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978-1-107-06898-8 - Emotional and Sectional Conflict in the Antebellum United States

Michael E. Woods

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Emotional and Sectional Conflict in the Antebellum United States

The sectional conflict over slavery in the United States was not only a clash between labor systems and political ideologies but also a viscerally felt part of the lives of antebellum Americans. This book contributes to the growing field of emotions history by exploring how specific emotions shaped Americans' perceptions of, and responses to, the sectional conflict in order to explain why it culminated in disunion and war. Emotions from indignation to jealousy were inextricably embedded in antebellum understandings of morality, citizenship, and political affiliation. Their arousal in the context of political debates encouraged Northerners and Southerners alike to identify with antagonistic sectional communities and to view the conflicts between them as worth fighting over. Michael E. Woods synthesizes two schools of thought on Civil War causation: the fundamentalist, which foregrounds deep-rooted economic, cultural, and political conflict, and the revisionist, which stresses contingency, individual agency, and collective passion.

Michael E. Woods is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. His work has been published in the *Journal of American History*, the *Journal of Social History*, and Ann Brooks and David Lemmings's edited volume, *Emotions and Social Change: Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (2014). Woods has written book reviews for the *Journal of American Studies*, the *Journal of the Civil War Era*, *Civil War History*, the *North Carolina Historical Review*, and the *Journal of Social History*. He was a 2012–2013 postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at the University of South Carolina.

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For Beth, Darlene, Jennifer, and Rick

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MICHAEL E. WOODS

Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia



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Acknowledgments

The notion that shared emotional experiences knit individuals into communities may seem self-evident to anyone who has completed a graduate degree. Fortunately, I began work on this project in the exceptionally supportive community that is the University of South Carolina History Department. From my first day, I enjoyed the intellectual and emotional support of a group of stellar scholars and teachers. Every member of the faculty was willing and eager to help. Special thanks to Matt Childs, Saskia Coenen-Snyder, Don Doyle, Kay Edwards, Carol Harrison, Wanda Hendricks, Dean Kinzley, David Shields, and Lauren Sklaroff for vital feedback on sections of this book. I owe much to each member of my dissertation committee as well: Lacy Ford, Lawrence Glickman, and Stephen Berry (University of Georgia) offered perceptive criticism and much-appreciated encouragement during my work on this project. Last, but most certainly not least, my heartfelt thanks to my dissertation director, mentor, advocate, and friend Mark Smith. Never too busy to read another draft, have another conversation, write another recommendation letter, or offer another piece of invaluable advice, Mark has made this a better book, and me a better scholar, and for this I am deeply grateful.

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Abbreviations

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| ADAH | Alabama Department of Archives and History |
| CHS | Connecticut Historical Society |
| CL | William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan |
| HL | Houghton Library, Harvard University |
| HRBML | Hargrett Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, University of Georgia |
| LC | Library of Congress (Manuscript Division) |
| MARBL | Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University |
| MHS | Massachusetts Historical Society |
| NHHS | New Hampshire Historical Society |
| OHS | Ohio Historical Society |
| RL | Rubenstein Library, Duke University |
| SCHS | South Carolina Historical Society |
| SCL | South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina |
| SCRC | Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago |
| SHC | Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina |
| VHS | Virginia Historical Society |
| VTHS | Vermont Historical Society |