Pursuant to constructing an accurate portrayal of what soldiers underwent during the American Civil War is the availability of letters, diaries, and memoirs. These first-hand accounts are critical for exploring how society, culture, the economy, and politics influenced what Civil War combatants fought for and why. Such primary sources yield an immediate access to what the common soldier and sailor experienced on a daily basis, albeit memoirs tend to lose essential detail and become tainted with postwar hindsight. In Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose, edited by W. Eric Emerson and Karen Stokes, and A Palmetto Boy: Civil War-Era Diaries and Letters of James Adams Tillman, edited by Bobbie Swearingen Smith, future generations studying the American Civil War are presented with a good understanding of the motivating and sustaining factors that led Civil War soldiers to see the conflict to its end.

William Porcher DuBose (1836-1918) was born into one of the most prominent families in South Carolina at the time, and was thus privy to the life of a planter family; this is evinced in his correspondence. He received his military education at the Citadel, where he graduated as the ranking cadet and assistant professor of English in 1855. He went on to achieve several more degrees in classical languages, mathematics, and physics at the University of Virginia. It was after this, in the closing months of 1859, that he began his formal preparation for becoming an Episcopal minister.

DuBose was not among the first volunteers who flocked to enlist as a result of the secession crisis in South Carolina after the election of 1860, or after the outbreak of hostilities in April 1861. However, by October of that year the recently engaged DuBose realized he could not stand by idly. He enlisted in the Holcombe Legion and for the first several months of his service participated in the defense of Edisto Island against Union advances toward Charleston. His unit was then transferred to the Army of Northern Virginia, where DuBose was present for the second Battle of Bull Run and the Battle of South Mountain. He was captured following the latter, imprisoned briefly at Fort Delaware before being paroled in early October, and returned to lead Holcombe’s Legion at the Battle of Kinston in North Carolina. It was at Kinston that he was wounded, and sent home on furlough to recover.

While stationed in North Carolina in March 1863, DuBose felt a "natural longing for a more congenial occupation," and that he was "no longer of any use" as a line officer and drill instructor (p. 143). His desire to become
something else was realized when he became a regimental chaplain in June. His unit was transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, in preparation for the relief of Vicksburg. After the fall of the beleaguered city in July, he was sent back to the defenses of Savannah, Georgia. In his role as chaplain, DuBose discussed the religiosity of soldiers, how religion offered comfort to those on their deathbed. Conversely, there were soldiers he encountered who relied on religion to find solace before battle, and lost their faith after coming through alive.

As brigade chaplain in Kershaw’s Brigade, DuBose was posted near New Market in February 1864, and later that month dispatched to Tennessee. DuBose witnessed the destitution that plagued many Confederate units. He mentions a raid on a commissary store by hungry Confederate troops, where many were killed or wounded, as well as theft of his private property, all of which may have been inspired by act of the Confederate congress to reduce rations. By July, he had witnessed the carnage of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse, and was behind the Confederate lines at Petersburg.

In the latter half of 1864 Kershaw’s Brigade participated in several actions in the Shenandoah Valley, where they attempted to draw Union troops away from the siege of Petersburg. In a desperate act, the brigade was sent to defend Charleston from the advance of Union forces under Major General William T. Sherman; however they were soon part of the general retreat into North Carolina. It was here, days before Lee surrendered at Appomattox, that there was a cessation of correspondence. In the epilogue, Emerson and Stokes explain how, after the surrender of Major General Joseph E. Johnston’s army in North Carolina, DuBose made his way back to his home in South Carolina to become a prominent Episcopal minister, critically acclaimed author, and dedicated professor and dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South.

James Adams Tillman (1842-66) was similarly born into a well-to-do South Carolinian family, the ninth of eleven children of Benjamin Ryan Tillman and Sophia Ann Hancock. His youth was spent primarily on the family’s estates and attending boarding schools. Before he could pursue advanced studies at university, war took priority over higher education. Although Tillman’s decision to enlist takes up part of a sentence in his journal entry for that day—typical of his diminutive accounts—the action must have impacted his family, who were under the impression that “there were plenty of men to fight while boys are getting their education” (p. 6). Nevertheless, Tillman was not dissuaded by his family’s reservations, and became a private in Company I of the Twenty-fourth South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, “willing to die now for the infant Confederacy” (p. 12).

Tillman presents a frank image of himself as initially a clumsy volunteer, yet he studied the essential Hardee’s Tactics (1855) and soon disciplined himself in the rigors of military life. Throughout much of 1862 the Twenty-fourth South Carolina bolstered the defenses of Charleston against the incursions of Union forces. Tillman provides abundant detail about the monotony of daily drill and guard duty on James Island, interspersed with details of skirmishes as well as the Battle of Secessionville on June 16, 1862.

Between December 1862 and February 1863 the regiment was transferred to North Carolina, but it was soon sent back to the fortifications around Charleston. It was at this time that Tillman confessed to his mother that “we [got] very little from the government,” and “how ravenously” he ate after receiving a package from home (pp. 63-64). Dispatched to prepare for the relief of Vicksburg, Tillman described the intolerable marching conditions faced by those who marched. After the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863, there was a general withdrawal of Confederate forces from across Mississippi and Alabama and into northern Georgia, where Tillman was wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga.

By mid-1864 Confederate forces were mustering for the defense of Atlanta. As a newly commissioned officer, First Lieutenant James Tillman wrote early on in the Atlanta campaign that the “health of the army [was] excellent” (p. 89). Yet as the battles for control of the city intensified, Tillman noted the lack of money to purchase provisions since the “[Confederate] Government has paid none of her soldiers,” and feared the outbreak of fatal ailments should supplies not be made available (p. 98). During this time, as noted in most of his letters home, he relied on religion to sustain and comfort him.

After the devastating Battle of Franklin in November 1864, Tillman spent much of the winter of 1864-65 on furlough at home, helping his family secure a new home should Union forces arrive. By March 1865, Tillman was once again on campaign with Major General Joseph E. Johnston as the Confederate forces retreated into North Carolina. The war ended here for Tillman when Johnston surrendered to Sherman on April 26, 1865. Much of the last year of Tillman’s life before he succumbed to his wounds on June 8, 1866 was spent working on what was left of his family’s estates and the land divided up.
amongst former slaves.

Taken together, the wartime letters and journals of William Porcher DuBose and James Adams Tillman allow access to the attitudes of two Civil War soldiers, particularly toward religion and the brutal nature of combat. Both men were heavily influenced by their faith in Christianity. Tillman understood that it was “God’s will” to either return home or die “upon the bloody field of battle” (p. 58). Inspired by his intensive study of the scriptures, DuBose posed a thought to his fiancée that if the Confederacy lost the war, it was “God’s will, & if so, it would be right,” since despite his cause being “in the right,” this did not necessarily mean “[his] cause must prevail” (p. 46). This discussion on fatalistic judgment of the Southern cause by DuBose—the belief that unearthly forces have favored those less deserving of military victory in the past—offers a remarkable glimpse into the mindset of religious soldiers.

DuBose and Tillman offer candid insight into the futility of war and the deprivations faced by Confederate troops and Southern civilians. DuBose frequently held informal services around campfires as many soldiers were not in possession of enough clothing to withstand the adverse conditions in Virginia in October 1864. In a letter to his family, Tillman commented that they “know nothing of the horrors of this war” as he witnessed death and destruction on a massive scale during the battles for Atlanta (p. 106). DuBose was equally disgusted by the “systematic & deliberate way men go about murdering each other” (p. 192).

Some may be disappointed with the apparent lack of discourse on slavery. Despite the fact that DuBose and Tillman kept slaves throughout the war, neither of them directly reference the “peculiar institution” or the defense of their right to own slaves. This does not necessarily mean the subject of bondage was not a ubiquitous issue. Both men came from large slave-owning families; their personal economies depended on the labors of those they held in servitude. While the editors of their respective collections do not comment directly on the absent references to slavery, this should not reflect poorly on their accomplishments.

For the better part of three years W. Eric Emerson, director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and Karen Stokes, an archivist with the South Carolina Historical Society, transcribed, annotated, and ultimately published *Faith, Valor, and Devotion*. The book itself is divided chronologically into five chapters, with an epilogue that details the significant postwar career of DuBose as an Episcopalian minister. Parts of the first chapter include letters from of DuBose and his fiancée, Anne Barnwell “Nannie” Peronneau, and other family acquaintances. While most of these pertain to the subject of the engagement of Nannie and DuBose, their inclusion seems somewhat disconnected from the rest of the narrative. In addition, letters written by Nannie appear less frequently than none are present. The only explanation for this, as DuBose made note of, is he probably destroyed the letters so that they would not fall into the wrong hands in the event of his death. Notwithstanding, the background research that went into identifying names, places, and events, even to the extent of describing what a “cherry shrub” was (a drink made of sugar and cherries), must be commended; these efforts will not go unnoticed.

As with *Faith, Valor, and Devotion*, there are evident merits, coupled with some minor flaws, in *A Palmetto Boy*. In the ten years she spent researching and editing Tillman’s letters and diaries, Bobbie Swearingen Smith, a descendant of James Adams Tillman, consulted with archivists at Clemson University and the University of South Carolina, in addition to family who were familiar with James Tillman’s story. Smith divides Tillman’s correspondence chronologically and thematically, an editorial decision that is advantageous in understanding Tillman’s duties during the war. Despite setbacks—documents pertaining to the battles of Chattanooga and Chickamauga were lost in a fire—Smith was able to craft a readable narrative. However, there are some shortcomings to the edited work. The first few letters of *A Palmetto Boy* feel disjointed from the rest of the story, the substance of which pertains mostly to school and family affairs; they still fall into the general Civil War-era timeline. Additionally, there are noticeable errors in portions of notes where dates and names are concerned. Regardless of the inaccuracies, the overall contribution of this collection is laudable, and adds to the available material on the daily experience of soldiers in the American Civil War.

These accounts furnish nuanced views that, even in some of the best social histories of soldiers in war, tend to be lumped together in generalized statements. William Porcher DuBose and James Adams Tillman demonstrate that, notwithstanding their similar socioeconomic backgrounds, their experiences during the war were unique. More importantly, the two works taken together may prove useful as part of a case study building on the accomplishments of Randall M. Miller et al. in *Religion and the American Civil War* (1998), Steven E. Woodworth...
in *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (2003), and Mark A. Noll in *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (2006), all of which focus on Confederate troops, specifically South Carolinians, and how religion affected their thoughts and actions throughout the war. What one must understand about these collections is that any assemblage of letters or diaries proves valuable to understanding what soldiers fought for, whether it was home, state, national pride, God, or personal vengeance. Despite some of the drawbacks they pose, the documents are necessary additions to the repository of Civil War correspondence as the sesquicentennial of this conflict unfolds and provides a fresh wave of scholarship on this pivotal event.

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