, newspapers captured the performance of the Guards. One reporter from Charleston, South Carolina stated, “Capt Tradewell’s Governor’s Guards...reminded me of Uncle Sam’s boys at West Point.”⁸³ The Guards were gaining notoriety beyond the city of Columbia, and Charleston’s own established volunteer companies took notice.

By the 1840s, Charleston was considered the military city of South Carolina. Before the incorporation of the Guards in 1843, Charleston had incorporated at least 21 volunteer companies, representing the largest force of uniformed companies in the state.⁸⁴ As one of the oldest volunteer companies in Charleston, the Washington Light Infantry was organized in 1807 and formerly incorporated in 1824. Like the Guards, the Washington Light Infantry boasted a strong membership of politicians, lawyers, planters, and merchants. In fact, its first commander was William Jones Lowndes, a lawyer, intellect, member of the General Assembly, and later influential member in the U.S. Congress. Since no highly publicized event occurred without a volunteer company present, the Washington Light Infantry served as guards for Lafayette’s visit to Charleston in 1824. The mandatory attendance of volunteer companies suggests that they were more than just a military presence; rather, volunteer members served as representatives or quasi-emissaries for their city. This idea is best illustrated by the Washington Light Infantry’s visit to Columbia in 1842.

⁸³ *The Charleston Mercury*, December 12, 1844 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁸⁴ Stauffer, “Volunteer or Uniformed Companies in the Antebellum Militia: A Checklist of Identified Companies, 1790-1859,” 114-116. Before 1843, Richland County incorporated at least three volunteer companies based on available dates.

When the first train connected Charleston to Columbia in 1842, nearly 5,000 citizens crowded Columbia's railroad depot at Gervais and Gadsden Streets. Charleston's dignitaries stepped off the train to be greeted by their own volunteer company, the Washington Light Infantry and Columbia's oldest volunteer company, the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company. The train's arrival connected two of South Carolina's largest commercial centers, but the attendance of Charleston's elite volunteer company, perhaps, secured new relationships between the two cities. After dignitaries from each city met and formal martial displays ended, members of the two volunteer companies likely retreated to the Rifles' arsenal to enjoy food and discuss local and national economic, social, and political issues.

Reports of the Guards' involvement in banquets and parades, perhaps, signaled to Charleston's volunteer companies that a new group of emissaries were available to negotiate opportunities for both Columbia and Charleston. As a result, the Guards were invited to Charleston to celebrate President Washington's birthday and the anniversary of the Washington Light Infantry. The Guards arrived in Charleston via train on the afternoon of February 21, 1845 and were immediately escorted to the Charleston Hotel by the Washington Light Infantry. Early the next day, Charleston's residents were "pleasantly aroused from their slumbers by the inspiring reveille, reverberating along the extended arches of the Charleston Hotel" signaling that the "high spirited and well-disciplined body of soldiers, the Governor's Guards," were preparing for the day's muster.⁸⁵ At eight-a.m. the Guards, and Northern Volunteers and Washington Artillery of Charleston, rallied to muster with the Washington Light Infantry. Once assembled, the

⁸⁵ *The Charleston Mercury*, February 26, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

volunteer companies paraded to the Lutheran church on Archdale Street. Along the way, “the public and the Ladies in particular,” lined the streets.⁸⁶ Again, the mention of women is not insignificant, as members of the militia required the presence of women to validate their masculinity and reiterate the social hierarchies of race and gender in the antebellum south.

The parade of companies halted at the Lutheran church to hear a religious service. When the sermon ended, the crowd was entertained by patriotic songs and speeches. Afterwards, the large militia formation maneuvered to the nearest shooting grounds for a friendly competition. The day, however, was not over. At 5 p.m., the Guards marched to “St. Andrew’s Hall... , where by invitation of the Washington Light Infantry, they, with numerous guests, partook of a sumptuous dinner.”⁸⁷ Guests included “his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, Governor Aiken, with his suite, also the Field Officers of the 16th and the 17th Infantry.”⁸⁸ The dinner was enlivened with speech, song, and sentiment.⁸⁹ Capt. Tradewell’s eloquent oratory skills were on full display that evening.

When the Guards returned to Columbia, they immediately held a meeting to adopt six-resolutions associated with their visit. The resolutions were mainly statements of gratitude. The Guards hoped to “have an early opportunity of reciprocating the attentions and hospitalities which the gallant soldiery of [Charleston] lavished upon” the Governor’s Guards.⁹⁰ The Guards also adopted a resolution to thank Mr. Hacker of the rail road company for “the handsome accommodations furnished by him for

⁸⁶ *The Charleston Mercury*, February 27, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁸⁷ *The Charleston Mercury*, February 26, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁸⁸ *The Charleston Mercury*, February 26, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁸⁹ *The Charleston Mercury*, February 26, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁹⁰ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, February 28, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

transportation.”⁹¹ While the Guards could have privately thanked the Washington Light Infantry for the invitation, the Guards’ public praise highlights the inseparable relationship between martial discipline, masculinity, and honor.⁹² This event was important for members of the Guards to solidify their status as not only men, but white men of a particular social class in South Carolina.

By 1846, debate surrounding the annexation of Texas reached a tipping point. President James K. Polk called for 50,000 volunteers to join the Union’s fight against Mexico. Accordingly, South Carolina raised one regiment, appropriately called the Palmetto Regiment. Several companies from different South Carolina’s districts readied for service. When the Chester Volunteers arrived in Columbia, the Governor’s Guards, Richland Volunteer Rifle Company, and the College Cadets escorted the Chester company to the front of the state house to offer volunteers for the war.⁹³

For some members of the Guards, this war was not their first. Michael Clark, James Tradewell, and James Cooper participated in expeditions against the Seminole Native American tribes in Florida. Clark, who joined the Guards in 1843 as third lieutenant, was a native of South Carolina. Born in 1818, he studied medicine and became a physician in Columbia before the war. When South Carolina called for Mexican War volunteers, Clark immediately answered the call. Clark and William B. Stanley were appointed as lieutenants in Company H of the Palmetto Regiment. Before Clark departed for war, the Guards presented him with a pearl handled sword to carry into battle. Clark and Stanley’s regiment travelled via rail from Charleston to Atlanta and

⁹¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, February 28, 1845 (Charleston, South Carolina).

⁹² Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1783-1858,” 348.

⁹³ *Edgefield Advertiser*, December 16, 1846 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

took the Alabama river to Mobile. There they boarded a steamer for the island of Lobos to join General Scott's forces. During the Battle of Chapultepec, the Palmetto Regiment charged through an open meadow to reach the fort's wall.⁹⁴ During the attack, Clark was struck in the hand by a ball, splintering "a portion of the mother-of-pearl" sword grip. Clark returned the sword in 1880, and it hung in the Guards' armory until 1899.⁹⁵

Despite the ongoing war, militia excursions and celebrations continued in Columbia. On February 22, 1847, Columbia celebrated President Washington's birthday. Reporters from Edgefield made a hasty trip to Columbia to cover the event. They wrote, "the anniversary was celebrated in an appropriate manner by the military companies of the Town...the College Cadets, united with the Governor's Guards, a fine Volunteer corps, and at an early hour, paraded to the sound of martial music."⁹⁶ Citizens, students, and dignitaries, joined the companies as they marched to the college chapel to hear a sermon followed by an enlivened patriotic speech. The *Edgefield Advertiser* reported, "a number of ladies were present, and by their close attention, evinced the interest which they felt."⁹⁷ The intimate relationship between gender roles and martial discipline led reporters to conclude that "the town is healthy, and the society courteous and refined."⁹⁸

In August 1847, the town of Columbia buzzed with excitement when the Washington Light Infantry arrived to celebrate the Richland Volunteer Rifles'

⁹⁴ Robert Gill Mills Dunovant, *The Palmetto Regiment, South Carolina Volunteer, 1846-48: The Battles in the Valley of Mexico, 1847* (Bryan Printing Company: Columbia, 1895): 8.

⁹⁵ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 8.

⁹⁶ *Edgefield Advertiser*, March 10, 1847 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

⁹⁷ *Edgefield Advertiser*, March 10, 1847 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

⁹⁸ *Edgefield Advertiser*, March 10, 1847 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

anniversary. The schedule of events nearly mirrored the Guards' visit to Charleston in 1845. The Washington Light Infantry travelled "by a special train, which came in gallant style by the power of a beautiful engine."⁹⁹ The Governor's Guards and Richland Volunteer Rifle Company escorted the Washington Light Infantry from the train to their lodging at the Congaree House. Early the next morning, the companies assembled to parade to the college chapel to hear a brief sermon followed by patriotic speeches. Once the public events concluded, the three companies proceeded to "Seatrunk's Spring, and celebrated the anniversary of the Rifle Company, by target shooting and a pic-nic."¹⁰⁰ There, the Washington Light Infantry received a silver cup from the Rifles and a plume from the Governor's Guards. The event concluded with an evening banquet at Columbia's town hall. Company men exchanged congratulations and practiced their oratorical skills through various speeches. The importance of the weekend was summarized by the *Charleston Daily Courier*: "It tends not only to promote social and good feeling, but creates a generous emulation in military discipline... and even tends to cement the bond of our political union."¹⁰¹

For the remainder of the year, Columbia continued to be a hub for militia excursions and special visits. Only months after the Washington Light Infantry's visit, Columbia's volunteer companies welcomed the Washington Artillery from Charleston. However, two-days earlier, the realities of war reached Columbia. Major N. R. Eaves—senator from Chester—and Lieutenant William Stanley arrived from the "perils and

⁹⁹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, August 11, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁰⁰ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, August 11, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁰¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, August 12, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

glories of their Mexican campaign.”¹⁰² The two men were greeted at the station by the Governor’s Guards and Richland Volunteer Rifle Companies, followed by a “torch-light procession of citizens, with banners flying and music playing.”¹⁰³ However, Major Eaves’ “fine health and spirits” did not match the battle-fatigued Lieutenant Stanley. Suffering from the toils of war, Lieutenant Stanley was immediately taken to his residence by the Governor’s Guards and Richland Volunteer Rifles. While newspapers often reported the gallant and honorable actions on the battlefield, Stanley represented the physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion experienced by war veterans. As a war veteran, in 1856, Stanley helped found the Palmetto Association of Columbia—later shortened to Palmetto Association—for Palmetto Regiment veterans. He served as the organization’s president until 1879.¹⁰⁴

A week after Stanley returned to Columbia in December 1847, another member of the Guards returned home. Columbia’s residents cheerfully welcomed Brigadier General James Shields and Lieutenant Michael Clark. General Shields was an important figure for South Carolinians. During the Mexican War, the Palmettos were placed in General Shields’ brigade. At the Battle of Churubusco, Colonel P. M. Butler, who was the commander of the Palmetto Regiment, was fatally wounded during the engagement. According to witnesses, General Shields dashed through company lines of the Palmettos shouting, “*Palmettos! Your Colonel has fallen! Avenge his death!*”¹⁰⁵ After Butler’s

¹⁰² *The Charleston Daily Courier*, December 9, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁰³ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, December 9, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁰⁴ Jack Allen Meyer, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment Volunteer, 1846-1917* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1996), 182.

¹⁰⁵ Jack Allen Meyers, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment Volunteer, 1846-1917*, 90.

death, Lieutenant Colonel Dickinson took charge of the regiment, but was also wounded during the battle and was unable to command. As a result, Major Addley Hogan Gladden led the regiment for the remainder of the war. After promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, Gladden helped to establish the Aztec Club—a gentlemen’s club for relaxation and entertainment during the war.¹⁰⁶ The clubhouse was placed in the home of the former Mexican minister to the United States.¹⁰⁷ After the war, the Aztec Club served as a veteran organization for the Mexican War.

When the train arrived with General Shields and Lieutenant Clark, a “salute was fired from the State Arsenal.”¹⁰⁸ A committee of the legislature received General Shields, while members of the Governor’s Guards rushed to meet Lieutenant Clark. The celebrated party proceeded to the governor’s quarters at the United States Hotel. Along the way, “the street, windows and piazzas being lined with admiring spectators, among whom... many of the fair daughters of Columbia, all [welcomed] the arrival of the noble General and his comrade in arms.”¹⁰⁹

While Clark and Stanley returned home alive, many South Carolinians had a different fate. Accounts vary, but historian Jack Meyer shows that by December 31, 1847, roughly 28.4 percent of the regiment had died.¹¹⁰ In January 1848, funeral services took place to honor the deaths of Colonel P. M. Butler and Lieutenant Colonel J. P.

¹⁰⁶ Meyer, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment Volunteer, 1846-1917*, 176.

¹⁰⁷ Meyer, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment Volunteer, 1846-1917*, 176.

¹⁰⁸ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, December 17, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁰⁹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, December 17, 1847 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹¹⁰ Meyer, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment Volunteer, 1846-1917*, 111.

Dickinson—who succumbed to his wounds after the Battle of Churubusco. Despite personal and political differences between James Tradewell and Butler, Tradewell led the Guards during the funeral procession that included fifteen volunteer companies from Columbia and Charleston. The procession was a “grand, imposing, and solemn spectacle” that “must have been over half a mile in length.”¹¹¹ Relatives, veterans, and citizens came to grips with the brutal nature of war, lining Main Street as the procession ended at the state house.

Following the end of the Mexican War, James Tradewell stepped down as captain of the Guards. In February 1849, the Guards elected Colonel Addley Hogan Gladden as their new captain. It seems that many were surprised “that after his brilliant military career in Mexico, he should accept the command of a company attached to the militia of the State.”¹¹² However, members of the Guards reminded Gladden that “Governor Hamilton commanded a Volunteer Corps in Charleston, after going out of office; and that the lion-hearted Butler, whilst Governor of the State, and afterwards, was in command of the Richland Rifle Company.”¹¹³ Thus, it is likely that Gladden saw the Guards as an opportunity to network with Columbia’s prominent men for future political advancement. Indeed, Gladden’s veteran status and association with the Guards likely influenced his rise to intendant of Columbia from 1851 to 1853. It certainly was not the first-time men used the militia system for political advancement.

In mid-February 1852, as intendant of Columbia, Gladden led the Guards during their first out-of-state militia excursion to Augusta, Georgia. With Gladden at the helm,

¹¹¹ *The Abbeville and Banner*, January 26, 1848 (Abbeville, South Carolina).

¹¹² *The Charleston Daily Courier*, February 3, 1849 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹¹³ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, February 3, 1849 (Charleston, South Carolina).

the Guards gained a new level of prestige and prominence that cemented their status as emissaries or representatives of Columbia. Three volunteer companies from Augusta welcomed the Guards, marking the first time a volunteer company visited from the town of Columbia. The event was historic. It provided an opportunity to re-establish, perhaps, neglected relationships between the two cities. The *Edgefield Advertiser* recalls:

We regard it as a happy indication of a better time coming, when Georgians and Carolinians shall become again as they were in the good days that are past—when our tastes and principles shall have become assimilated by frequent and friendly intercourse—and when there shall be nothing distinguishing us as two people beyond the ostensible paraphernalia of our separate governments.¹¹⁴

The article dismisses readers' attempt to disregard the importance of their message, saying, "when we see a prospect rapidly opening up of a closer intimacy between the two sisters in other matters, we think the estimate we place upon the circumstances is by no means exaggerated."¹¹⁵

By the early 1850s, the efficiency of the railroad network encouraged rapid transportation, allowing Charlestonians to arrive in Columbia within twelve hours.¹¹⁶ The ability to travel quickly certainly encouraged additional militia excursions from and to Columbia. In April 1854, the Governor's Guards, Richland Volunteer Rifle Company, and College Cadets welcomed cadets from the Citadel in Charleston. The Citadel cadets were escorted from the train and marched through Gervais and Richardson streets, where the companies halted at Columbia's Arsenal. A "large crowd of spectators witnessed the reception and the maneuverings."¹¹⁷ Validating the performance of the companies, one

¹¹⁴ *Edgefield Advertiser*, February 26, 1852 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

¹¹⁵ *Edgefield Advertiser*, February 26, 1852 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

¹¹⁶ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 137.

¹¹⁷ *The Charleston Mercury*, April 22, 1854 (Charleston, South Carolina).

news reporter stated, “we have never seen military movements so exact and so satisfactory.”¹¹⁸ Only months later, the Governor’s Guards with the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company, paraded in full-force to celebrate the fourth of July. The Guards marched to the state house, “performing those evolutions that can be well executed only by such a well-drilled corps.”¹¹⁹ Hundreds of spectators witnessed the Guards perform skirmishing—“firing and going through intricate movements.”¹²⁰

While the Guards continued to publicly flaunt their mastery of drill and parade, in fall 1854, members of the Guards sought further distinction from their beat counterparts. They were not alone in their efforts. The Richland Volunteer Rifle Company, Governor’s Guards, Richland Guards, and Carolina Blues, petitioned the General Assembly to create a separate and independent volunteer battalion under the 23th Regiment of the South Carolina Militia.¹²¹ Officers of the four companies argued that four beat companies and four volunteer companies, were “sufficiently large enough to constitute two Battalions of the ordinary size.”¹²² The second paragraph of the petition further describes the reason for independence. The officers stated, “[y]our petitioners would further show that the intermingling of Volunteer Companies with Beat Companies in the same Battalion is apt to produce injurious effect on both destroying that spirit of emulation which alone imparts life and energy to all military organizations.”¹²³ The call for an independent

¹¹⁸ *The Charleston Mercury*, April 22, 1854 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹¹⁹ *The Greenville Enterprise*, July 7, 1854 (Greenville, South Carolina).

¹²⁰ *The Greenville Enterprise*, July 7, 1854 (Greenville, South Carolina).

¹²¹ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1854, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 04647.

¹²² Petitions to the General Assembly, 1854, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 04647.

¹²³ Petitions to the General Assembly, 1854, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Series S165015, Item 04647.

battalion was reported throughout the state by several newspapers. The petition was presented to the state's legislature on November 28, 1854.¹²⁴ In December, the General Assembly passed, *An Act to authorize the formation of a Volunteer Battalion, to be attached to the Twenty-Third Regiment South Carolina Militia, and for other purposes.*¹²⁵

During the antebellum period, the public often portrayed the men of beat companies as drunkards that “poked each other with cornstalk weapons, and inevitably shot their commander in the back with a rusty, antiquated musket.”¹²⁶ An independent battalion further separated volunteer members from the negative connotations associated with men from the beat companies. Separation secured prestige, social status, and distinction within the community. A new battalion also opened up new militia leadership positions that certainly benefitted men seeking political advancement at the local and state level.

After separating, from 1854 to 1859, Columbia's volunteer members continued to participate in celebratory parades, host banquets, and welcome fellow volunteer companies from sister cities and towns. In 1855, when Columbia held celebrations for President Washington's birthday, the *Greenville Enterprise* highlighted that the anniversary “will be celebrated by a parade of the Independent Battalion.”¹²⁷ The following year, the Governor's Guards, Columbia Flying Artillery—which joined the independent battalion in December 1854—and the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company

¹²⁴ General Assembly, *Journal of the Senate of the State of South Carolina*, (Columbia: R. W. Gibbs & Co. State Printers, 1854), 11.

¹²⁵ South Carolina General Assembly, *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly Passed in 1854* (Columbia: R. W. Gibbs & Co. State Printers, 1854), 317. Section I.

¹²⁶ Laver, *Citizens More than Soldier: The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic*, 1.

¹²⁷ *The Greenville Enterprise*, February 16, 1855 (Greenville, South Carolina).

welcomed the Washington Light Infantry to Columbia and escorted the visiting company to their quarters. That evening, the Washington Light Infantry “had sumptuous entertainment at the Congaree House as the guests of the Independent Battalion.”¹²⁸ In the early morning of July 4, 1857, the “Rifle Company, Governor’s Guards, Carolina Blues, Flying Artillery, and Emmet Guards [all part of the independent battalion] paraded, and proceeded through the principal streets, each followed by a large number of spectators.”¹²⁹ The men “went through their skirmishing movements in firing, and attracted much attention.”¹³⁰ On Saturday, May 21, 1859, the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company returned to Columbia from Charleston, and the Columbia Flying Artillery and Governor’s Guards welcomed their comrades and escorted them from the train station.¹³¹

¹²⁸ *The Camden Weekly Journal*, April 29, 1856 (Camden, South Carolina).

¹²⁹ *Spartan*, July 9, 1857 (Spartanburg, South Carolina).

¹³⁰ *Spartan*, July 9, 1857 (Spartanburg, South Carolina).

¹³¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, May 23, 1859 (Charleston, South Carolina).

CHAPTER 4

MEMBERSHIP IN 1859

By 1859, the nation had moved further along towards disunion. In 1857, the Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scot Case that Congress had no authority to forbid or abolish slavery in the territories. While southerners viewed the ruling as legal grounds for slavery, northerners were outraged. A year later, James Henry Hammond—South Carolina’s senator—delivered his “Cotton is King” speech, cementing South Carolina’s militant stance towards those who threatened slavery in the South. In 1859, perhaps the greatest southern fear was realized. Abolitionist John Brown raided the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia with the intent to free surrounding slaves and establish a community of freed slaves in the mountains of Maryland and Virginia. Across the South, communities braced for further abolitionist inspired insurrections. Fears were exacerbated when officials found a map among Brown’s possessions with highlighted X’s. Southerners wondered if the X’s marked locations for future uprisings. South Carolina’s newspapers encouraged panic by highlighting places in the Northeast that celebrated John Brown as a martyr.¹³²

¹³² *The Charleston Daily Courier*, December 6, 1859 (Charleston, South Carolina).

By the time of John Brown's raid, membership in the Governor's Guards had soared. In 1859, the pocket sized-account book of John S. Leaphart—first sergeant of the Guards—listed 90 members in the militia company.¹³³ In some ways, the demographic profile of the Guards had changed, but in other aspects, members of the Guards shared similarities with the original 1843 cohort. Membership had increased from 54 to 90, suggesting the Guards had no issue maintaining the membership numbers required per law. By 1859, most of Columbia's men would have recognized the benefits of joining the Guards. The company was highly recognized throughout the state and beyond as an organization that enabled political advancement, facilitated socialization and networking, and created a space for men to display their masculinity through martial discipline. However, as Columbians calculated the value of the union, it is likely that many men joined the Guards as a mechanism to protect their families, livelihood, city, and state from possible conflict with the federal government or abolitionists inspired insurrections.

By 1860, Columbia's urban population was 4,395 white and 3,657 black residents.¹³⁴ Surrounding Richland County—which focused on the lumber, milling, and farming industries—relied heavily on the county's majority black population of 11,444 compared to its white population of only 6,863.¹³⁵ While the type of labor was different from rural industries, Columbia's merchants, tailors, shopkeepers, cabinet makers, stonecutters, and carpenters depended on an enslaved labor force. Some enslaved

¹³³ John Samuel Leaphart Papers, 1827-1899, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. Researchers should ask for the 1859 account book containing the Governor's Guards. Due to available records, demographic information (age, occupation, wealth, and birthplace) for only 46 of the 90 members is incorporated into this section of the paper.

¹³⁴ Moore, *Columbia & Richland County*, 119.

¹³⁵ Moore, *Columbia & Richland County*, 119.

individuals may have been hired out, but based on available records, in 1859, at least eight members of the Governors Guards enslaved a total of 64 individuals. Out of the 1859 cohort only two were planters like James Sims, who enslaved twelve individuals.¹³⁶ Other enslavers of this cohort were merchants, tailors, stonecutters, and butchers. Samuel Beard co-owned the H. & S. Beard store where he sold fruit and other food items. Beard enslaved nine individuals, amassing a personal wealth of \$5,000.¹³⁷ The following year, Beard was elected—a year after Jesse Dent—Sheriff of Columbia. Born in New Jersey, Milo H. Berry owned and operated a furniture wareroom. By 1860, he enslaved three individuals, accruing a personal wealth of \$15,000.¹³⁸ Garret Van Antwerp was a prominent merchant and tailor from New York. He had spent nearly 20 years living and working in Columbia. He enslaved ten individuals and owned two slave houses. By 1860, Van Antwerp had a real estate value of \$30,000 and a personal wealth of \$75,000.¹³⁹ Throughout his time in Columbia, Van Antwerp's wealth enabled him to make several trips to New York and at least one trip to Paris. As a butcher, Gabriel R. Starling enslaved fourteen individuals contributing to a personal wealth of \$40,000 by 1860.¹⁴⁰ The wealth generated by enslaved labor provided white men with the leisure to pursue membership in social, political, and military organizations like the Governor's Guards. While the leisure to participate in community events like parades was granted to whites, the same

¹³⁶ 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedules.

¹³⁷ 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedules.

¹³⁸ 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedules.

¹³⁹ 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedules.

¹⁴⁰ 1860 United States Federal Census Slave Schedules.

opportunities were not afforded to enslaved blacks. In fact, in 1855, Columbia's police "were ordered to prevent blacks from assembling at military parades."¹⁴¹

The 1843 and 1859 cohort of Governor's Guards were similar in that many relied on enslaved labor. However, by 1859, northern membership had fallen since 1843. During the early years of the company, almost half of the original cohort was from the northeast. By 1859, only eight were born outside of the state and four of the eight were original members. Yet, several northeastern men became prominent members in Columbia's merchant and political scene. In 1859, New Yorker Ralph Brown was working as a clerk at the Assembly House. Thirty-eight-year-old John Townley was also born in New York and after moving to Columbia, he opened the Townley J. & Co. clothing store on Richardson Street (also referred to as Main). On the same street, Washington, D.C. native James W. Gaither, co-owned the Cooper & Gaither watch shop with another member of the Guards and Washington, D.C. native Joseph Cooper. In 1859, Gaither was also a city officer and keeper of the city clock. Another rising merchant was Malcom Shelton from Stratford, Connecticut. By 1859, Shelton had lived in Columbia for nearly two decades. He left Connecticut at the age of 15 to work for his uncle G. M. Thompson. In Columbia, Thompson was a wealthy merchant in the shoe trade and owner of the G. M. Thompson & Company. While working for his uncle, Shelton met the Irish-born John Meighan. An original member of the Governor's Guards, Meighan fostered Shelton's interest and eventual membership in the Guards. Shelton spent years in the company before being elected as first lieutenant in 1859. While working as a merchant and serving in the Guards, Shelton adopted the ideology and

¹⁴¹ Moore, *Columbia & Richland County*, 129.

practice of southern slavery. Like several of his northeastern counterparts, he enslaved eight individuals while working in the shoe trade. By 1859, northern-born Shelton was a sitting alderman for Columbia's Ward 1.¹⁴²

The 1859 cohort of the Governor's Guards were slightly older than the original 1843 members. In 1843, the group's average age was 26 years old. By 1859, the average age was 33 years old. The oldest acting member was New Yorker and tailor, Garret Van Antwerp. Antwerp was 49 in 1859. One of the youngest members was twenty-three-year-old William H. West. West was born in South Carolina about 1836. He owned and operated a saloon beneath the Congaree House, where nearly a year later, crowds gathered to hear updates on the General Assembly's decision to call for a secession convention.¹⁴³

By 1859, the buzz of secession did not hinder individuals from participating in the city's large and vibrant social organizations. Men interested in uniforms and martial discipline could choose from eight volunteer companies, including the Governor's Guards.¹⁴⁴ However, Columbia also hosted the Sons of Temperance and Sons of Malta, along with three groups of Odd Fellows and seven Masonic lodges.¹⁴⁵ Several members of the Guards—original and current—joined or held leadership positions in other social organizations outside of the company. William B. Stanley, an original member of the Guards, was vice-president of the Columbia Athenaeum. The Athenaeum was not only a library, but also served as a space for city leaders to discuss current issues. Robert

¹⁴² The 1859 Columbia City Directory accounts for occupations.

¹⁴³ The 1859 Columbia City Directory accounts for occupations, and the 1860 Federal Census accounts for ages.

¹⁴⁴ Moore, *Columbia & Richland County*, 150.

¹⁴⁵ Moore, *Columbia & Richland County*, 150.

Anderson, an original and remaining member of the Guards, was a Mason and served as president for Columbia's Royal Arch Chapter. For the Odd Fellows's Eutaw Encampment, D. B. Miller, an original member of the Guards and captain of the Richland Rifles, presided as the organization's president. In addition to its many social organizations, Columbia also boasted four fire engine companies. Walter Van Woert was vice-president of the Independent Fire Engine Company. The Palmetto Company had a heavy presence of Governor's Guards. William B. Stanley served as president, Joseph Cooper was the secretary and treasurer, and George W. Meetze was the first axe-man. Meetze was a merchant on Richardson Street with other members of the Guards.¹⁴⁶

As a social organization, membership in the Guards connected a network of local merchants that contributed to Columbia's local economy. In fact, 16 members of the 1859 cohort owned and operated businesses on Richardson Street. As the center for commerce in Columbia, Richardson Street contained clothing stores, grocers, bakeries, dry good shops, tinning, jewelry stores, and doctor offices. Despite the bustling streets, members likely interacted daily. However, most merchants found the Guards' armory in town hall as the proper space to discuss economic issues, devise solutions, and consider political options to advocate for change.

The number of Governor's Guards in political positions from 1845 to 1860, likely eased merchants' and shopkeepers' ability to navigate the local political system when petitioning for economic changes. Antebellum men recognized the relationship between "martial display, local influence, and political authority."¹⁴⁷ Militia historian Mark

¹⁴⁶ The 1859 Columbia City Directory identifies names for each social organization.

¹⁴⁷ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 265.

Pitcavage observes that “the inseparable interconnection between politics and the militia was the inevitable result of the highly politicized antebellum and political culture.”¹⁴⁸

This inseparable relationship ensured “a large proportion of the electorate” was comprised of militia men.¹⁴⁹ The men of the Guards viewed the military organization as a vehicle for political advancement. From 1845 to 1860, four members of the Governor’s Guards served a total of ten years as intendants or mayors of Columbia.¹⁵⁰ Some like Jesse Dent served in other civic positions beyond mayor.

Dent was a South Carolina native with a propensity for precarious violent interactions. In 1851, he nearly died after a violent encounter with wealthy planter Robert P. Mayrant.¹⁵¹ Insults resulted in Dent stabbing Mayrant several times in the abdomen, and elsewhere. Mayrant was able to connect a hammer with Dent’s head, causing a concussion. Despite being hospitalized, both men survived. Dent’s unruly past, however, did not prevent him from becoming Columbia’s sheriff in 1854. In that year, Dent faced an armed mob of college students from South Carolina College. After receiving reports that a number of students attacked police officers, Dent arrived at the scene with a posse “supplied with muskets loaded with a ball and three buckshot.”¹⁵² The belligerent students—many members of the College Cadets volunteer company—retreated, only to

¹⁴⁸ Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1783-1858, Volume I,” 340.

¹⁴⁹ Pitcavage, “An Equitable Burden: The Decline of the State Militias, 1783-1858, Volume I,” 340.

¹⁵⁰ Columbia’s Mayors and Intendants, The Walker Local and Family Center, Richland County Library Digital Collections. One out of the four was Addley Hogan Gladden. He was not an original member, but led the Guards after the Mexican-American War (1846-1848).

¹⁵¹ *The Charleston Daily Courier*, April 14, 1851 (Charleston, South Carolina).

¹⁵² Julian A. Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C., and Incidents Connected Therewith* (Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1905), 38.

return minutes later with weapons. Yet, when the students returned, they were met by “several hundred armed citizens, extending from Plain Street down Main and around Washington.”¹⁵³ Sheriff Dent “appeared as cool as a proverbial cucumber,” ordering his men and the armed citizens not to fire unless attacked.¹⁵⁴ This show of force was enough to disband the students and prevent a potentially bloody event in Columbia’s history. Drilling with the Governor’s Guards likely provided Dent with the skills to lead, organize fires, and maintain control of police, citizens, and the student mob. Perhaps his leadership encouraged voters to elect him alderman of Columbia’s Ward 2 in 1856.

By 1859, several members of the 1843 and 1859 cohort secured positions in Columbia’s local political scene. Under James D. Tradewell’s leadership as mayor, Malcom Shelton served as alderman for Ward 1, D. B. Miller as city clerk and assessor, J. W. Gaither as keeper of the city clock, and Walter Van Woert as cotton weigher. In the same year, three members of the Guards served as district officers: D. B. Miller as coroner; Sheriff Jesse Dent; and William B. Stanley as ex-officio chairman for the Commissioners of Public Buildings.¹⁵⁵ In 1860, with Tradewell still at the helm, three members of the Guards—James Kennedy, William H. Casson, and Robert C. Anderson—served as aldermen for different wards, Walter Van Woert, served as the city council clerk, and Samuel Beard enforced the law as Sheriff.¹⁵⁶ The number of Guards in

¹⁵³ Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C., and Incidents Connected Therewith*, 38.

¹⁵⁴ Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C., and Incidents Connected Therewith*, 39.

¹⁵⁵ The 1859 Columbia City Directory identifies civic positions.

¹⁵⁶ The 1860 Columbia City Directory identifies civic positions.

local politics illustrates the inseparable relationship between militia membership and political advancement in antebellum society.

CHAPTER 5

THE GOVERNOR'S GUARDS DURING THE CIVIL WAR, 1860-1865

By 1860, members of the Governor's Guards permeated Columbia's political, social, and economic landscape. Thus, they were intimately aware of discussions and rumors about what it would mean for South Carolina if Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. They likely weighed the value of South Carolina's place in the Union and discussed their role in a potential conflict with the federal government. In fact, for several years the Guards' armory was a "place of meeting where the local advocates of secession had a chance to display their oratorical powers."¹⁵⁷ On November 7, 1860, South Carolinians' fears were realized: Lincoln would become the next President.

Soon after Lincoln's election, delegates to the Secession Convention arrived in Columbia. Due to rumors of a smallpox outbreak, the convention was relocated to Charleston. For most men in the Guards, the military organization was a social group that facilitated political advancement and enabled networking opportunities. Parading, drilling, and shooting competitions created opportunities for men to display their masculinity in a non-combat environment. However, now, members of the Governor's Guards were faced with the real possibility of participating in combat operations.

¹⁵⁷ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 10.

Three days before secession delegates voted, South Carolina was already preparing for conflict. On December 17, 1860, the state's legislature passed, *An Act to provide an Armed Military Force*. This act enabled the governor to raise the appropriate militia forces to defend the state and, if required, repel federal forces from South Carolina. On December 20, 1860, the Secession Convention voted to secede from the United States. Days later, Governor Francis W. Pickens authorized the raising of ten volunteer regiments. With the governor's approval, the Columbia Artillery and Richland Volunteer Rifle Company travelled to Charleston. Meanwhile in Columbia, other companies from around the state converged at the fair-grounds. Throughout January and early February 1861, the Columbia Grays, Congaree Mounted Riflemen, Richland Light Dragoons, Governor's Guards, and a small group of Richland Rifles, "paraded about the business district, much to the delight of onlookers."¹⁵⁸ After months in Columbia, under the command of Captain William H. Casson, the Guards offered their services in the Second South Carolina (Palmetto) Infantry Regiment, under "Colonel Joseph B. Kershaw, commanding, for twelve months service within the State."¹⁵⁹

The Governor's Guards travelled to Charleston on April 10, 1860 and were stationed on the north end of Morris Island.¹⁶⁰ Four days later, after thirty-four hours of bombardment, Major Anderson surrendered the fort. After the fall of Fort Sumter, volunteers were invited to transfer their remaining service to fight for the Confederate States. Thirty-two members of the Guards elected to stay behind on Morris Island, while

¹⁵⁸ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 184.

¹⁵⁹ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁰ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 11.

fifty-four transferred their service to the Confederate States.¹⁶¹ The Governor's Guards—known as Company A—left for Virginia on April 24, 1861.¹⁶²

A year after their deployment to Virginia, Company A experienced several changes in the chain-of-command. A. S. Salley indicates that Captain William H. Casson was promoted to Major on March 15, 1862.¹⁶³ He was replaced by newly promoted Captain Malcolm Shelton. However, an 1875 broadside of the Second Regiment, indicates that both Casson and Shelton's term of service expired on May 3, 1862.¹⁶⁴ Ten days later, Company A reorganized and elected new officers. Reorganization was partly due to Casson's lack of leadership qualities. Franklin Gaillard stated that "the men are very much dissatisfied with Capt. Casson, through duplicity and insincerity and other qualities, equally uncommendable."¹⁶⁵ According to Gaillard, the men refused to follow Casson. As a result, Second Lieutenant Sherod Leaphart was promoted to captain and First Lieutenant Gaillard was promoted to captain and then immediately to major.¹⁶⁶ Casson relocated to South Carolina and took a leadership position in the Eighth South

¹⁶¹ Robert Seigler, *South Carolina's Military Organizations during the War between the States: The Midlands. Volume II* (Charleston: The History Press, 2008), chapter 3; Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 11.

¹⁶² Seigler, *South Carolina's Military Organizations during the War between the States: The Midlands. Volume II*, Chapter 3.

¹⁶³ A. S. Salley, *South Carolina Troops in Confederate Service, Vol. II* (Columbia: The State Company, 1913), *The Civil War in South Carolina*, <http://www.researchonline.net/sccw/rosters/2ndinfa.htm>.

¹⁶⁴ Company A, Second Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, 1875, call number: 33/122-06, South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁶⁵ Seigler, *South Carolina's Military Organizations during the War between the States: The Midlands. Volume II*, Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁶ A. S. Salley, *South Carolina Troops in Confederate Service, Vol. II* (Columbia: The State Company, 1913), *The Civil War in South Carolina*, <http://www.researchonline.net/sccw/rosters/2ndinfa.htm>.

Carolina Volunteers.¹⁶⁷ Shelton's story is more of a mystery. His name drops from the rolls after the expiration date, possibly indicating that his Civil War career ended. However, Gaillard continued to climb ranks in the regiment, and on June 3, 1863, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel.¹⁶⁸ The following year, Confederate and Union forces converged at Wilderness, Virginia. Sometime during the two-day engagement, Gaillard was killed.¹⁶⁹

On the home-front, initially many Columbians enthusiastically supported the war effort. The Soldiers' Relief Association was established, committees devised plans to care for the city's poor, the Columbia's Ladies' Working association made clothing and material for South Carolina's Quartermaster Department, and the Young Ladies' Hospital Association relocated the Wayside Hospital to Columbia.¹⁷⁰ In 1862, the Central Association for Relief of South Carolina Soldiers was formed in Columbia. The relief organization "undertook to ascertain and supply the wants of [southern] troops, to the extent of the means furnished by the State appropriations and private contributions, sending their own agents to inquire what was most needed by the different commands wherever stationed."¹⁷¹ Original Guards member and Maine native, Asher Palmer, served

¹⁶⁷ Seigler, *South Carolina's Military Organizations during the War between the States: The Midlands. Volume II* Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁸ "2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment," Mac Wyckoff, The Ohio State University, accessed March 26, 2021, https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/Regimental/south_carolina/confederate/KershawsBrigade/2nd

¹⁶⁹ "2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment," Mac Wyckoff, The Ohio State University, accessed March 26, 2021, https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/Regimental/south_carolina/confederate/KershawsBrigade/2nd

¹⁷⁰ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 186-187.

¹⁷¹ Edwin J. Scott, *Random Recollection of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876* (Columbia: C. A. Calvo, Jr., 1884), 169.

as an agent for the Central Association for Relief, providing material to different Confederate commands.¹⁷² However, between 1862 and 1863, Columbians focused on “more long-range planning, schemes to manufacture goods in short supply or find substitutes for them, and concern for home defense.”¹⁷³ Compacting issues at home, inflation was increasing and Columbia was “fast becoming the state’s number one refugee center.”¹⁷⁴

South Carolinians’ worries about the war mounted in 1863 as the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1. By mid-1863, Columbians read about the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Only months later, an all-black Union regiment landed on South Carolina’s soil to storm Fort Wagner near Charleston’s port. Casualty reports from distant battles reached Columbia and Charleston. Yet, men and women on the home-front continued to volunteer their time and resources to support the war effort. In the latter part of 1863, the State Board of Relief in South Carolina distributed food and material to aid soldiers’ families, but by 1864, communities across the state continued to feel “the effects of inflation and the blockade.”¹⁷⁵ Walter Edgar argues that by 1864, “most Carolinians realized that their cause was lost.”¹⁷⁶

For several years, the city of Columbia was viewed as a sanctuary for war refugees. As a result, the city’s population had roughly tripled from 8,000 in 1860 to about 24,000.¹⁷⁷ However, when General William Tecumseh Sherman crossed into South

¹⁷² Scott, *Random Recollection of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876*, 169.

¹⁷³ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 189.

¹⁷⁴ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 189.

¹⁷⁵ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 369.

¹⁷⁶ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 370.

¹⁷⁷ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 372.

Carolina from Georgia on February 1, 1865, local officials prepared the sanctuary city for a possible attack. Columbia's Confederate forces and officials monitored the movements of General Sherman's army through South Carolina. On February 14, 1865, the federal army arrived just twelve miles outside of the city.¹⁷⁸ The following day, artillery shells began to fall on Columbia—primarily hitting the state house. On the same day—February 15, 1865—the city was placed under martial law. William B. Stanley—an original Governor's Guards member from 1843—assisted Mayor Thomas Jefferson Goodwyn and several other councilmen in overseeing law and order.¹⁷⁹ Several of the city's women, children, men, and Confederate soldiers packed the train depot to flee the city. On the morning of February 17, 1865, all remaining Confederate forces evacuated Columbia. Hours later, Mayor Goodwyn surrendered the city to General Sherman's army.

During General Sherman's occupation, portions the city caught fire. Numerous histories detail the events that led up to the burning of Columbia, but several factors are worth mentioning. Before Confederates troops evacuated the city, they were ordered to remove cotton bales. This order was not carried out. Confederate troops were also ordered to not set fire to the cotton, but some reports suggest that troops proceeded anyway.¹⁸⁰ Before federal troops entered Columbia, Confederate officials debated the destruction of liquor, but attention was placed elsewhere once shelling began. When General Sherman arrived in the city “both blacks and whites greeted them with liquor

¹⁷⁸ Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C, and Incidents Connected Therewith*, 159.

¹⁷⁹ Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C, and Incidents Connected Therewith*, 160.

¹⁸⁰ Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 373.

cups, bottles, and buckets.”¹⁸¹ His own troops partook in the spirits and continued drinking into the evening. Federal troops torched Hampton’s home and several other prominent Confederate homes. Between five and eight o’clock that evening, three fires began throughout the city. One historian writes, “broken cotton bales, wooden roofs, drunken soldiers, and gusting winds were a recipe for disaster.”¹⁸² The next morning, businesses along Richardson Street and several residential areas were destroyed. Members of the Governor’s Guards lost fourteen properties to the fire.¹⁸³

On February 20, 1865, General Sherman’s army left Columbia. Several Columbians left the city with the federal army, including members of the Governor’s Guards: Milo H. Berry, Joseph Cooper, and James W. Gaither.¹⁸⁴ Both natives of Washington, D.C., Cooper and Gaither owned and operated a watch and jewelry store on Richardson Street. Berry was an original member of the 1843 cohort. In his early twenties, he relocated from New Jersey to establish a furniture store in Columbia. All three men lost their businesses during the burning of the city. Unfortunately, Cooper and Gaither drop from the records after leaving Columbia. However, Berry returned to Columbia at the end of the war. In 1866, Berry opened a new hardware and commission store in Columbia “opposite the ruins of Janney’s Hotel.”¹⁸⁵ Records suggest that Berry rejoined the company after it converted into the Richland Rifle Club.

¹⁸¹ Moore, *Columbia and Richland County*, 201-02.

¹⁸² Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, 373.

¹⁸³ Selby, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C. and Incidents Connected Therewith*, 196-97. Selby lists the names of those who lost property due to the burning of Columbia.

¹⁸⁴ *The Daily Phoenix*, March 23, 1865 (Columbia, South Carolina).

¹⁸⁵ *The Daily Phoenix*, March 2, 1866 (Columbia, South Carolina).

CHAPTER 6

DISMANTLING AND REBRANDING THE VOLUNTEER MILITIA

The Civil War had a profound impact on the Governor's Guards. Members that transferred their service to the Confederate Second South Carolina Infantry Regiment, fought in thirty-three battles. Twenty-eight men died or were killed and ten were disabled.¹⁸⁶ Others like Captain Sherod L. Leaphart, First Lieutenant P. H. B. Shuler, and Sergeant James T. Wells were captured at the Battle of Gettysburg and imprisoned until the close of the war.¹⁸⁷ While not all members joined Company A of the Second South Carolina Infantry Regiment, all surviving members returned to a city in ruin. With black South Carolinians free and businesses destroyed, merchants and slave owners' ability to generate wealth diminished. To make matters worse for members of the Guards, state officials discussed banning new and dismantling old volunteer companies.

Reasons for banning volunteer companies were obvious. At the start of the war, nearly 80 percent of Confederate forces were comprised of volunteer militia companies.¹⁸⁸ After the war, militia companies like the Governor's Guards were dismantled and banned to prevent southerners from participating in further conflict against the federal government. However, around the city, men of banned volunteer

¹⁸⁶ Company A, Second Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, 1875, (Call Number: 33/122-06) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁸⁷ James T. Wells, "Diary of a Confederate Soldier and Recollections of a Federal Prison during War," 1861-1865, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Golden, "The Dormant Second Amendment: Exploring the Rise, Fall, and Potential Resurrection of Independent State Militias," 1042.

companies quickly found ways to circumnavigate the law by re-establishing social fraternal relationships through local survivor organizations.

In Columbia, surviving members of the Richland Volunteer Rifle Company formed the Richland Volunteer Relief Association (RVRA) and invited members from the Governor's Guards and Richland-Light Dragoons to join.¹⁸⁹ By 1869, however, local survivor organizations merged to create a statewide organization that sought political influence. In August 1869, county delegates from around the state arrived in Charleston to create the Survivors' Association for South Carolina.¹⁹⁰ The state's Survivors' Association collected Confederate records and stories to preserve and promote the Lost Cause narrative. During the first meeting, Wade Hampton was elected as president along with vice-presidents T. G. Barker, J. B. Kershaw and Samuel McGowan. Members of the banned Governor's Guards also served in various roles. William K. Bachman served as treasurer for the Association while Fitz W. McMaster and Sherod L. Leaphart served as delegates from Richland County.¹⁹¹

Before election as treasurer of the Survivors' Association, Bachman served in several local and military roles. He was originally from Charleston and after graduating from the College of Charleston, he travelled to Germany to study at the University of Gottingen.¹⁹² Bachman returned to Charleston to study law, but about 1856, he relocated

¹⁸⁹ Andrew Abeyounis, "Before They Were Red Shirts: The Rifle Clubs of Columbia, South Carolina" (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2014), 9.

¹⁹⁰ Abeyounis, "Before They Were Red Shirts: The Rifle Clubs of Columbia, South Carolina," 5.

¹⁹¹ Abeyounis, "Before They Were Red Shirts: The Rifle Clubs of Columbia, South Carolina," 7.

¹⁹² William Kundhardt Bachman, Antietam on the Web, accessed March 29, 2021, https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=840

to a new law firm in Columbia. Shortly after arriving in Columbia, he briefly joined the Governor's Guards. However, by 1859, Captain Bachman led the Columbia Artillery volunteer company.¹⁹³ His move was not uncommon as several men transferred to other volunteer companies to fill leadership positions. During the war, Captain Bachman led a mostly German speaking artillery company called Bachman's German Battery, Hampton Legion.¹⁹⁴ After the war, he became the assistant Attorney General of South Carolina (1876-1888).¹⁹⁵

Like Bachman, Fitz William McMaster practiced law and held leadership positions in the militia. Before the war, McMaster led the Guards as captain from 1854 to 1857. He also served as treasurer and librarian for South Carolina College. After leaving his job at the college, he began practicing law in Columbia. During the war, he mustered with the Guards to Morris Island, but did not join Company A. Instead, he enlisted as a private in the 17th South Carolina Infantry, but about December 1, 1861, he promoted to lieutenant colonel. Nearly a year later, after the death of Colonel John H. Means, McMaster replaced Means and promoted to colonel. After the war, he served in South Carolina's General Assembly and, was Mayor of Columbia from 1890 to 1892.¹⁹⁶

Sherod L. Leaphart likely served in the Guards under McMaster's leadership. He joined the Guards before the war and worked as a bookkeeper in Columbia. During the war, he promoted to captain after the reorganization of Company A on May 13, 1862.

¹⁹³ 1859 Columbia City Directory.

¹⁹⁴ William Kundhardt Bachman, Antietam on the Web, accessed March 29, 2021, https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=840

¹⁹⁵ William Kundhardt Bachman, Antietam on the Web, accessed March 29, 2021, https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=840

¹⁹⁶ Fitz William McMaster, Antietam on the Web, accessed March 29, 2021, https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=583

Leaphart was already acquainted with vice-president of the Survivors' Association, J. B. Kershaw, as he served under Kershaw's leadership during the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. Together, members of the Association used their social, military, and political influence to shape the narrative that southerners were not traitors to the Union, but victims of a tyrannical federal government. Their efforts influenced education, romanticized the war, and painted southerners as heroes for future generations to admire.

In addition to survivor associations, former volunteer members created rifle clubs. To ensure that clubs did not smell of the pre-war militia, military ranks were replaced by titles such as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, etc. Yet, rifle clubs facilitated similar political and social opportunities as previous volunteer companies. According to Andrew Abeyounis, after the war, a new generation of men were looking for a place to display their masculinity.¹⁹⁷ Like volunteer companies, rifle clubs enabled men to develop fraternal bonds and show their masculinity. More senior members looked to rifle clubs for political advancement. In fact, in 1876, the state Democratic ticket featured several rifle club members, including Sherod L. Leaphart for state treasurer.¹⁹⁸

On July 13, 1874, several members of Columbia's antebellum volunteer companies held a meeting at the Independent Fire Engine Company, for the purpose of organizing a rifle club.¹⁹⁹ William H. Casson and Ralph H. Brown—two members of the disbanded Governor's Guards—served on a committee that drafted the club's

¹⁹⁷ Abeyounis, "Before They Were Red Shirts: The Rifle Clubs of Columbia, South Carolina," 27.

¹⁹⁸ Abeyounis, "Before They Were Red Shirts: The Rifle Clubs of Columbia, South Carolina," 29.

¹⁹⁹ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 13.

Constitution and By-Laws. A week later, the Constitution and By-Laws were adopted, creating the Richland Rifle Club. Casson was elected second warden for the new club. Like volunteer companies, rifle club members wore uniforms. The Richland Rifle Club's uniform was "gray cloth, trimmed with black braid, very similar to that of the cadets of the United States Military Academy, and with white web cross belts, and white, fringed, epaulettes."²⁰⁰ The club was so similar to a military organization that members paraded through the city on November 13, 1874.²⁰¹ In spring 1875, the Richland Rifle Club secured an armory and held its first ball. John Bateman—later member of the reorganized Guards—states that "balls, parades, suppers and barbecues followed each other in rapid succession."²⁰² While antebellum volunteer companies morphed into rifle clubs, the purpose of the clubs remained the same. Rifle clubs enabled men to display their masculinity and foster long-lasting social networks that transformed Columbia's social, political, economic, and racial landscape after the Civil War.

²⁰⁰ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 13.

²⁰¹ Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 13.

²⁰² Bateman, *A Sketch of the History of the Governor's Guards of Columbia, S.C., 1843-1898*, 14.

CONCLUSION

Before the Civil War, the Governor's Guards mirrored volunteer companies across the nation. They attended parades, celebrated holidays, hosted banquets for visiting volunteer companies, and remained critical to white antebellum social life. However, they were more than a social organization for the elite. Instead, like many other volunteer companies, the Guards provided merchants, lawyers, politicians, planters, and shopkeepers an opportunity to build social networks, display their masculinity, and alter the political, economic, and social fabric of Columbia, South Carolina.

While historians often focus on the political and social impact of volunteer companies, they neglect to consider how local economies were shaped by militia members. This paper illustrates how volunteer companies facilitated networking opportunities between local merchants and shopkeepers. Company armories became places where merchants and shopkeepers strategized ways to influence local trade and advocate for local improvements. Petitioning served as their most effective strategy. As highlighted in this paper, militia members of the merchant class consistently petitioned the General Assembly to advocate for new economic opportunities like incorporating new steam boat companies and urging canal repairs to increase the efficiency of cotton transportation. While merchants and shopkeepers personally benefited from these petitions, they also shaped the labor and economic landscape of Columbia before the Civil War. Their membership in the volunteer company not only boosted their social

status, but likely enhanced their ability to advocate and shape local economic opportunities.

Perhaps another overlooked area in militia historiography is how volunteer militia members acted as quasi-representatives for their respective town, city, and state. On several occasions, the Governor's Guards visited and hosted in-state and out-of-state volunteer companies. During these engagements, members of the merchant and political classes likely discussed local, state, and national political and economic issues. When the Governor's Guards visited Augusta, Georgia in 1852, one newspaper stated that the visit opened up "a closer intimacy between the two sisters in other matters."²⁰³ While the article's author does not go into detail about the substantial outcomes of this visit, one can assume that the Guards' visit rekindled political and economic discourse between local and state leaders from Georgia and South Carolina. Volunteer members as quasi-emissaries or representatives and the political and economic consequences of these militia excursions demands further attention from militia historians.

Lastly, this paper showcases how members of the pre-war Governor's Guards continued to project power and influence through post-war survivor associations and rifle clubs. In both post-war organizations, members of the Governor's Guards served in key leadership positions. With tremendous political influence and power, post-war organizations supported efforts to dismantle Reconstruction policies throughout the state. Without participation in the Governor's Guards before the war, it is unlikely that members would have held key leadership positions in survivor associations and rifle

²⁰³ *Edgefield Advertiser*, February 26, 1852 (Edgefield, South Carolina).

clubs. By joining the Guards before the war, members not only elevated their social and political status, but formed lasting relationships with men from other volunteer companies that, perhaps, ensured a mostly pre-war militia cadre would lead post-war military and political organizations. This paper highlights how pre-war volunteer companies, survivor associations, and rifle clubs were intimately linked. However, future studies should continue to examine the pre-war relationships between militia men and consider how they continued to shape South Carolina's political, social, and racial landscape after the war.

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APPENDIX A

GOVERNOR'S GUARDS: MEMBERS IN 1843 (ORIGINAL MEMBERS)

TABLE A.1 GOVERNOR'S GUARDS: MEMBERS IN 1843 (ORIGINAL MEMBERS)

Name	Age (1843)	Birthplace	Occupation (1859 City Directory)	Wealth (1850)	Wealth (1860)
Robert C. Anderson	28	NJ	Merchant (Clothier)		\$60,000 real estate; \$3,000 personal
Edward J. Arthur	28	SC	Lawyer	\$5,000 real estate	
William A. Bass					
Samuel Beard	23	SC	Merchant	\$1,000 real estate	\$4,000 real estate; \$5,000 personal
Milo H. Berry	33	NJ	Cabinetmaker		\$3,500 real estate; \$15,000 personal
Charles H. Black					
George Boland					
Amos Bostwick	24	CT	Clerk		
Alfred Bullock					
Charles Carrington	28	VT	Clerk		
Samuel Chambers	19	SC	Merchant		
William H. Casson	26	PA	Stagecoach Driver		
Michael R. Clark	25	SC	Physician		\$3,000 real estate
Thomas E. Clarke		CT			
Joseph Cooper	32	DC	Jeweler/Clock Maker		\$5,000 personal
William Copper					
Nathan Daniels	28	SC	Farmer		\$540 real estate; \$100 personal

Jesse Dent	33	SC			\$3,500 real estate; \$5,000 personal
William W. Eaton	25	CT	Lawyer		
Henry Edwards					
William A. Edwards					
D. L. Gage					
Edward Gandy					
James Gardiner					
James L. Haynsworth					
D. J. Holand					
James E. Hussey	25	SC	Engineer		
James A. Kennedy	32	SC	Merchant		\$4,000 real estate; \$6,000 personal
James Kerey (?)					
John Meighan	18	Ireland	Merchant (Shoe Trade)		\$10,000 personal
Daniel B. Miller	32	SC	Merchant	\$2,5000 real estate	\$4,000 real estate; \$8,000 personal
David B. Mordecai					
Asher Palmer	28	MA	Merchant		\$3,000 real estate; \$8,000 personal
Elias Pollock	35	England	Bookkeeper		\$4,000 real estate
Benjamin Price					
William J. Roberts					
William B. Stanley	23	SC	Merchant		\$8,000 real estate; \$10,000 personal

James D. Tradewell	31	SC	Lawyer		\$2,500 real estate; \$7,700 personal
William H. Tutt					
Walter Van Woert/Wirt/Wart	20	NY	Clerk		\$3,000 real estate; \$8,000 personal

APPENDIX B

GOVERNOR'S GUARDS: MEMBERS IN 1859

TABLE B.1 GOVERNOR'S GUARDS: MEMBERS IN 1859

Name	Age (1859)	Birthplace	Occupation (1859 City Directory)	Wealth (1860)
Robert C. Anderson	44	NJ	Merchant (Clothier)	\$60,000 real estate; \$3,000 personal
Garret Van Antwerp	49	NY	Merchant (Clothier)	\$30,000 real estate; \$75,000 personal
William K. Bachman	27	SC	Lawyer	
J. S. Ballou			Merchant	
James Beard	47	SC	Clerk	\$2,500 real estate; \$1,000 personal
Samuel Beard	35	SC	Merchant (Fruit Dealer)	\$4,000 real estate; \$5,000 personal
Milo H. Berry	39	NJ	Cabinetmaker	\$3,500 real estate; \$15,000 personal
J. H. Brooks			Clerk	
Ralph Brown	23	NY	Clerk (Assembly House)	
P. Brown			Tinner	
Charles Carrington	44	VT	Clerk	
William H. Casson	42	PA	Stagecoach Driver	
Ford Cooper	33	SC	Planter	
Joseph Cooper	48	DC	Jeweler/Clock Maker	\$5,000 personal
George L. Dial	26	SC	Clerk	\$3,000 personal
Julius Drierson			Merchant (Clothier)	

R. U. Evans			Clerk (Assembly House)	
Henry W. Fields			Printer	
Perry W. Fuller	33	SC	Merchant (Clothier)	\$1,500 real estate; \$2,500 personal
James W. Gaither	37	DC	Jeweler/Watchmaker	\$5,000 personal
James Gavett			Stonecutter	
Charles Hoefffer	24	SC	Farmer	
H. Huffman			Merchant (Fruit Dealer)	
J. S. Leaphart			Bookkeeper	
Sherod L. Leaphart	28	SC	Bookkeeper	
John Madrey	27	SC	Apprentice	
Moses Madrey	25	SC	Laborer	
F. Marks			Physician	
George W. Meetze		SC	Merchant	
S. R. North			Merchant	
Ashter Palmer	44	MA	Merchant	\$3,000 real estate; \$8,000 personal
Noah Platt	35	England	Farmer	\$1,000 real estate; \$175 personal
William J. Randolph	31	SC	Stonecutter	\$4,200 real estate; \$2,000 personal
J. C. Reid			Merchant	
Jesse Rose	20	SC		
H. Roth			Merchant (Clothier)	
Malcom Shelton	33	PA	Merchant (Shoe Trade)	
P. H. B. Shuler			Bookkeeper	
James Sims			Planter	
George Stadler			Baker	
Gabriel R. Starling	39	SC	Butcher	\$3,000 real esatate; \$40,000 personal
Sidney A. Torley	38	SC	Clerk	
John Townley	38	NY	Merchant (Clothier)	\$5,000 personal

William Waddell	31	NJ	School Teacher	\$500 personal
Thomas H. Walsh	35	SC	R. R. Conductor	\$200 real estate; \$500 personal
William H. West	23	SC	Restaurant Keeper	\$2,000 personal

APPENDIX C

LEADERSHIP TIMELINE: CAPTAINS OF THE GUARDS, 1843-1865

1843 - 1848: James Tradewell

1848 - 1851: Addley H. Gladden

1851 - 1854: John Meighan

1854 - 1857: Fitz William McMaster

1857 - 1859: A. D. Goodwyn

1859 - 1862: William H. Casson

1862 - 1862: Malcolm Shelton

1862 - 1864: Franklin Gaillard

1864 - 1865: M. M. Maddy*

*According to John Bahlmann's broadside, Captain M. M. Maddy stayed with Company

A until the company's surrender in April 5, 1865.