

Secession--A Crack in the Long Grey Line

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The Civil War split West Point apart, as it did the entire United States. Of the 278 cadets present at the Academy on November 1, 1860, eighty-six cadets hailed from Southern states. By June 1861, sixty-five of these Southern¹ cadets had been discharged, dismissed, or resigned due to causes related to the Civil War, leaving only twenty-one Southerners at the Academy.² Why did the majority of Southern cadets resign from West Point despite having sworn to bear true faith and allegiance to their country? Loyalty to respective states, the influence of family and friends, and the resignations of respected and popular Southern officers at the Academy surface as the overriding reasons for the Southern cadets' resignations.

By mid-19th century, the United States was a nation divided. The North was characterized by a large, mobile population; heavy industry; abolition crusades; progress and prosperity. In contrast, the South was a rural, agricultural society dependent on the slave trade to cultivate their valuable crops.³ Considering that cadets represented each of the congressional districts, each

¹The term "Southern" in this paper correlates to the eleven slave states that seceded from the United States, and not to the states that resided in the South but did not secede.

²Edward C. Boynton, History of West Point (New York: Nostand, 1864) 252.

³James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom (New York: Ballentine Books, Inc) 6-46.

territory, and the District of Columbia during this time period, it is hardly surprising that sectionalism at antebellum West Point followed so closely the path that it took in the rest of the country.⁴ Many cadets held certain cultural prejudices about classmates from other regions of the country. For instance, most Southerners found it hard to compete with the better-schooled Northerners. Cadet Ewell, in writing to his sister in 1836, said, "I have no hopes of getting a good standing at this place. There are several Yankees here who know the whole mathematical course. The Yankees generally take the lead in every class."⁵

Ohioan Cadet John Tidball, member of the Class of 1848, commented in his memoirs on the deep-seated sectional attitudes within the Corps in the 1840s. He described how cadets from the same region drifted toward each other, an action he attributed to similarities in politics, speech, and diet. He described "Yankee" cadets as smarter, brighter, and more inquisitive than the rest of the Corps. In contrast, he attributed to Southern cadets a dignified contentment with what they already knew and described them as continuously talking of politics and the Negro.⁶

⁴James L. Morrison, "The Struggle Between Sectionalism and Nationalism at Antebellum West Point." Civil War History 19 (June 1973): 138-48.

⁵Richard S. Ewell, Letter from Cadet to his Sister, Rebecca (29 August 1836) 3. USMA Library.

⁶John C. Tidball, Papers. USMA Library, 65-69.

Sectional issues became topics of heated debates around the country in the late 1840s. Intersectional politics and territorial slavery issues dominated the floors of Congress during the 1848-1849 session which eventually led to the Compromise of 1850. During this constitutional process, several fistfights broke out between Northern and Southern congressmen. Jefferson Davis reportedly challenged an Illinois senator to a duel during the angry debate.⁷ The Corps of Cadets, too, had their forum to debate this central issue. Upperclassmen often found it amusing to require plebes to choose a Northern or Southern position and debate the Compromise of 1850. Ohioan Morris Schaff, Class of 1862, related how during his in-processing he was continuously stopped by upperclassmen and quizzed on his political beliefs and party membership. During his plebe year he described being often pitted against a Southern classmate and ordered to debate the Missouri Compromise.⁸

One of the first violent incidents underscoring the growing hostility at the Academy between the North and the South occurred in 1847 and involved Cadet Crittenden, a slave-owning Kentuckian, and Cadet Derby of Massachusetts. Crittenden, objecting to a glance from Derby, and for no other apparent reason save a deep-seated hatred for anything

⁷Ludwell Johnson, Division and Reunion (New York: Jon Riley & Sons) 9-15.

⁸Morris Schaff, The Spirit Of Old West Point, 1858-1862. Personal Memoirs of a Cadet (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908) 29.

from the North, began hurling accusations, then drew his sword and slashed Derby on the chin.⁹

Sectional tension throughout the nation increased during the 1850s. Violence erupted in the spring of 1856 over territorial slavery in Kansas as pro-slavery advocates from Missouri attacked New England backed free-state proponents in Lawrence.¹⁰ The Corps continued to reflect the increasingly turbulent society. By the late 1850s, hatred and physical altercations between Northern and Southern cadets became commonplace. In early 1858 three Southerners attacked First Captain William Cushing Paine of Massachusetts with swords.¹¹ In 1859, Cadet Wade Hampton Gibbes of South Carolina, remarked that an abolitionist New Yorker, Cadet Emory Upton, had special reasons for attending Oberlin School, a school which regularly admitted Negroes, "as many of the Negro coeds would be glad to testify." A fight ensued, with tactical officers looking on and most of the Corps watching from divided Northern and Southern sides. The stronger Gibbes mauled Upton unmercifully, until Upton's second, Pennsylvanian John Rogers, called the fight to a halt. Morris Schaff, Class of '62, described the scene as

⁹Thomas J. Fleming, West Point: The Men and Times of the United States Military Academy (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1969) 128.

¹⁰McPherson, 145-169.

¹¹Fleming, 140.

wild bedlam until Academy officials finally brought the situation under control¹²

During the John Brown trial proceedings in November 1859, Cadet Pierce M.B. Young, a Georgian, wrote to his father, "I am devoted to my whole country; but to that portion of my country who array themselves under a black republican banner, I am a sectional enemy." He described how he and another classmate hung a replica of John Brown's body from one of the windows at the barracks.¹³

In October 1860 another event signified the mounting bitterness within the Corps. A group of Southern cadets conducted a straw poll in anticipation of the November presidential contest among Lincoln, Bell, Douglas, and Breckinridge. Some 214 of the 278 cadets voted (see Annex A for results). Schaff, who voted for Douglas, described the Southern rage and indignation when the tallymen reported sixty-four votes for Lincoln, the "Black Republican." The Southerners promptly appointed tellers--Southern cadet representatives--for each division to interrogate cadets personally and discover who voted for Lincoln. The interrogations produced fistfights throughout the Corps.¹⁴

After Lincoln's election, Southern politicians began convening to discuss secession. At West Point on November 19, 1860, one month and a day before Henry Farley's state of

¹²Schaff, 143-8.

¹³Lynwood M. Holland, Pierce M.B. Young: The Warwick of the South (Athens, GA: Univ of GA Press, 1964) 27.

¹⁴Schaff, 164-7; Holland, 32.

South Carolina seceded, he handed in his resignation and became the first Southern member of the Corps to withdraw. In December, seven of the ten South Carolina contingent had resigned, along with three Mississippians and two from Alabama. In January and February 1861, the Gulf states-- Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas-- followed South Carolina into secession.¹⁵ At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1860, ex-cadets Gibbes and Farley pulled the lanyard on the first two salvos to hit Fort Sumter.¹⁶ The war had begun.

As the war raged on, and even after it ended, leading Republicans accused the Academy of breeding Southern sentiment and causing the defection of cadets and officers to the rebel cause.¹⁷ Historians have not found any evidence that proves Academy support for any type of instruction about secession. In fact there are numerous historical references illustrating that the institution prohibited any such bias. For instance, in 1841, the professor of ethics, with the approval of the chief of

¹⁵Compiled from "U.S. Corps of Cadets Casualties, Class of 1860-1865," (West Point, N.Y.: USMA Press) Unpublished Government Document, USMA Archives; and McPherson, 234-264.

¹⁶Schaff, 175-177; Ellsworth Eliot, West Point in the Confederacy (New York: Baker & Co., 1941) 8; Stephen E. Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1966) 169-170; Fleming, p. 149.

¹⁷"Report of the Secretary of War," Senate Executive Documents, 37 Congressional Records, 1 Session, I, no. 1, pp. 27-28. Taken from Harry T. Williams, "The Attack Upon West Point During the Civil War," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 25 (March 1939), 493.

engineers and the secretary of war, excised from a text cadets were to use in his course chapters dealing with the morality of slavery.¹⁸ In fact, as early as 1845 Academy authorities attempted to prevent politics from dividing the Corps by dissolving the Dialectic Society for a year because it heatedly debated such secessionist topics as "Has a State under any circumstances the right to nullify an Act of Congress?"¹⁹ On November 7, 1845, Major Richard Delafield reinstated the Dialectic Society as long as "the discussion of subjects is confined within proper limits."²⁰ The existence of the Dialectic Society issue resurfaced again in 1857 when Cadet Charles Morgan wrote a letter to the Superintendent, Major Delafield, requesting that two debating clubs, one representing the North, the other the South, be formed to replace the Dialectic Society. Morgan felt that the present set-up did not allow equal representation of opposing views. The Superintendent denied the request.²¹ In 1858 Superintendent Delafield denied cadets' requests to attend a Buttermilk [Highland] Falls

¹⁸Letter from Superintendent Delafield to the Chief of Engineers, 10 Dec 1841, Engineer Letters Sent, X, 8-10, National Archives. Source taken from Morrison's "The Struggle Between Sectionalism and Nationalism at Ante-Bellum West Point," Civil War History 19 (June 1973): 142-143.

¹⁹Sidney Forman, West Point (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961) 115-6.

²⁰Post Orders, Vol II, 279; Superintendent's Order No. 101.

²¹Letter from Cadet C. M. Morgan to Superintendent Delafield, 7 April 1857. Adjutant's Letters Received. USMA Archives.

church which preached abolition and anti-sectionalism themes, fearing it would instigate trouble within the Corps.²²

Another question considered whether William Rawle's A View of the Constitution of the United States, which sanctioned secession, was actually taught at West Point.²³ Former Confederate General Dabney H. Maury, Class of 1846, first brought up this assertion in a magazine article published in 1878. Maury, after contending that Rawle's text was taught at West Point, defended his action in joining the Southern cause by proclaiming, "we were not only obeying the plain instincts of our nature and dictates of duty, but we were obeying the very inculcations we had received in the National School."²⁴ In response to the Rawle controversy, Colonel Edgar S. Dudley, professor of law at West Point, produced evidence showing that Rawle's work had only been used for one year, 1826, and then had been replaced by another law text, Kent's Commentaries. He contends that of all the general officer Academy graduates

²²Letter from Superintendent Delafield to Inspector of the Academy, Colonel S. Thayer, 12 April 1858. Adjutant Letter Book, No. 3. USMA Archives.

²³This argument is covered in depth in the following three articles: Williams, "The Attack Upon West Point During the Civil War," 491-504; James Latta, "Was Secession Taught at West Point?" Address at the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, PA, 5 May 1909. USMA Library; and Edgar S. Dudley, "Was Secession Taught at West Point? What the Records Show." Century Magazine (August 1909): 629-36.

²⁴Dabney H. Maury, "West Point and Secession." Southern Historical Society Papers 6 (July-December, 1878): 249.

who fought in the Civil War, only one, Albert Sidney Johnston, Class of 1826, received instruction in that work.²⁵ Therefore, the text could have had little influence on the majority of cadets during the antebellum period.

One factor which is known to have strongly influenced cadet resignations was loyalty to the state. Because this loyalty directly conflicted with their sworn allegiance to uphold the cadet oath, the cadets who resigned must have somehow rationalized that swearing "to observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States" still allowed their primary loyalty to the state rather than the federal government.²⁶ It seems significant that the oath cadets swore to uphold in the late 1850s was vastly different from the current oath.²⁷ Unlike the current oath (see Annex B1), the oath of 1856 (see Annex B2) made specific reference to the states, referring to the United States by the plural "them." Thus, the oath essentially stated that cadets' loyalty was to the states, not the Constitution. J. H. Holman, who resigned to become an officer in the First Tennessee Regiment, illuminated this very same argument. After the war and his election as state attorney general, a Nashville court indicted him for holding office in violation

²⁵Dudley, 633-35.

²⁶Cadet Oath of Office, 1857; Regulations for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (New York: John F. Trow, 1857) 11.

²⁷John Pelham's Oath (member of Class of 1861), 11 July 1856, USMA Archives; Regulations for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (John F. Trow, 1853) XLII.

of the Fourteenth Amendment. He pleaded that he had never taken an oath "to support the Constitution of the United States" and that the only oath he took was to "bear true faith and allegiance...." The court sustained his plea and quashed the indictment.²⁸

Many of these Southern cadets reached the same decision as their esteemed Confederate leaders pertaining to loyalty. Some historians argue that the state of professionalism among Army officers reflected the integration of the nation--both were splintered. The antebellum Army was institutionally weak if using Huntington's model of professionalism.²⁹ Roles and relationships were not clearly defined and a divided command system furthered the confusion among all ranks. Hence, the combined sectional events caused officers--and thereby cadets--to react less as a cohesive class facing a clear military duty than as individual citizens confronting a choice both personal and

²⁸Mrs. J. W. Newman to the Fayetteville Observer, quoted by S.E. Tillman to the Editor, The Nation, 14 May 1885: 399. Source taken from Tully McCrea, Dear Belle, Letters from Tully McCrea to his Sweetheart, 1858-1865, ed. Katherine S. Crary (Middletown, Conn., 1965) 86-87.

²⁹Samuel P. Huntington, in "Officer as a Profession," The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957) 23-34, states that military officers meet the criteria (expertise, responsibility, and corporateness) of professionalism. He posits that the officer corps is both a bureaucratic profession and a bureaucratic organization; thus, a highly efficient unit. Within the organization, rank inheres in the individual and reflects his professional achievement measured in terms of experience, education, and ability. The antebellum Army was neither efficient or effective; therefore it does not stand as a profession by Huntington's standards.

political. Neither their West Point training nor their oath of allegiance swayed their response to the Civil War situation.³⁰

Many cadets defined loyalty to state much along the same lines as did Robert E. Lee. When on his way to report to General Winfield Scott on February 13, 1861, Lee farewelled the officers at Fort Mason, Texas, by stating:

I shall never bear arms against the Union, but it may be necessary for me carry a musket in defense of my native state, Virginia, in which case I shall not prove recreant to my duty.³¹

Apparently Lee believed that the Union would cease to exist if Virginia was not part of it; therefore, he was not actually fighting against the United States. Similarly, Alabama native John Pelham, Class of 1861, believed he was not planning to fight against the true United States. In late February 1861, Cadet Pelham wrote to his brother's wife that:

You need not be afraid of hurting my Southern feelings by respecting the Stars and Stripes. Although I am a most ultra Secessionist, I am still proud of the American flag and would fight harder and longer to tear the Stars and Stripes from every Northern battlement than for any other cause.³²

³⁰The above paragraph was a summarization from June Gow, "The Old Army and the Confederacy, 1861-1865," Against All Enemies, ed. K. Hagen and W. Roberts (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press) 134-136.

³¹Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee: A Biography, 4 Vols. (New York: Random House, 1934-35) 425.

³²Quote taken from Mary Elizabeth Sargent, They Lie Forgotten (Middletown, N.Y.: The Prior King Press, 1986) 95.

Obviously Pelham did not think he was fighting against his country, the United States, but rather, he was fighting against the Northern states.

At the time Pelham was justifying his resignation, Academy officials were struggling with the ramifications of an apparently ambiguous oath of allegiance. Troubled by the large amount of officers and cadets joining the Confederacy, Major General Joseph Totten, Chief of Engineers, ordered the Superintendent Alexander Bowman to have all officers, professors and cadets to take the oath of allegiance.³³ According to Cadet Tully McCrea, in a letter he sent to his girlfriend, Belle, the following scene took place on April 18, 1861.

The oath is administered in the chapel in the presence of military and academic staff in full uniform. Ten of the class refused to take the oath and of course will be dismissed. When the first one refused, a few Southern cadets tried to applaud him by stamping on the floor, but he was immediately greeted with such a unanimous hiss that he could clearly see the sentiments of the majority present. Thirty-one cadets resigned this week and will leave perhaps tomorrow.³⁴

One of the cadets who refused to take the oath, Will Anderson, a plebe from Virginia, described in a letter to his mother the inner conflict and anguish the affair evoked in him. Anderson said that he would have taken the customary conditional oath of allegiance because he

³³Letter from Superintendent Bowman to MG Totten, Chief of Engineers, 24 April 1861, Superintendent's Letter Book.

³⁴McCrea, 86-88.

considered the United States to be no longer in existence; therefore, he was not bound to uphold what had already been dissolved. But when the judge told him to kiss the Bible, Anderson resisted, rationalizing that the oath now promised allegiance to the remaining Northern states, and thus obligated the taker to fight for them against the South.³⁵

By May 1861, only twenty-one out of the eighty-six Southern cadets remained at West Point, but Superintendent Alexander Bowman was convinced the remainder were simply awaiting permission from their parents to resign. Major Bowman made them swear to another oath of allegiance in May; eventually all signed and fought for the Union.³⁶ Academy officials finally realized they had to make the oath more ironclad, so in August 1861 they changed it to read, "That I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States, paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty or fealty I may owe to any State, county or country whatsoever." When this oath was administered on August 3, 1861, two cadets from Kentucky refused to recite it and resigned. Later, however, these ex-cadets fought for the Union.³⁷

Cadets who resigned despite swearing to the original oath illustrate the prevalence of "localism" in the United

³⁵Edward W. Anderson, "Letters of a West Pointer, 1860-1861." American Historical Review, 33 (April 1928) 611.

³⁶Bowman to Totten, 26 April 1861.

³⁷R. Ernest Dupuy, Where They Have Trod (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1940) 298.

States at the time. Southern cadets who resigned, such as Holman and Anderson, rationalized that the cadet oath did not bind them to the Union. Furthermore, loyalty to the state had a major impact on Southern cadet resignations as evidenced by the correlation between the Southern cadets' resignation dates and that of their respective states' secession dates (Annex D). For instance, prior to Georgia seceding on January 19, 1861, no cadets from Georgia had resigned. However, in the three weeks following the state's secession, five Georgian cadets resigned. Moreover, no cadets from Virginia resigned prior to the state of Virginia's secession on April 17. Yet during the next two weeks, thirteen Virginian cadets left the Academy.

In regard to other external influences on Southern cadet resignations, by regulation, cadets needed parental or guardian permission to resign.³⁸ However, the secessionist advice parents offered their sons went a step further, proving highly influential in the cadets' decision to resign or stay on at the Academy. For instance, on December 19, 1860, South Carolinian John Wofford wrote to the Academy Adjutant, Lieutenant Holobird, requesting permission to resign based on the advice of his mother. Evidently, Wofford's mother wanted him to resign immediately because she led him to believe "...that there will be a Negro insurrection in my part of the state during the Christmas holidays that will leave my mother and sisters in an exposed

³⁸Regulations (1857), 12.

condition if anything of the kind should happen...."³⁹

Although the request was denied, Cadet Wofford resigned one month later.

On January 10, 1861, Pierce Young, the same cadet from Georgia who had hung an effigy of John Brown's body in the barracks, wrote his father for advice. His father declared in a January 17 letter that "there would be no impropriety in your remaining at West Point even if our state should go out of the Union, provided the state does not need your service." Consequently, Cadet Young remained at West Point even after Georgia seceded. In late February, Pierce's former classmate and friend, Edward Willis, who had already joined the Georgia militia, pressured Pierce by writing, "My only question for you now to decide is will you stay or come; don't be offended at this because I know you are true to Georgia as the magnet to the steel, but my advice is come and not only come but do it at once." Willis also asked Pierce to persuade the cadets from Virginia to come South to join up with them.⁴⁰ On March 11, Pierce Young and his fellow Georgia cadets handed in their resignations (see Annex D).⁴¹ Additionally, it is evident from the table in Annex D that cadets from the same states often resigned

³⁹Letter from Cadet John T. Wofford to Superintendent Delafield, 19 December 1860. Adjutant's Letters Received. USMA Archives.

⁴⁰Holland, 44-49.

⁴¹"U.S. Corps of Cadets Casualties, Class of 1860-1865."

together, another example of the influence of friends in resigning.⁴²

Family advice sometimes delayed the decision to resign. In December 1860, Cadet Will Anderson, an avid states' rights supporter troubled by the oath he had taken, asked his mother for guidance. Mrs. Anderson responded to her son in a letter dated December 31, saying:

I think you boys take rather an erroneous view of your positions. You are not exactly commissioned officers yet. You are under a sort of contract to serve the U.S. eight years, and you are under this bond as minors. Now I think you are bound by that contract, but of course no contract ever contemplated that a man should fight his own countrymen. I think you should remain where you are until called upon to fight your own brethren, then sheath your sword and tell all men, law or no law, you will only draw it for your country's enemies.

Cadet Anderson followed his mother's wisdom and remained at the Academy until forced to make a choice between fighting his own "brethren" or resigning during the April oath ceremony. Cadet Anderson resigned on April 18, 1861.⁴³

During January 1861, John Pelham, Class of '61, wrote to his parents, "I don't see any honorable course other than that of tendering my resignation." Pelham's father ordered him to wait, however, and that he did. In a letter to his family soon afterward, Pelham wrote, "It would be exceedingly gratifying to me, and I know to the whole family

⁴²There are a total of six instances (all are underlined in Annex D) in which more than two cadets from the same state resigned during the same period.

⁴³Anderson, 610-611.

for me to receive a diploma from this institution." On February 1, Dr. Pelham reluctantly gave his son the necessary permission to resign.⁴⁴ Cadet Pelham waited more than a month and a half, hoping against hope that he could satisfy his father's desire for him to graduate, but he finally accepted the call to the Southern cause.⁴⁵

The Corps of Cadets' sectional biases mirrored those of the nation. The primary reason for this phenomenon is the influence on the cadets from families, friends, and other cadets. Some parents and friends, like Mrs. Wofford and Edward Willis, wanted them to come home immediately, while others, like Mr. Young, Mrs. Anderson, and Dr. Pelham, advised a more cautious approach.

Many Southern officers served as role models for the impressionable cadets, and resignations of Southern officers at West Point caused a few Southern cadets to follow suit. On January 23, 1861, Major Pierre G.T. Beauregard relieved Major Delafield as Superintendent.⁴⁶ As a native of Louisiana and an officer worried about his career, Beauregard found himself in a difficult position. Consequently, he decided to play both sides of the fence. On his Army career side, he told MG Totten he had no intentions towards resigning in order to join the Confederacy. However, during his five days at West Point,

⁴⁴Fleming, 149.

⁴⁵Sergent, 95.

⁴⁶Post Orders, V, 404; Special Order 6, USMA, 23 Jan 1861.

he never moved into the Superintendent's house, but stayed in a room at the Cozzens Hotel.⁴⁷ When a Southern cadet from Louisiana went to Beauregard's room to ask his advice on resignation, Beauregard replied, "Watch me, and when I jump, you jump. What's the use of jumping too soon?"⁴⁸ Days later Joseph Holt, the new Secretary of War, suspecting that the Superintendent would follow Louisiana into secession, relieved Beauregard. Beauregard departed the Academy and went back to Louisiana and resigned his commission.⁴⁹

Lieutenant "Charley" Field, a cavalry instructor and tactical officer left the Academy to join the Confederacy in early March of 1861. Joseph Farley, Class of '61 and later a Union officer, gave a vivid description of Lieutenant Field, who later became a Confederate Major General.

Standing six feet three inches, and cast in the mold of an Adonis, he was probably the finest specimen of manhood that ever passed from out the portals of our Alma Mater. The soldierly bearing of this officer coupled with a certain recklessness in his training of the cadets in the riding hall,

⁴⁷Forman, 119; Fleming, 149-150.

⁴⁸Schaff, p. 196. Joseph P. Farley, Class of 1861, tells a less colorized version of the story in his memoirs, West Point in the Early Sixties (Troy, N.Y.: Palfrey's Book Co., 1902) 24. Farley's roommate and classmate from Louisiana visited Superintendent Beauregard for counsel and advice. Farley reports that Beauregard hesitated to advise the young men from the South further than to suggest that as long as he himself remained in the Regular Army of the United States he thought they should all do so.

⁴⁹Special Order 8, USMA, 28 Jan 1861; Basso, Beauregard, the Great Creole (New York, 1933) 61. This source taken from Ambrose, 171.

won for him the deepest admiration and affection. In fact, the cadets fairly worshipped him.⁵⁰

In a letter to his girlfriend dated April 27, 1861, Cadet Tully McCrea described the resignation of Lieutenant Fitzhugh Lee ten days after Virginia seceded, and five days after Lee's uncle, Robert E. Lee, resigned. Lee, a tactical officer from Virginia, "was liked by the officers, cadets, ladies and, in fact, by everyone that knew him. He was the most popular officer that I have ever seen at West Point." On the evening of 26 April, he "went to every room and shook hands with every one of us."⁵¹

Of the forty-four Academy faculty members stationed at West Point during the period from August 1860 to April 1861 (Class of 1861's academic year), only five, including 2LT Lockett and LTC Hardee, resigned to join the Confederacy (See Annex C). The dates of those Southern officers' departures from the Academy correlate with the amount of Southern cadet resignations around those times (See Annex E). For instance, in the week prior to Beauregard's departure, only one cadet resigned. However, in the week following his departure on January 28, ten Southern cadets resigned. During the week after that, the resignations trickled to two. Moreover, during the week that Field left

⁵⁰Farley, 72-3.

⁵¹McCrea, 88-9. Farley, who upon graduation became a Union officer, also gives an eyewitness report of Lee's departure by writing "Fitz's parting words, as tears in his eyes...bade us farewell, left an impression that will not be effaced so long as memory lasts," 71.

the Academy (17-24 March), five cadets resigned. Although only three cadets left the week after F. Lee's departure on 27 April, it should be noted that the week followed the mass resignation period of 19-26 April during which thirty cadets resigned.

Although West Point emerged from the war with an outstanding reputation for producing leaders, the long-standing tensions and numerous recorded violent outbreaks during the antebellum years left the Academy divided with the rest of the nation. To the Academy's credit, however, the venerable institution did everything possible to negate the secessionist influences from the outside world. The Academy ensured the curriculum, debating clubs, religious events and all practices did not subscribe to sectionalism in any manner or form.

Loyalty to the state had a major impact on Southern cadet resignations as evidenced by the correlation between the Southern cadets' resignation dates and that of their respective states' secession dates (Annex D). Additionally, the weakened state of the profession of arms caused officers and cadets to place more emphasis on their personal loyalties rather than their professional duty. As a result, many Southern cadets and officers were able to rationalize they were not taking up arms against the Union, because it really was not a "Union" if their state was not a part of it. They also justified to themselves that when they sworn to the cadet oath of allegiance, they were only representing

a member of their state, they were not swearing to fight and protect the Constitution of the United States.

The writings of cadets such as Anderson, Rosser, Pelham, and Young demonstrate the impact parents and friends had on their decisions to resign. Many parents advised patience, while friends like ex-Cadet Willis urged their comrades to join them. It is evident in the table in Annex D that cadets from the same states often resigned together, another example of the influence of friends in resigning.

The resignations of respected and popular Southern officers most certainly motivated some cadets to leave the Academy. Beauregard advised cadets from Louisiana to resign when he did, and Field and Lee were extremely popular and well-respected as evidenced by the first-hand descriptions of them. By examining Annex E, one can make the informed assessment that an empirical correlation existed between Southern officers departing the Academy to join the Confederacy and Southern cadet resignations.

Overall, this paper serves to correlate the historical ramifications of the effects of secession on cadets with the dilemmas experienced by today's corps from the perspective of a tactical officer. Maurice Matloff, in A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History, contends that every generation looks to the past for inspiration, knowledge, antecedents, and a source of ideas in meeting its own problems. Future tactical officers must remember that cadets reflect the cultural background of their individual

communities. The influence of family and friends, whether it be paternal advice or peer pressure, becomes a denominator when analyzing the cadets' decision-making abilities. Also, cadets look up to and depend on tactical officers for advice--just as cadets of the Civil War era watched and listened to the likes of Beauregard, Field and Lee. Analyzing the reasons why Southern cadets resigned is another means of examining cadets' basic outlook on loyalty, their relationships with family and friends, role models, and the effects of the curriculum--all topics the tactical officer, as a master developer, has to somehow absorb and integrate.

Annex A: October 1860 Presidential "Straw Poll" Results

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Political Party</u>	<u># of Cadet Votes</u>
John C. Breckinridge	Southern Democrat	99
Stephen A. Douglas	Northern Democrat	47
John Bell	Constitutional Union	44
Abraham Lincoln	Republican	64

		Total = 214*

* Corps population at the time was 278; thus, 24 cadets abstained or did not participate.

Annex B1: Current Cadet Oath

I, (state your name), do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and bear true faith and allegiance to the National Government; that I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States, paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty, or fealty I may owe to any State or Country whatsoever; and that I will at all times obey the legal orders of my superior officers, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Annex B2: 1856 Cadet Oath

I, (Name), of the State of _____, aged ____ years, ____ months, having been selected for an appointment as Cadet in the Military Academy of the United States, do hereby engage, with the consent of my _____ (Father or Guardian) in the event of my receiving such appointment, that I will serve in the Army of the United States for eight years unless sooner discharged by competent authority. And I, (Name), do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whatsoever, and observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Annex C: Academic Officer Status--June 1860 to June 1861

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Union/Conf/NA</u>
COL R. Delafield	Superintendent of USMA	1) 1838-1845 2) 1856-Jan 1861 3) Jan-Mar 61	Union
COL P. Beauregard	Superintendent of USMA	23-28 Jan 61	Confed
COL A. Bowman	" " "	Mar 61-Jan 64	Union
D. Mahan	Prof of Mil & Civ Eng	NA	NA
1LT W. Craighill	Ass't Prof " " "	Aug 59-Jun 63	Union
2LT G. Weitzel	" " " " "	Sep 59-Aug 60	Union
2LT W. Merrill	" " " " "	Sep 60-Jul 61	Union
W. Bartlett	Prof of Nat & Exp Phil	NA	NA
1LT J. Schofield	Ass't Prof " " "	Sep 56-Aug 60	Union
1LT G. Mendell	" " " " "	Jan 59-Jun 63	Union
2LT C. Comstock	" " " " "	Sep 59-Jul 61	Union
A. Church	Prof of Mathematics	NA	NA
1LT O. Howard	Ass't Prof of Math	Sep 57-Jun 61	Union
1LT H. Hascall	" " " " "	Jan 60-Jul 61	Union
1LT J. Wheeler	" " " " "	Oct 59-Apr 61	Union
2LT A. Webb	" " " " "	Nov 57-Jan 61	Union
LTC W. Hardee	Commandant of Cadets	Jun 56-Sep 60	*Confed
LTC J. Reynolds	" " "	Sep 60-Jun 61	Union
1LT R. Saxton	Ass't Inst of Arty	Jun 59-Sep 60	Union
1LT R. Dodge	" " " Tactics	May 60-Nov 60	Union
1LT A. McCook	" " " "	Feb 58-Apr 61	Union
1LT W. Hazen	" " " "	Feb 61-Sep 61	Union
1LT C. Field	" " " Cavalry	Sep 56-Mar 61	**Confed
1LT R. Williams	" " " "	Dec 57-May 61	Union
1LT F. Lee	" " " "	Jun 60-Mar 61	**Confed
1LT G. Bayard	" " " "	Mar 61-Sep 61	Union
R. Weir	Prof of Drawing	NA	NA
1LT H. Douglass	Ass't Prof of Drawing	Jan 58-Jul 61	Union
2LT J. McMillan	" " " "	Sep 58-May 61	Union
H. Agnel	Prof of the Fr Lang	NA	NA
1LT B. DuBarry	Ass't Prof of Fr Lang	Aug 59-May 61	Union
1LT W. Jenkins	" " " " "	Aug 59-Jul 61	Union
REV J. French	Prof of Geo, His & Ethics	NA	NA
1LT S. Benet	Ass't Prof of " " "	Apr 61-Feb 64	NA
1LT H. Symonds	" " " " " "	Oct 59-Jan 61	Union
1LT J. Greble	" " " " " "	Dec 56-Sep 60	Union
1LT S. Breck	" " " " " "	Sep 60-Dec 61	Union
2LT H. Biggs	" " " " " "	Aug 59-Jul 61	Union
H. Kendrick	Prof of Chem & Mineralogy	NA	NA
1LT T. Vincent	Ass't Prof of " " "	Aug 59-Jul 61	Union
P. DeJanon	Prof of the Span Lang	NA	NA
2LT S. Lockett	Ass't Prof of " " "	Sep 59-Oct 60	*Confed
1LT G. Williams	" " " " "	Sep 60-Oct 61	Union
2LT E. Carling	" " " " "	Aug 59-Oct 60	Union
1LT W. Owens	Ass't Prof of Span Lang	Nov 60-Sep 61	Union

<u>Rank/Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Union/Conf/NA</u>
CPT J. Benton	Inst of Ord and Gunnery	Feb 57-Jan 61	Union
1LT J. Duane	Inst of Prac Mil Eng	Oct 58-Jan 61	Union
1LT J. Keldon	Small Arms Instructor	Jun 60-Apr 61	Union
A. Lorentz	Sword Master	NA	NA

*LTC Hardee and 2LT Lockett did not resign their commissions while stationed at West Point.

**Beauregard, C. Field, and F. Lee resigned while stationed at West Point.

Annex D⁵²

Significant Event (Date)	Date NY Times Reported the Event ⁵³	Time Period of Cadet Resignations	# of Cadet Resignations (Voluntary)	State Representation
-	-	19 Nov-21 Dec	7	SC--5, MI--2
SC Secedes (21 Dec 60)	22 Dec	22 Dec-28 Dec	2	SC--1, MI--1
-	-	29 Dec-9 Jan 61	3	SC--1, AL--2
MI, FL, AL Secede (9,10, & 11 Jan)	10 Jan 12 Jan 14 Jan	10-19 Jan	0	FL--1, MO--1
GA Secedes (19 Jan)	20 Jan	20-27 Jan	1	SC--1
LA Secedes (26 Jan)	28 Jan	28 Jan-1 Feb	1	TX--1, MO--1
TX Secedes (1 Feb)	2 Feb	2-7 Feb	9	AL--2, GA--4 TX--1, TN--1 MO--1
-	-	8-15 Feb	2	MI--1, NC--1
-	-	16 Feb-10 Mar	2	TN--1, MD--1
-	-	11 Mar	5	GA--1
-	-	12-20 Mar	2	MI--1, FL--1
-	-	21 Mar	4	LA--3, AL--1
-	-	22 Mar-12 Apr	2	LA--1, MI--1
Rebels attack Sumter (12 Apr); Sumter Falls (15 Apr)	13 Apr 15 Apr	13-17 Apr	0	-
AR, NC, TN, & VA Secede (17 Apr)	19 Apr	18-21 Apr	4	SC--1, VA--1 AL--1, DE--1
& Allegiance/Oath Pledge (18 Apr)	NA			

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Annex D (Cont')

Significant Event (Date)	Date NY Times Reported the Event	Time Period of Cadet Resignations	# of Cadet Resignations (Voluntary)	State Representation
-	-	22 Apr	26	VA--12, TN--4 NC--3, SC--2 LA--1, AL--1 DC--2, MI--1
-	-	23-25 Apr	3	MD--1, KY--1 VA--1
-	-	26 Apr	1	VA--1
-	-	27-30 Apr	2	NC--1, LA--1

⁵²Tabling Southern cadet resignations to the order of secession illustrates the correlation between Southern officer resignations and loyalty to the state. The data was formulated from: "Casualties, U.S. Corps of Cadets, Class of 1860-65"; George Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy, 3rd Ed., Vol I and II (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1891); and USMA Special Order 28, April 26, 1861, granting Lieutenant F. Lee a leave of absence beginning 27 April 1861.

⁵³The initial day starting the time period that tracks cadet resignations was based on an informed judgement that the cadets would not have heard about a specific states' secession and the Fort Sumter incident until reported by the New York Times. Archival copies of the New York Times show that the first edition to carry news of the states' secession and Fort Sumter was that as listed.

Annex E⁵⁴

Time Period (1861)	Resigning Southern Officer's Name	Resignation Date	# of Cadet Resignations
20-27 Jan	-	-	1
28 Jan-4 Feb	Beauregard	28 Jan 61*	10
5-12 Feb	-	-	2
13-20 Feb	-	-	2
21-28 Feb	-	-	2
1-8 Mar	-	-	0
9-16 Mar	-	-	7
17-24 Mar	Field	17 Mar 61*	5
25 Mar-2 Apr	-	-	1
3-10 Apr	-	-	0
11-18 Apr	-	-	0
19-26 Apr	-	-	35
27 Apr-4 May	Lee	27 Apr 61*	3
5-12 May	-	-	0

* These are dates the Southern officers departed the Academy grounds. Their actual resignation dates for all three officers were not until several weeks afterwards.

⁵⁴The following table assists in determining the correlation between Southern officer (role model) resignations and Southern cadet resignations. The data was formulated from: "Casualties, U.S. Corps of Cadets, Class of 1860-65"; George Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy, 3rd Ed., Vol 1 and II (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1891); and USMA Special Order 28, April 26, 1861, granting Lieutenant F. Lee a leave of absence beginning 27 April 1861.

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