Divided Loyalties in Washington during the Civil War

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In March, 1865, a beautiful young lady of 22 arrived in Washington to stay with her husband's family. As she boarded the horse-car from the railroad depot for Georgetown the passengers took one look at her costume and knowingly nudged one another. Mrs. Loughborough was wearing an old-fashioned bonnet with a cape crown, a black embroidered veil and a fine cashmere shawl—but her skirt was of coarse alpaca trimmed with worsted braid dyed in pokeberry juice. It was easy for them to recognize that she had just come from the South.

Margaret Loughborough had received a pass to come North more than a year before but had insisted on staying in Richmond, where she was working as a government clerk, until almost the end of the War. Finally, yielding to her husband's pleas, she had gone from City Point to Baltimore by flag-of-truce ship. Union officers had treated her with consideration, for the Loughboroughs were well known in Washington. Besides their Georgetown house they owned "Grasslands," a large estate near Tenleytown, and a farm on River Road just outside the District. One of James Henry Loughborough's sisters was married to Commander Simon Bissell of the United States Navy, a niece to General E. D. Keyes, who had been an aide to General McClellan. Naturally enough there were Loughboroughs on the other side. A brother and his son who lived in Louisiana were both serving in the Confederate Army. James Henry himself had left for the South in 1861, had joined the Signal Corps and had been attached to Stonewall Jackson's command until Chancellorsville. In July, 1864, he joined General Early in his raid on Washington and had managed to slip through the Union pickets long enough to visit "Grasslands" and to have a hasty meal before dawn.1

1 Diary of Mrs. Margaret Loughborough. Courtesy of Miss Caroline Loughborough and of Father Joseph Durkin, Georgetown University.
There were many families living in the District of Columbia with similar Union connections and predominatingly Southern sympathies. Washington was still a small Southern town of less than 75,000 inhabitants. The tone of society, of the receptions and balls and diplomatic dinners was set by those families who still owned a larger portion of the property in the District and who were connected by ties of marriage with the aristocratic slave-owning families of nearby Maryland and Virginia. It was not even uncommon for old residents of the District—especially those born in Georgetown—to refer to themselves as “Marylanders”, since this area originally formed part of that state.

The circle of well-born and influential Washington and Georgetown families was small and select. Money alone could not purchase an entry into it. The group consisted of men who had been high government officials, officers of the Army and Navy, or members of the United States diplomatic corps. Since the Democrats had been in control of Congress for several years prior to 1861 Southerners tended to occupy not only the top positions in the government but also a large proportion of clerkships in the various bureaus. Abolitionists were frowned upon, and New England civilization was sneered at as being made up of “weak-minded men and strong-minded women”. The social life of Washington in 1861 was closer to that of a Southern state capital to-day than that of the national capital. The entire diplomatic corps, including all of the envoys and their staffs, numbered in 1861 only 44—less than half of the number of foreign nations which have their representatives in Washington to-day.

Since Washington was a Southern town the “peculiar institution” of slavery existed there, although it was gradually dying out. Of the total colored population of some 11,000 listed in the 1860 Census only a little more than 3000 were slaves and most of these domestic servants. The largest number owned by any single individual was 68, the property of George Washington Young who occupied the huge estate of “Giesboro” on the present site of Bolling Field. A small number of valuable slaves who were experienced cooks, waiters or carpenters were often hired out by their owners who benefited from their earnings. Generally speaking, however, the residents of the District had come to regard the end of slavery as inevitable and had made provision in their wills for giving freedom to their servants. In 1850 the slave trade in the District, which had been regarded by Northern members of Congress as a national disgrace, had been abolished. Nevertheless, the Black Codes which governed the activities of the entire colored population, slave and free, continued to be enforced.
Since the District Marshal and the Washington and Georgetown police received a percentage of the fees paid by slave owners for the recovery of their property, much of their time was spent in hunting runaways who had taken refuge in the District of Columbia.

In January, 1861, the uncertainty regarding the political future of the nation hung over Washington like a dark cloud. South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida had already seceded, and it was a foregone conclusion that the remainder of the Cotton States would follow them. The actions of the Border States, in particular of Maryland and Virginia, were watched at the capital with great apprehension. If Virginia seceded there was an outside chance that Washington might continue to remain the capital of the United States, but if Maryland were to secede its position would be untenable. The Confederacy would take over the District, and its possession would probably ensure diplomatic recognition in Europe as an independent state. On December 31st, 1860, General Winfield Scott, commander of the U.S. Army, summoned to his hotel Captain Charles P. Stone, a topographical engineer from Massachusetts who had been living in Washington for some time. The General was anxious to have Stone's opinion of the attitude of the District residents in the event of a serious threat to the capital. Stone replied that he believed two-thirds of the fighting stock of the District would stand by the government, but that they lacked a rallying-point. "Make yourself that rallying-point," the old General told him: two days later he appointed Stone Colonel and Inspector-General of the District Militia.

Organizing the defense of Washington in those early months of 1861 was a disheartening task. Stone could count upon the loyalty of the Washington Light Infantry commanded by former Mayor Roger Weightman and of the National Guard under another former Mayor, Peter Force, but the attitude of the other militia companies was extremely dubious. The National Rifles, largest and best equipped, had been plentifully supplied with arms and ammunition by former Secretary of War John Floyd of Virginia—it even boasted two mountain howitzers—but its captain, Frank Schaeffer, a veteran of the Mexican War and Interior Department employee, was an outright Secessionist. Stone did not forget the remark which Schaeffer had made in an unguarded moment that he expected to lead his men to the Susquehanna to guard Maryland's frontier against the Yankees, and he made plans accordingly. General Scott was prevailed upon to send down a company of sappers from West Point and to order an artillery battery to reinforce the District Armory. When Schaeffer
later requested additional arms Stone not only turned him down but ordered him to give up his howitzers and sabers. On being asked by Schaeffer to endorse the commission as major which Floyd had given him, Stone returned it with a slip of paper on which he had copied the Oath of Allegiance prescribed under the 1799 Militia Law. As he hesitated about complying Stone told Schaeffer that he could hold no office in a District Militia company without subscribing to it—furthermore his captain's commission was also invalid, as he had failed to take the prescribed oath at the time of his appointment.

Another such Secessionist company was the National Volunteers, organized the previous autumn by supporters of Breckinridge and Lanc, Stonc's spics reported to him that at the meetings held in the large hall above Beach's livery stable the seizure of government buildings in the event of Maryland's secession was openly discussed. One of the leaders of this organization, Dr. Alexander Garnett, was a former surgeon in the United States Navy and the president, Dr. Cornelius Boyle, son of the Chief Clerk in the Navy Department. When Boyle approached him for arms on behalf of the National Volunteers Stone asked him to produce a muster roll containing the names of one hundred men. When Boyle returned with the list he promptly locked it in his desk. "Dr. Boyle, I am very happy to have obtained this list", he said, "and I wish you good-morning".

In the meantime Colonel Stone had made a heroic effort to rally around him the Unionist men in the District. He wrote to forty prominent men in Washington and Georgetown asking each of them to help raise a company of one hundred volunteers to preserve order in the capital. Some of them did not trouble to reply, others sarcastically declined, but a few accepted with enthusiasm. Within three months the number of militia in the District had risen to over two thousand. They included firemen, masons, carpenters, stone-cutters, painters, and a full company of German Turners, all of whom provided their uniforms and rented drill halls at their own expense. In addition to the rifle companies Stone was able to raise two batteries of artillery, two hundred cavalry and a company of engineers. The Southern sympathizers did all they could to obstruct his efforts. In February he found that the requisitions which he had made for arms had been revoked by the President; when he called upon Buchanan to protest he was told that District Attorney Robert Ould had claimed that the rival companies of firemen would fight each other if given weapons. Stone was obliged to give the President his personal assurance that he would assume full responsibility if bloodshed resulted before the arms were released to the new militia companies.
In spite of Stone's success in recruiting Union men Congress was worried by the accounts appearing in Washington newspapers concerning Secessionist activities. On January 17th, 1861, the Evening Star had printed a report of a meeting of the National Volunteers in which plans for seizing government buildings had been discussed. Since the District police numbered only one hundred men and the Capitol Guard fourteen there was every reason for concern. At the end of January the House of Representatives appointed a select committee to begin hearings on "Hostile Organizations in the District of Columbia" to determine the seriousness of the situation.2

Many of the witnesses at this investigation did their best to allay the suspicions of Congress. The Mayor of Washington, James G. Berret, who had been a Breckinridge Democrat, stated that he was well acquainted with the officers of the National Volunteers, but claimed that the government had no reason to fear any precipitate action on their part. Other witnesses were franker: Captain Dunnington of the Capitol Police admitted that he held property and slaves in Virginia and would have to go South if his state seceded. General Scott stated that he had received more than eighty letters warning him of a conspiracy to kidnap him and to take him South. Stone spoke of rumors that Virginia would furnish arms to the National Volunteers in the event of an emergency, since Dr. Garnett had married a daughter of Virginia's Governor Wise. Dr. Boyle had no hesitation in stating that as a native of Maryland he would cast his vote with that state if she seceded and he believed that four-fifths of the people of Washington would do likewise. "I am a Union man", he declared, "but not a Union man under all circumstances."

Since the uncertain position of Maryland was of such importance to the District the Committee called to the witness stand a number of prominent men from that state, among them Governor Thomas Hicks, former Governor E. Louis Lowe and officers in various militia companies in those counties adjoining the District. The Committee hoped to discover from them whether there were plans for a concerted attack upon the capital in the event of Maryland's secession. They learned little, however, from the testimony of the militia officers except that their companies were small in numbers and that there was little co-ordination between them. Hicks, a somewhat wa-er Unionist who hoped to preserve Maryland's neutrality, told of the threats which he had received for refusing to call a special session of the state Legislature, which he had postponed, fearing the

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passage of a Secession Ordinance. The most disturbing testimony came from former Governor Lowe, an ardent Southern sympathizer, who maintained that if Maryland were to leave the Union she would at once lay claim to that portion of the District which she had ceded to the Federal Government and that the status of the buildings there would become "a matter for negotiation". On February 13 the Committee adjourned, reporting that it could find no positive evidence of a conspiracy by hostile organizations to seize power in the national capital.

The Committee's report reassured no one. The exodus of Southern families with their slaves continued during the weeks which followed, as hundreds of government clerks and army officers handed in their resignations to join the Confederate Government. Many of those who left confidently expected that they would soon be back in Washington and that the city would fall like a ripe plum after Maryland and Virginia seceded: one minister was reported to have left his favorite cat in the cellar of his house with three weeks supply of water and provisions. After the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12 the fear of attack upon the city grew ever stronger. When the news was received the following week that Union troops had been assaulted in the streets of Baltimore as they were marching to the defense of Washington a group of Congressmen headed by Cassius Marcellus Clay of Kentucky and Senator Lane of Kansas met in the rear of Willard's Hotel and formed their own volunteer company, patrolling the streets of the city and the White House: on April 24 they took up duty at the Navy Yard, which was still poorly guarded pending the arrival of regular troops from the North.

The National Volunteers, lacking arms and closely watched by Colonel Stone, finally decided to leave Washington. On April 22 they crossed the Potomac in a body and enlisted at Alexandria in the Confederate Army; two weeks later they were mustered in as Company E of the First Virginia Infantry and as Company H of the Seventh. When Colonel Stone inspected the National Rifles on April 10th and ordered them to the War Department to be mustered into the service of the United States all except fifteen men dropped out of the ranks. Captain Schaeffer led the Secessionist group, who took the name of "Beauregard Rifles", into Virginia, where they were taken into the Confederate service as Company F of the First Virginia Infantry. All three District infantry companies participated in the Battle of Bull Run, in which one man, Corporal Isadore Morris, was killed and a number wounded. The Washington companies remained as separate units, however, for less than one year. Most of the men re-enlisted in
Major-General David Hunter  
Rear-Admiral Louis Goldsborough  
General Manning F. Force  
Lt. Com. A. A. Semmes  
*Photographs from the Library of Congress*
other Confederate Army units, for the most part in Virginia and Maryland regiments.

The ranks of the National Rifles were soon filled by men loyal to the Union—among them Alexander R. Shepherd, later to become Governor of the District. New companies were organized, including the Garibaldi Guards composed of Frenchmen and Italians: even a group of veterans of the War of 1812 offered its services. James E. Morgan, a professor of Medicine at Georgetown University, organized the Fourth Battalion of District Volunteers. In the exciting early days of the war the Rifles played an important part. A special detail of which Shepherd was a volunteer took a train to Annapolis Junction in the latter part of April to meet the troops from New York and Massachusetts who had repaired the torn-up track of the Elkridge Railroad, and proudly escorted them into Washington. Following Virginia's ratification of her Secession Ordinance the Rifles were the first unit to cross the Potomac, and a company of Anderson Rifles under Captain Rodier the first to capture uniformed Confederate troops near the Chain Bridge. At the end of their ninety-day term of service many members of the Rifles decided to remain in the Army and several of them later became officers in the First District of Columbia Volunteer Infantry formed in July 1861. No fewer than 26 men of the Rifles secured commissions, one of them becoming a Brigadier-General and five others reaching the rank of Colonel. John R. Smead, a former Lieutenant in the United States Coast Survey, who had succeeded Schaeffer as Captain of the Rifles, was killed at the Second Battle of Bull Run in 1862. Writing of these Washington men many years later Colonel Stone remarked:

I have never found among new troops a finer spirit than was exhibited by the District of Columbia Volunteers. They uncomplainingly submitted to strict military discipline and from the moment of entering the service cheerfully performed arduous duty to which they were quite unaccustomed. They seemed to be fully impressed with the truth that they were in service to protect their homes as well as the government, and as a rule acted as if while on duty they were attending to their own interests.  

While the total number of men who were enrolled in the Confederate Army from the District was relatively small—probably not in excess of four hundred—their experience and qualifications were of inestimable value to the South. Among them were Robert Ould of Georgetown, former District Attorney, who became Assistant Sec-

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retary of War and Agent for Prisoner Exchange; Dr. Cornelius Boyle of the National Volunteers, named Provost Marshal to the Army of Northern Virginia; and Dr. Alexander Garnett, who served on the Board of Medical Examiners of the Confederate Army and as personal physician to President Davis and most of the Cabinet. Captain William N. Barker of the Volunteers headed the Confederate Signal Corps in 1864. Colonel Lloyd J. Beall of Georgetown became the commander of the Marine Corps. Major Edmund Myers, a Washington engineer, built the branch of the Piedmont Railroad connecting Lynchburg and Greensboro. Commodore French Forrest resigned his naval commission and was placed in charge of the Norfolk Navy Yard after its evacuation by the Union naval forces, and later headed a Confederate Navy Bureau. George Upshur Mayo, another former naval officer, became Chief of Ordnance in the Artillery. Richard S. Cox of Georgetown, a former colonel in the District Militia, served as a major in the Confederate Army. Charles Wallach, brother of Mayor Richard Wallach and of W. D. Wallach, proprietor of the "Evening Star", served in the Quartermaster Department. Two members of the Peter family of "Tudor Place", Walter Gibson Peter and his cousin William Orton Williams, enrolled in the Confederate Army; they were arrested in 1862 in the camp of General Rosecrans in Tennessee wearing the uniform of Union officers and executed after their identity as spies had been discovered. Lieutenant Beverly Kennon, the son of Britannia Peter, who resigned his naval commission to enlist in the Confederate forces, boasted that he had one brother and more than two hundred cousins serving with the Confederacy.

There were many tragic cases in the District of families which were divided in their loyalties. The investigation made by Congress in the summer of 1861 disclosed the names of many men of Southern sympathies who were still working in Washington, most of whom were dismissed or asked to resign. Others of proven loyalty who had sons fighting with the Rebels were permitted to remain, although under the cloud of suspicion. Among them was William Towers, Chief Clerk of the Government Printing Office and son of a former Mayor of Washington, whose son Lemuel was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the First District Infantry but who had two other sons serving in Virginia regiments. William H. Hickey, Chief Clerk of the United States Senate, was the father of two sons who had joined Maryland Confederate regiments. The son of the Chief Clerk of the Quartermaster Department, William A. Gordon, was serving with the Confederate Engineers. The two sons of John F. Callan, clerk to the Senate Mil-

Colonel Robert Auld

Commander French Forrest

Major Edmund Trowbridge Dana Myers

Brigadier-General Lafayette C. Baker

3 from Cook Collection, Valentine Museum, Richmond
4th from National Archives
itary Affairs Committee, who were also in government service, were dismissed after information implicating them with the Confederates came to the notice of the War Department. Mr. Callan himself, a Southern sympathizer who had given secret military information to Mrs. Rose Greenhow in 1861, resigned shortly afterwards. Henry Matthews, the Collector of the Port of Georgetown, disinherited shortly before his death two of his sons who were serving with the Confederate armed forces. One, Albert Matthews, was an officer in a Virginia Infantry regiment. The Rev. Alfred Holmead of the Land Office had a son with the Rebels, as did William P. Faherty, mail room clerk of a Georgetown mother who came to plead for the life of her youngest son who had been captured with arms in his possession with Mosby's Rangers: her oldest was a Union officer. "Miserable woman," the President was reported to have said, "God bless you, for I cannot. This is the third time your boy has been caught. Mercy is beyond me." 

For every District resident who joined the Confederate armed forces or who, like former Mayor Walter Lennox and hundreds of others, left to take up civilian positions with the Richmond government at least ten remained in Washington as active Southern sympathizers. The records of the Old Capitol Prison contain the names of nearly three hundred residents of Washington and Georgetown incarcerated on suspicion of disloyalty, denied habeas corpus, and released only after the interrogation of the prison authorities had extracted from them all possible information. Many District citizens, including Lennox, were confined in other prisons, such as Fort McHenry, Fort Lafayette and Fort Delaware: those considered most dangerous were taken to the Federal Penitentiary at Albany, New York. Those imprisoned included men and women from every walk of life, rich and poor, colored and white, slave and free Negro.

One cannot mention the Old Capitol without a special reference to the female prisoners—in particular Mrs. Rose Greenhow, who spent more than seven months behind its dreary walls. Probably no other woman in the history of Washington exercised more political power than Mrs. Greenhow or displayed greater skill at extracting military information from her admirers. She had connections with

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*National Republican*, Washington, D. C. December 15th, 1863. "In consequence of some correspondence implicating J. F. Callan, clerk in the Adjutant-General's office and—Callan, clerk in the Purveyor's office, as being in sympathy with the Rebels they have been dismissed from the service. They were sons of John F. Callan, clerk in the Military Committee of the Senate for some years... Mr. Callan resigned to-day, or he would have been removed."

members of the United States Senate, high-ranking Army officers, and informants in every bureau of the government. Mrs. Greenhow had even the supreme audacity at a time when she was sending messages to Confederate officers to plead for the promotion of her son-in-law, Captain Moore, who was in the Union Army.

Mrs. Greenhow was aided by a group of attractive young girls who smuggled her messages out of the city to Colonel Thomas Jordan of General Beauregard's staff. Women made ideal spies in the 1860's, as their voluminous clothing rendered the concealment of messages a very easy matter, and they usually received sympathetic and chivalrous treatment when endeavouring to cross picket lines. Even while she was a prisoner in the Old Capitol, Mrs. Greenhow still managed to communicate with General Beauregard, warning him of a second attack on Manassas and of the preparations being made for General Burnside's expedition. It was little wonder that General McClellan said of her: "She knows my plans better than Lincoln, and has four times compelled me to change them."

Closely associated with Mrs. Greenhow and her spy-ring was the Washington banker William R. Smithson. He was arrested in January 1862, following the discovery of two letters in cipher taken from a schooner near Alexandria warning of coming Union attacks in Tennessee and assuring the Confederacy of his complete devotion and support. Smithson spent four months in jail but was re-arrested in June 1863 for dealing in Confederate bonds and currency contrary to Treasury regulations. His property was confiscated and he was removed to Albany for 17 months, being permitted to return without a pardon. In 1867 Smithson sued Secretary of War Stanton for damages, claiming that he had been falsely arrested and that the incriminating letters were not his, but Stanton died before the case could be brought to Court.

Others in the spy-ring were Dr. Aaron van Camp, a prominent dentist, and the attorney Michael Thompson, who were jailed after their messages concerning troop movements had been intercepted and deciphered. Two other Washington ladies were confined in the Old Capitol: Mrs. Philip Phillips, wife of a former Alabama Congressman, and Mrs. Augusta Morris, daughter of an Alexandria baker. They were quartered in the same portion of the prison as Mrs. Greenhow, although she considered them far beneath her socially and refused to associate with them in spite of their devotion to the Southern cause. In March 1862, Mrs. Greenhow was examined by a military commission—an ordeal which she passed triumphantly—and two months later she and the other ladies from the Old Capitol
were taken South by flag of truce ship—doubtless to the great relief of the prison authorities.

The Old Capitol was frequently visited by Secessionist ladies of Washington and Georgetown who made no attempt to conceal their feelings. After the Peninsula campaign, when the prison was filled with Confederate officers and men they would come carrying all manner of foods and delicacies—even new Confederate uniforms—ostentatiously snubbing the Union soldiers in confinement. The notorious Maryland spy and guerilla, Walter Bowie, escaped from the Old Capitol the evening before he was to be hanged through the help of his aunt, Mrs. Grafton Tyler, wife of a professor at Columbian College School of Medicine, who passed him a message in her mouth when she kissed him good-bye and arranged to bribe one of his guards. Mrs. Simon Bissell and her daughter Georgia were taken to the Old Capitol after attempting to smuggle to relatives in Virginia nine trunks containing forty dresses, 223 pieces of undeclothing and fifty pounds each of coffee and sugar for which they had received no special authorization.\(^7\) The food and letters which they were carrying to parties in the South were confiscated and the ladies spent four weeks in jail before they were sent behind the lines: their punishment would have been much severer had they not been closely related to high-ranking Union officers. Lafayette Baker, the chief of the United States Secret Service, complained bitterly in a report to the Secretary of State of the boldness of Secessionist ladies in Washington, who waited at official doors until they had bagged important secrets of state, stole military maps, took copies of official documents and smuggled news of government strength in the inner linings of their coats and the meshes of their crinolines.

In January 1863, and again a year later, several hundred ladies of Washington and Georgetown who desired to go South were taken to the exchange center on the James River by government steamer. Most of them were wives and children of Confederate officers, but there were also a number of less respectable females whose presence caused Colonel Ould to protest in outraged terms. Some of them, he reported, had behaved so scandalously as to attract the attention of the press and to engage the gossip of the street, and he sent them back to Washington by the very next boat. Living conditions had become so bad in Richmond by 1863 that Confederate authorities would accept only those women and children for whom assurances of support could be furnished. Many of the ladies who had so confidently departed from Washington at the beginning of the War ex-

\(^7\) Turner-Baker Papers, National Archives. Case No. 1570.
pecting to be back in their homes within a few weeks were happy to avail themselves of the opportunity to leave the Confederate capital. By 1864 a number of prominent Washingtonians who had served in the Southern government and in the armed forces had also slipped quietly back home—‘rats leaving the sinking ship,’ the Evening Star termed them.

Several of the wealthier residents of the District who sympathized with the South considered it more prudent to go abroad for the duration of the War. W. W. Corcoran, Washington’s leading banker, philanthropist and art collector, whose only daughter was married to George Eustis, secretary to John Slidell, Confederate envoy to the French Government, departed in 1862 for Paris. His house on Lafayette Square was leased to the French Minister, “Harewood”, his country estate, turned into a hospital, and the building on Pennsylvania Avenue designed to house his art collection taken over as a storehouse for army clothing. George N. Magruder of Georgetown, brother of “Prince John” Magruder, the Confederate general, resigned from his post as chief of the Navy Ordnance Bureau and departed with his family for Canada, where he helped raise arms and money for the South.

On July 24, 1863, Judge Wylie of the District Supreme Court ordered the confiscation of the property of a number of Washington residents whom he declared not to be traitors but “Rebel enemies.” In conformity with the act which Congress had passed a short time previously only their personal property was confiscated outright, their real estate being taken only for the duration of the War. Those men affected by Judge Wylie’s order included those who in the words of the Act had “left a loyal district” to go South as well as men who were serving in the Confederate armed forces. Among them were Dr. Cornelius Boyle, Commodore Forrest, Charles Wallach, Lieutenant H. H. Lewis (a distant relative of George Washington) and Charles W. Havenner, as well as a number of prominent Southerners who owned property in the District—Governor Letcher of Virginia, Edward Pollard, publisher of the Richmond Examiner, and Supreme Court Justice John A. Campbell, a native of Alabama.8 The spacious home of former Senator Gwin of California, scene of many fashionable balls in pre-War days, had already been taken over by the military for their courts martial, and the estate of Richard Cox in Georgetown, ”Berleith” (on the present site of Western High School), was turned into a home for colored orphans under the sponsorship of the wives of Republican members of Congress.

8 32nd Congress, 2nd Session. Executive Document No. 32.
During the course of the War the Negro population of the District had more than tripled owing to the influx of slaves from the plantations of Maryland and Virginia. Early in 1862 Congress had passed laws which forbade army commanders to return fugitive slaves to their disloyal owners and after the passage of the District Emancipation Act in April of the same year the Fugitive Slave Law became for all practical purposes a dead letter in the capital. Congress provided that all owners of slaves in the District be given compensation for their property, and set up a commission to examine the value of the slaves and the loyalty of their masters. Out of almost one thousand claims received for such compensation only 44 were denied, the average award for one slave being around $300. The majority of the Negroes freed by law stayed on with their former masters, many took up employment elsewhere in the District, and several thousand left for the North. Hundreds of young colored men of military age living in Washington joined the Union Army, either as substitutes in Northern regiments, or in the 1st, 2nd and 23rd United States Colored Troops, organized in the District of Columbia and in nearby Virginia during the latter part of 1863.

For the most part, however, these regiments were composed not of District men, but of former slaves from Maryland, Virginia and other parts of the South and of free Negroes from as far distant places as Canada. The colored men of Washington who had been free before the War were less anxious to enlist in the service, where they received only $7 a month in pay compared with $13 for white soldiers, and where they had little expectation of receiving a commission. Of the 2,635 colored residents of the District who served in the Union forces 1,051 were volunteers, 421 were drafted and 1,161 acted as substitutes, many of them in out-of-state regiments.

As in other cities the recruiting of substitutes was accompanied by graft and abuse. In October 1864, Judge-Advocate L. C. Turner reported to the Attorney General that members of the Enrollment Board—the Commissioner for the Draft and the Chief Clerk—were sharing in the profits. Agents from the states were willing to pay $500 to $600 for a Negro substitute, and additional sums for those who helped to recruit them. In order to avoid a further draft in the District a Committee headed by John H. Semmes, a leading grocer, was formed to promote enlistments in November 1863, which recommended that $5 be paid to every individual who brought in a recruit. Through the efforts of the Committee 893 men were recruited and

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$20,000 was raised to help the families of Union soldiers who were in need. In January, 1864, the Ladies Relief Association held a Fair for the same purpose, which realized $17,000.

As far as public opinion in the District was concerned, its newspapers maintained a strongly pro-Unionist stand throughout the War. The National Intelligencer was violently opposed to Secession, though its editor, John F. Coyle, was a Conservative who had many connections in the South. The editorials of the Intelligencer were considered by many to reflect the views of the Lincoln Administration. The National Republican, which had been established at the beginning of the War, represented the opinions of the more Conservative members of the Party and the Daily Chronicle those of the Radical wing. The most widely read paper in Washington, the Evening Star, had originally supported Breckinridge, but had later swung around in favor of the Republicans. The Star covered the local scene in greater detail than any other newspaper and was constantly in the forefront for improving conditions in the city, the lighting and paving of which were unworthy of a town half its size. The only open criticism of the government was voiced in the Constitutional Union which appeared in June 1863, as the organ of the Democratic Party and which managed to survive the War without censorship or confiscation.

Considerable dissension prevailed in the District churches, especially in those Episcopalian parishes where ministers had strong pro-Southern leanings. After the re-opening of the Potomac to Union shipping in March, 1862, when the Confederates had abandoned their batteries on the Virginia shore, the Bishop of Washington had ordered all ministers to read from their pulpits a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the deliverance of the District from the terrors of blockade and siege. Dr. Pinckney of the Church of the Ascension, the Reverend Mr. Syle of Trinity Church and the Reverend Mr. Morsell of Christ Church near the Navy Yard all refused to read it, and Dr. Hall of Epiphany Church urged the Bishop not to compose such prayers in future without consulting with all of the ministers in the diocese. At the Presbyterian Church on 4½ Street Dr. Byron Sunderland, the Chaplain to the Senate and an ardent Abolitionist, preached a sermon which nearly tore his congregation apart. Even Dr. Channing, the pastor of the Congregationalists, had similar difficulties with some of his parishioners. In July 1862, perhaps as a warning to ministers of Secessionist sympathies, the military governor of the District ordered Trinity, Ascension and Epiphany churches to be closed, and they were taken over for several months as military hospitals.
Shortly after the outbreak of the War the District had been placed under military government. Although the municipal corporations of Washington and Georgetown continued to operate they were subordinated to the governor, the provost marshal and the judge advocate, who had the power to overrule their decisions. In August 1861, Mayor Berret of Washington, who was suspected by the Administration to be disloyal, refused to take the Oath of Allegiance required by his appointment to the newly-formed Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners. Berret refused to do so on the ground that he was chief magistrate of the city, in which capacity he had previously taken an oath, and that he did not wish to be considered in any way an employee of the executive branch of the government. Secretary Seward, aware of Berret's previous affiliations and of his unwillingness to reveal his knowledge of pro-Southern organizations in Washington, was convinced that he was a dangerous man. On his orders Berret was secretly arrested, taken to Fort Lafayette and held there for 22 days until he had agreed to take the Oath and to resign his office of Mayor. He was succeeded by Richard Wallach, an unconditional Unionist, whose relations with the Administration and the military governors were consistently harmonious. In May 1862, Congress passed a law requiring all voters in Washington and Georgetown to take an "iron-clad oath" to support the Constitution against all enemies. The following month Wallach was re-elected by a vote of five to one over his Democratic opponent. It would appear significant, however, that despite the many newcomers to the District who would have been eligible to vote, the total number of ballots cast was considerably smaller than in the election of 1860. It is not unlikely that many of those men who were still sympathetic to the South found it impossible to accept the sweeping provisions of the Test Oath.

During the two serious threats to Washington—in 1863, when Lee invaded Maryland, and again the following year when Early was at the gates of the city—the Secesh sympathizers in the capital fervently hoped that the Confederates would deliver them. A few young men stole through the Union lines in 1864 to join Early's forces, and a number of government employees, particularly in the Navy Yard and Quartermaster's Department, failed to show up for work. There were many Marylanders and quite a few District men among Early's troops, and it is probable that some of them were able to slip through the pickets to pick up information from their friends. Rumors flew through Washington that Confederate flags were being secretly manufactured and that spics were keeping the Rebels informed of the
state of the Northern defenses. However, the vast majority of government clerks turned out for emergency drill and the National Rifles again offered their services. Many Washingtonians enrolled in the Second D.C. Infantry were serving in the defenses of the city. There was little real panic in the District during those fateful July days: even if the Confederate troops had succeeded in breaking through the Union defenses they might have had a tough fight to subdue and capture a capital which had known war on its doorstep for more than three years.

Considering their Southern way of life and their close personal ties with Maryland and Virginia the loyalty of the District population to the national government throughout the War was remarkable. No better proof of this devotion can be found than by citing the number of fighting men whom they supplied to the Union Army. Five units were raised from the District: the First and Second D.C. Infantry and the First, Second and Twenty-Third U.S. Colored Troops. One half of the First District Cavalry was composed of men from the area, and there were in addition some small cavalry companies, such as Captain Whitney’s, which did not serve outside it. Entire companies recruited in the District served in the Eleventh New York Cavalry, the Second Maryland Cavalry, the Third Maryland Infantry, the 71st Pennsylvania Infantry, the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry, the Second New York Artillery and in a number of West Virginia regiments. Hundreds of District men served in the regular Army and in the Navy and Marine Corps. High-ranking officers included Major-Generals David Hunter and Alfred Pleasonton, George Getty and John M. Brannan, Brigadier-Generals S. S. Carroll, W. W. Orme and Manning F. Force (son of former Mayor Peter Force). Naval officers from the area numbered such men as Rear-Admiral Louis Goldsborough, Commodore Thomas Turner, Commodore Thomas T. Craven, Lieutenant-Commanders George M. Bache, Alexander A. Semmes and Francis M. Ramsay. In all 16,872 men served from the District in the Union forces, of whom more than 13,000 were enlisted for three-year terms. Even when it is considered that the total population of the District, which numbered 75,000 in 1861, had increased by the end of the War to 120,000, this total still remains an impressive one.

It is, I believe, a sad reflection upon this city that so little recognition has been given to the military services of Washington men during the Civil War. Mr. Ralph Donnelly, whom many of you know and who is now residing in Charlotte, North Carolina, has spent several years compiling a history of those District men who served
in the Confederate forces, which may be published within the next year or so. There is to my knowledge, however, no similar work in preparation concerning those men who fought for the Union. Apart from the First D.C. Cavalry—composed for the greater part of men from the state of Maine—no history of the District regiments has yet been written, and there exists only a brief account of the National Rifles, who played so glorious a role in the early days of the War. Were this Society to sponsor such a project during this period of the Centennial it would earn the gratitude and respect of Civil War scholars and historians in all parts of the country as well as providing the most fitting recognition of those men who helped defend and save the capital during the time of her greatest peril.