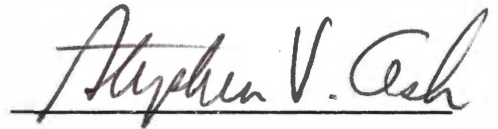


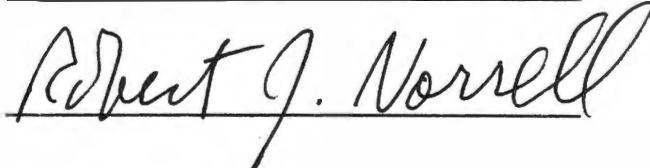
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Victoria Ott entitled "When the Flower Blooms in Winter: Young Women Coming of Age in the Confederacy." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

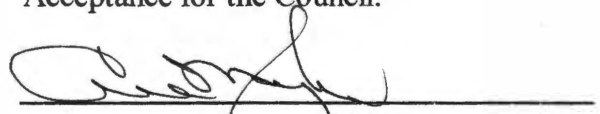


Stephen V. Ash, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:


Acceptance for the Council:



Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate
Studies

WHEN THE FLOWER BLOOMS IN WINTER:
YOUNG WOMEN COMING OF AGE IN THE CONFEDERACY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Victoria Ott
May 2003

Thesis
2003b
.088

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father Thomas Ott, for serving as a role model and source of encouragement during the course of my education, to the memory of my mother, Margaret Franklin Ott, for giving me the inspiration to study women's lives and teaching me how to be strong, to my husband, John Vanover, for believing in me and supporting my efforts in graduate school, and my brother, John Ott, for his smile and laughter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank all those who helped me in completing the Doctor of Philosophy in History. I thank my advisor, Dr. Stephen V. Ash, for his guidance and patience in helping me throughout the dissertation process, his willingness to mentor me in the historical profession, and his support during the course of my graduate studies. I thank Dr. Lorri Glover for her valuable critique of my work and for encouraging me as a scholar. I also thank Dr. Robert J. Norrell for his direction in completing the dissertation and challenging me to become a better writer. I thank Dr. Allison Ensor for serving on my committee and offering crucial suggestions on how to improve the dissertation. I want to extend my gratitude to the members of the Virginia Historical Society for providing a Mellon Fellowship to support my research at their archives and the Charles Jackson Family for the 2001-02 Charles Jackson Graduate Fellowship to help in my research efforts.

I thank my family and friends, especially Valerie Emanoil Nokas, whose encouragement made this work possible.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the lives of young females of the slaveholding South who grew into womanhood during the Civil War. At an early age they understood their privileged place in the southern social order and their family's reliance on slave labor. As their parents and other adults debated secession, these young women came to realize the severity of the sectional conflict and its implications for southern society. They played a significant but heretofore unexplored part in the homefront experience during the war.

Because of their age and roles as elite daughters in the family, they reacted differently than their mothers and older female kin to the absence of white men and loss of slaves. Their community activities and new functions in the home were different from those of their mothers, who assumed roles as plantation managers, nurses, and heads of households. By analyzing changes in their education, courtship, family, race relations, and community activities, this study will show how the war shaped a generation of southern females as they were coming of age and how it produced a unique self-image. This self-image influenced their approach to marriage and motherhood as well as their civic and economic endeavors as they reached adulthood in the postwar period.

Forced to grow up in a time of great economic, political, and social change, this generation of young women shared an experience that shaped their identity as they reached adulthood in the postwar era. Their diaries, family papers, and memoirs from the war and postwar period reveal that all young women felt the impact of war in their daily lives. The Civil War transformed their roles within the home and the larger community as well as their relationships with fathers, brothers, and suitors. The end of slavery also had a special meaning to young women as they watched their family "black and white" disintegrate. As they grew into adults in the postwar period, young women carried their experiences with them and forged a distinct identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	“Our Bright Youth”: Adolescent Girls Before the Civil War	19
III.	The Politicized Belle	43
IV.	The Perfect Woman: Courtship and Marriage	84
V.	Self-Sufficient Daughters: Family and Work	121
VI.	“Our Strength, Our Dependence is Gone”: Race Relations	155
VII.	Epilogue: A Generation Remembered	190
VIII.	Bibliography	205
IX.	Vita	222

INTRODUCTION

In the final year of the Civil War, Emma Florence LeConte, age seventeen, looked at her surroundings with a sense of despair. Gone were the carefree days of her childhood. Now the pale riders of war, destruction, and fear consumed her life. Her family was split apart, the men having left to fight in the war or to retrieve other family members from danger. The imminent Union invasion of her hometown of Columbia, South Carolina, threatened to separate her from the home of her fond childhood memories. LeConte recorded her anger and frustration in her diary:

Truly we girls, whose lot in life is to grow up in these times, are unfortunate.

No pleasure, no enjoyment . . . nothing but the stern realities of life. These which should come later are made familiar to us at an age when only gladness should surround us. . . . I have seen little of the light heartedness and exuberant joy that people talk about as the natural heritage of youth.¹

The Civil War altered the lives of young women from slaveholding families. Although they filled their diaries and correspondence with the normal concerns of teenagers, these girls could not escape the changes surrounding them. As the generation coming of age, they reacted to the evolving social, political, and economic landscape of the Confederate South differently from their mothers and older female kin. They expressed their excitement, fears, and frustrations in ways that reflected their age and

¹Earl Schenck Miers, ed., When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 21-22.

position within the family. Furthermore, homefront conditions thrust young women into adulthood at an early age while they attempted to hold on to the remaining years of their youth. A new self-image emerged from this experience, which young women carried with them into their adult lives in the postwar period.

The new social history appearing in the 1960s opened the door for innovative studies of southern women and the Civil War. Earlier histories dealing with southern women emphasized “notable” or “exceptional” females and eschewed analysis of their roles and relationships. The new social history employed a “bottom up” approach that brought issues of gender, race, class, and religion to the center of the historical experience. As a result, historians began to examine how the Civil War shaped southern women’s lives.

Historians Mary Elizabeth Massey and Anne Firor Scott were among the first to offer an in-depth analysis of southern women’s experiences during the Civil War. Massey’s Bonnet Brigades illustrates how women used the circumstances of war to move “beyond the circumscribed ‘woman’s sphere’ into that heretofore reserved for men.” Scott’s account of women on the Confederate homefront offers a similar view. In The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, Scott asserts that “the challenge of war called women almost at once into new kinds and degrees of activity.” Scott and Massey therefore agree that the Civil War experience represented a watershed in women’s lives. Southern females took on a variety of new roles during the war, such as nursing, soldiers’ aid, and plantation management. These changes, according to Scott and Massey, fostered female participation in areas traditionally open only to males. Jonathan Wiener,

however, challenges the notion that the war transformed southern women's lives. In his 1977 article on female planters, Wiener contends that continuity rather than change marked women's lives.²

In the early eighties, historians began to ask new questions about how the Civil War changed the lives of southern women. George Rable's Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism provides a comprehensive examination of the many activities women engaged in during the war. Rable contends that women's duties in the home enabled them to move into new community activities. Yet, Rable challenges Scott and Massey's contentions regarding the long-term effects of the war in women's lives. He says that while women moved into new areas such as nursing and plantation management, these changes ended with the war: women retreated to their traditional gender roles after Confederate defeat. Thus, Rable supports Wiener's argument that the Civil War produced few lasting changes for southern women.³

²Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Knopf Press, 1966), 367; Ann Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 81; Jonathan Wiener, "Female Planters and Planters' Wives in Civil War and Reconstruction Alabama, 1850-1870," Alabama Review 30 (April 1977): 135-49. Other studies that agree with Scott and Massey include H.E. Sterkx, Partners in Rebellion: Alabama Women in the Civil War (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970) and Bell Irvin Wiley, Confederate Women (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975).

³Catherine Clinton. The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth

In the 1990s, scholars took a different approach in their studies of women on the homefront. Rather than focus on role fulfillment, historians examined the shaping of elite female identity in the Confederate South. In Mothers of Invention, Drew Gilpin Faust contends that economic hardships, loss of slaves, and the absence of white men disrupted the racial and gender hierarchy. No longer under the protection of men, southern females assumed new roles and activities that ultimately altered their “sense of self.” In Faust’s view, however, changes in the southern social order caused many elite women to turn against the war. Women’s patriotism declined as the material and personal hardships of the military conflict began to take their toll. Faust argues that their adherence to the social and racial hierarchy thus contributed to southern defeat. Much like Rable, however, Faust contends that the war produced few lasting effects in women’s lives. Their adherence to racial and gender norms, she concludes, continued into the postwar period. Through Lost Cause activities, white women worked to reestablish their dependence on white men as well as their elite status.⁴

Lee Ann Whites also examines identity formation in her study of white womanhood and manhood in Augusta, Georgia, during the Civil War. Like Faust, Whites argues that the disruption of slavery, military defeats, and economic devastation undermined traditional gender notions. Whites, however, notes that besides calling into

Century (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984); George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

⁴Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

question antebellum ideas of womanliness, the war shook the foundation of masculine identity. Men failed to “protect” their dependents, and women’s roles assumed greater importance. Thus, the Civil War constituted a crisis in gender that, Whites contends, “required a fundamental ‘reconstruction’” of the gender hierarchy. Men turned their attention inward to the home during the postwar era hoping to reestablish domestic dominance. Taking her study beyond the Reconstruction era, Whites uncovers the long-term effects of war on the female population of Augusta. Women, Whites argues, continued to remain in the public light through their reconstruction of the traditional gender hierarchy.⁵

Recent studies also examine the centrality of race in the lives of Confederate women. Faust and Whites show that the war forced plantation mistresses to assume new positions of power over their field and house slaves. As slaves left the plantation for freedom, elite women also took a contradictory approach to race relations. Mistresses viewed those slaves who remained on the plantation as “loyal” and depended in many ways on their assistance. However, as slavery collapsed, whites’ belief in the inferiority of blacks led many slaveholding women to regard African-Americans with fear and bitterness.⁶

Despite growing awareness of gender identity, regionalism, and race, much

⁵Lee Ann Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995)

⁶Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 115-16, 120-21; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 53-79.

remains to be done. Recent histories concentrate for the most part on older married or widowed women, ignoring the experience of adolescent females. Only a few books offer a glimpse of the changes young elite women experienced during the war. Drew Faust, in Mothers of Invention, suggests how adolescent females changed their views toward gender and race during the Civil War, but she focuses primarily on women who were married when the conflict began. Faust maintains that the disruptions of war created in young women a sense of fear and anxiety concerning their gender relations, and ambivalence toward their relationship with slaves. Rable's Civil Wars touches on the changes in young women's lives with regard to courtship and marriage, but, like Faust, Rable generally pays little attention to the generational differences among women. The first attempt to use age as a category of analysis is in James Marten's recent work, The Children's Civil War. In his examination of children's experiences, Marten provides an excellent analysis of youngsters from the Confederacy. However, rather than distinguishing between adolescents and children, he places all young people in the category of "child." In addition, he does not employ a gendered analysis that would reveal the complexities of young people's experiences but rather focuses on children as a whole.⁷

This dissertation explores the experiences of young females of the slaveholding South who grew into womanhood during the Civil War. Born between 1843 and 1849, a time of national expansion and deepening sectional conflict, they came from slaveholding families. At an early age they understood their privileged place in the southern social

⁷Faust, Mothers of Invention, 3-8; Rable, Civil Wars, 52; James Marten, The Children's Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

order and their family's reliance on slave labor. As their parents and other adults debated secession, these young women came to realize the severity of the sectional conflict and its implications for southern society. They played a significant but heretofore unexplored part in the homefront experience. Because of their age, adolescent daughters viewed the war from a different vantage point than their mothers and older female kin. Free from the constraints of marriage and motherhood, young women had concerns and activities that varied considerably from those of the older female generation. On the eve of the war, young women were in the developmental stage in which they formed their understanding of womanhood. But the war disrupted this development of a feminine identity.

By analyzing changes in their education, courtship, family, and race relations, this study will show how the war produced a unique self-image in young women. This sense of self afforded them a degree of independence from the traditional patriarchal structure of the slaveholding family and transformed their attitude toward work in and outside the home. Young women, moreover, wielded greater control over their relationships with men as they adjusted to the loss of potential suitors. The conflict also imparted a sense of political responsibility and a drive for civic involvement that they integrated into their new feminine identity. The end of slavery likewise forced young women to alter their traditional approach to race relations. Their feminine identity failed to challenge conventional gender expectations concerning elite women, but rather integrated their new attitude toward women's roles and responsibilities. As they grew into adults, young women faced a social, economic, and political landscape that helped sustain their new understanding of southern womanhood.

Most studies using age as a category of analysis come from historians of twentieth-century America. William Tuttle, in Daddy's Gone to War, argues that age is an important factor in understanding the American homefront during World War II. He notes that "what is important is not only what happens in a child's life but also when in the child's life--that is, at what age--the event occurs." Age, Tuttle contends, plays a role in determining how individuals react to an event such as war. Their stage of physical and mental development, furthermore, influences the methods used to cope with disruptions to their daily routines. Tuttle concludes that changes caused by war ultimately shaped a generation of individuals as they grew into adulthood. Historian Rebecca Klatch takes this argument a step further by examining a generation in a particular stage of their psychological and physical development. In her analysis of young adults during the 1960s, she argues that a generation represents a category similar to class in that all its members share certain experiences. "During depressions, wars, and other periods of rapid change," Klatch asserts, "crucial group experiences act as 'crystallizing agents,' binding people of the same age into 'generation-units.'" By examining the generation of young adults in both the New Left and New Right movements, Klatch shows how their shared experiences produced a common identity as they reached maturity. Despite the differences in Klatch and Tuttle's approaches to generational studies, both illustrate the importance of age in understanding the experiences of individuals during periods of profound change.⁸

⁸William M. Tuttle, Jr., Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15, 254; Rebecca E. Klatch, A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s

Although age is important in understanding the experiences of individuals, I believe that other factors contribute to the formation of a shared experience. By considering not only age but also gender, race, and class, I intend to show how young women's wartime experiences joined them together and produced a feminine identity distinct from that of preceding generations. As white, slaveholding daughters, these young women perceived the changing southern landscape from a similar perspective.

The generation of young women under examination was between the ages of twelve and eighteen (which modern sociologists term the adolescent stage) when the war broke out. Historians debate the sociological classification of teenagers and the point at which American society began to separate adolescence from childhood. John Demos and Virginia Demos state in their article "Adolescence in Historical Perspective" that the term was not in use between 1800 and 1875. Most of the contemporary literature concerning child-rearing, furthermore, expressed little concern for that period of youth. The Demoses maintain that the term came into use after the restructuring of the family during early twentieth-century industrialization and urbanization. But, other historians refute the Demoses' assertions by illustrating how, at least informally, mothers, fathers, educators, and even young women themselves distinguished the teenage years as an interim stage between childhood and adulthood.⁹

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

⁹John and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," Journal of Marriage and Family 31 (November 1969): 632-38. Other studies dealing with the distinctions between child and adolescent include Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage:

Barbara Welter, in her book Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century, argues that a distinction between child and adolescent, especially with regard to young women, emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. As a teenage daughter matured physically and mentally, society regarded her as different from a child. Welter argues that certain events such as menstruation marked the beginning of a girl's growth into womanhood. This growth culminated in her marriage between the ages of eighteen and twenty. Mothers and other female kin also made the distinction between child and young woman by directing her in new tasks once she reached the age of twelve or thirteen. The teenage daughter assumed new responsibilities in the home and became increasingly involved in church and social events.¹⁰

Distinctions between child and adolescent also appeared in education. Anya Jabour, in her article on female education in the antebellum period, argues that changes occurred in the focus of a young woman's education once she reached her teen years. During his daughter's childhood, a father typically oversaw her learning and expected her to study the same subjects taught to boys. William Wirt of Virginia, for example, directed his children's education in a variety of topics such as English, French, natural philosophy, and history. However, as Laura, the Wirts' daughter, reached her teenage years, William

Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1977) and Jane Turner Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984).

¹⁰Barbara Welter, Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).

decided that her education needed to include more female-directed domestic tasks. This sort of shift, Jabour argues, ensured that daughters received a well-rounded education and that they cultivated the conventional skills associated with southern womanhood, such as cooking, sewing, and entertaining. Jabour's study suggests that despite the lack of formal recognition of an "adolescent stage" in the Old South, parents saw a need to alter their daughter's education as they became teenagers.¹¹

Appearance and mannerisms also helped to distinguish between adolescence and adulthood. As teenagers, young women typically wore their hair down or in a fashionable short style. Their dress was less formal and conservative with fewer shawls and more ribbons and ornaments. When a young woman reached eighteen, society considered her a young adult. To signify this transition, she began to wear her hair up and assumed the title of "Miss." For example, Susan Eppes of Pine Hill, Florida, noted in 1865 that since her sister married she could now assume the title of "Miss Bradford" and that as a mature woman, she "must dress accordingly." Alice Lucas of Charlottesville, Virginia, wrote in

¹¹Anya Jabour, "'Grown Girls, Highly Cultivated': Female Education in an Antebellum Southern Family," Journal of Southern History 64 (February 1998), 32-34. Other studies that examine female education in the nineteenth century include Christie Anne Farnham, The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family and Education (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985).

1864 that upon her eighteenth birthday people addressed her as “Miss Lucas” rather than by her first name. Although the term “adolescent” did not appear until much later, on the eve of the Civil War distinctions between a female child and teenager existed in the realm of family life, church, education, and self-identity. In this study, therefore, I refer to this generation of females as adolescents.¹²

This dissertation is based on numerous sources from over a hundred families during the Civil War and Reconstruction era. Diaries offer the most valuable source because they provide a window on everyday lives. Mothers often encouraged daughters to keep a diary as a way to practice writing skills. While many young women maintained a diary only for a few years, some continued writing even as wives and mothers. These women provide an abundant source of information on the transition from adolescence to womanhood between the 1850s and 1880s. For example, Sally Independence Foster from Florence, Alabama, began her diary in 1862 at the age of thirteen and kept it until 1888, after the birth of her second child. From Foster’s diary we gain an understanding of how the homefront shaped the identity and activities of the female generation reaching maturity in the Reconstruction era. Many women did not keep a diary as a teenager, but began one in adult life. These sources allow us to explore how they viewed themselves as mature women as well as their attitude toward race and gender relations. Diaries kept in the postwar period shed further light on this generation as its members engaged in new

¹²Susan Bradford Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years (Macon: J.W. Burke Co., 1926), 298-99; Alice Lucas to her brother, June 2, 1864, Lucas-Ashley Family Papers, Perkins Library, Manuscript Division, Duke University, Durham.

activities at home and in the community.¹³

These diaries collectively present a detailed picture of the lives of young women during the Civil War. Although they reflect the normal concerns of young women, such as courtship, school, and family, the diaries also provide a plethora of information about growing up during the most tumultuous time in southern history. Several diaries, such as those of Emma Florence LeConte of Columbia, South Carolina, and Anna Cagdell Howell of Nashville, Tennessee, give accounts of life in Union-occupied areas of the South. Other diaries from young women such as Elizabeth Collier of North Carolina describe their refugee experiences as they fled from Federal invasions.¹⁴

Collections of family papers provide a deeper understanding of the familial and personal relationships of young women during and after the war. The letters between adolescent females and their family members represent the most important sources in these collections. These letters reveal young women's reaction to war and homefront activities. Furthermore, their correspondence with male friends and kin serving in the military provides insights into how they dealt with the changes in traditional gender relations. Many letters from parents to their daughters also show the ways in which fathers and mothers reacted to their young belle's new activities on the homefront. Mothers and

¹³Sallie Independence Foster Diary, Wesleyan Archives and Museum, University of North Alabama, Florence.

¹⁴Miers, When the World Ended; Anna Cagdell (Howell) Hollowell Journal, Miss Frank Hollowell Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Elizabeth Collier Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

fathers frequently expressed concern about their daughters' domestic duties, relationships with young men, and educational studies. Some young women corresponded with female friends of the family or former schoolmates their age. These letters provide a rich source for understanding what young women thought about the changes occurring in their lives as well as their relationships with each other during the war. As young women matured in the postwar era, they filled their letters with new concerns regarding pending marriages, motherhood, and their former slaves. These letters show where these women saw themselves within the changing social landscape of the Reconstruction South.¹⁵

Memoirs are another fruitful source for historians exploring the homefront experiences of young women in the South. A number of women who were adolescents during the war wrote memoirs in their adult lives about their homefront activities. Using sources written after the fact is problematic, of course. However, memoirs help us to understand how the war shaped young women's identity. Having come of age during our nation's greatest conflict, these women retold their Civil War experiences from adult perspectives. Their wartime recollections bring to light how they viewed such matters as race and gender relations as mature women. Furthermore, they provide information on how women perceived changes in their daily activities while they came of age. By examining their stories told many years later, historians can also analyze the extent to which the war influenced the identity of young women.

Interweaving chronological and thematic approaches, I have organized this

¹⁵Steven Stowe, "The Rhetoric of Authority: The Making of Social Values in Planter Family Correspondence," Journal of American History 73 (March 1987), 916-933.

dissertation into five chapters. Chapter one surveys adolescent females in the late antebellum period. It explores social prescriptions for elite daughters, looking specifically at their preparation for their roles as mothers and wives in a slaveholding family. An examination of young women's family life, educational pursuits, social endeavors, and religious activities brings to light what southern society expected from its slaveholding daughters. As young, single females, however, this generation of women enjoyed a degree of freedom, especially in their relationships with potential suitors. Continuing the theme of relationships, the chapter explores those in the extended family "white and black" as well as what parents taught their daughters about slavery and how this shaped relations between young women and their slaves.

In chapter two, I examine how Confederate nationalism and developments in the postwar South created and sustained a political identity among young women. This chapter begins with young women's views on secession and their reactions to the outbreak of war. Many adolescent females expressed their support for the Confederacy within the limitations of their age and gender, but circumstances afforded them a degree of freedom in their patriotic expressions greater than that permitted their mothers and older female kin. The sense of political responsibility young women gained in the war shaped their civic involvement in the Reconstruction era. They saw their participation in civic life as an extension of the female ideal, and after the conflict they believed they had a moral and maternal responsibility to help rebuild their communities.¹⁶

¹⁶In past studies of women in nineteenth-century America, historians tended to view the public and private spheres as separate, with women occupying the private or

The third chapter examines how the war challenged young women's traditional courtship practices and attitudes toward marriage. Most young women expected eventually to marry, but the absence of potential suitors on the homefront forced many to

domestic sphere and men occupying the public. Yet Linda Kerber, in a 1988 article, found that this separation of female and male spheres was merely a "rhetorical construction" used to fit the changing ideologies of society. Since Kerber's article was published, other historians have shown ways in which public and private came together and the lines of demarcation in female activities blurred. The home became a vehicle for public involvement while public issues found their way into the home. Cynthia Kierner takes this argument a step further in her assertion that southern women in the early nineteenth century found avenues to political involvement through "informal civic and social activities," which she terms the informal political sphere. Since young women, like their mothers, were excluded from the formal realm of politics, I will employ Kierner's terminology to illustrate how they used social activities in the home, school, and community to assert themselves politically. This participation in the informal political sphere blurred the distinction between public and private in the lives of young women. See Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society," American Historical Review 89 (June 1984): 620-47; Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," Journal of American History 75 (June 1988): 9-39; Cynthia Kierner, Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

reconsider their prospects. Yet the war failed to produce in young women the sense of urgency about marriage that older single or widowed women experienced. Rather, many young women willingly postponed marriage until after the war, enjoying the freedom that courtship offered. The changes in their relationships with young men, however, failed to alter young women's world view as they entered adulthood in the postwar period.

Although they encountered economic and social obstacles to marriage, they accepted the postwar domestic ideology that regarded the roles of wife and mother as the fulfillment of women's purpose.

The next chapter examines how young women, especially those in occupied areas, were forced to become self-sufficient daughters as the perils of war endangered the southern homefront. Adolescent daughters endured daily traumas caused by the absence or death of male family members and friends. As federal invasion forced many young women into refugee life, they found themselves uprooted from their childhood home. Disruptions on the homefront compelled those who remained in their homes to become managers and protectors of the family, and contributors to the household economy. As a result, young women adopted a new attitude toward work in and outside the home, which helped them adjust to the economic hardships in the postwar period.

The fifth chapter looks at how the disruption of slavery affected young women's relationships with their slaves and their view of African-Americans as a whole. Slaveholding daughters reacted to the emancipation of slaves and the postwar racial order ambivalently. They held tightly to the paternalism that characterized their relationships with the slaves in the Old South, but as slaves left the plantation for Union lines and

slaveholding families experienced hardships their support for slavery weakened. As southerners adjusted to the new status of their former slaves in the postwar era, young women manifested paternalistic ideals in their relationships with blacks. Yet the racial conflicts that surfaced in the Reconstruction South challenged such sentiments and young women replaced their paternalism with a harsher treatment of African Americans.

The dissertation concludes with a brief discussion of young women's memory of war. Examining how young women of the Confederacy remembered their experiences helps us to understand the extent to which they saw themselves as a unique generation of southern females. Moreover, their memories reveal a deeper impression left by the Civil War. By exploring their memoirs and reminiscences, we see how the conflict shaped their view toward the world around them, informing their opinions about issues such as war, society, and economics.

When Emma Florence LeConte wrote that she knew little of the "light-heartedness of youth," she expressed a feeling shared by young women from slaveholding families during the Civil War era. Forced to grow up in a time of great economic, political, and social change, this generation of young women shared an experience that shaped their identity as they reached adulthood in the postwar era. Their diaries, correspondence, and memoirs reveal that all young women daily felt the impact of war. The conflict transformed their roles and attitudes concerning home, family, and civic life as well as their understanding of gender and race relations. As they grew into adults in the postwar period, young women carried their experiences with them and forged a unique identity.

CHAPTER TWO

“OUR BRIGHT YOUTH”: ADOLESCENT GIRLS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

In June 1859, less than two years before the start of the Civil War, Susan Bradford, age thirteen, was paying little attention to the brewing sectional conflict between the North and South. Bradford, of Pine Hill plantation near Tallahassee, Florida, spent her summer break from school aiding in the preparations for her sister's wedding. As the daughter of Edward Bradford, former territorial governor of Florida and a prominent planter, Susan enjoyed the extravagant display that marked the marriage ceremonies of the Old South's elite. She noted in her diary the numerous wedding presents and elaborate dresses as well as the many guests who came from all over the area to attend her sister's wedding. Although her father had talked to her about the sectional conflict, the excitement over the wedding overshadowed any political concerns she had. Only in passing did Bradford mention the conflict in her diary after overhearing her older male kin engaged in “a serious talk” about the future of the South.¹

Bradford, like many of her female peers, focused mainly on the normal activities of daily life. Not until 1860, when serious talk of secession circulated throughout the South, did young women realize that the relatively carefree days of their youth would come to an end. To understand how war altered the lives of adolescent females, we must begin with an examination of their daily activities and relationships before the war.

Traditional ideals of southern womanhood shaped the lives of young women

¹Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 95-100.

throughout the slaveholding South. Social prescriptions for these youths emphasized preparation for their eventual roles as wives, mothers, and slave mistresses. As historian Ann Firor Scott notes, “from earliest childhood girls were trained to the ideals of perfection and submission. . . . By the time they arrived at their teens most girls had absorbed the injunctions of the myth.” School and church inculcated the domestic skills and religious morality prescribed for southern women while social engagements and courtships reinforced traditional views on gender relations and a young woman’s sense of self. Training future women of the slaveholding South likewise entailed teaching adolescent females how to interact with slaves. Parents oversaw their daughters’ association with slaves both inside and outside the home and expected them to follow the prescribed model of race relations. Their domestic training, however, gave them very little practical experience in the day-to-day management of a home and its dependents. Yet as rigid and confining as their education in the ideals of southern womanhood was, adolescent females nevertheless relished the freedom that came with being young and single. Their church, school, and family life all provided avenues for social interaction and gave daughters a degree of freedom in their activities and relationships.

Education was a primary tool for teaching adolescent daughters the roles of wife, mother, and moral guardian. During childhood, most women either attended a neighborhood school or received private tutoring. Fathers paid close attention to their daughters’ formal education and supervised their studies outside the classroom. As girls matured, however, parents wanted them not only to continue their formal education but also to cultivate domestic skills and religious morality. Mothers and older female kin

therefore assumed a larger role in the education of young women as they approached adolescence. Schools and churches reinforced this transition to a more domestic and religious education.²

The education of Letitia Burwell exemplified the transition in a young woman's training once she reached adolescence. Burwell was the daughter of a Virginia planter. Like all wealthy southerners, he viewed his daughter's education as a means to display his elite status as well as to prepare his daughter for her future role. At an early age, Burwell received private tutoring that emphasized the development of intellectual skills. Madam Henriquez, an immigrant from Copenhagen, taught Burwell and her sister geography, grammar, history, and science. As Burwell reached adolescence, her parents replaced Henriquez with a Virginia woman "of a wholly different type, all grace and accomplishments" who taught the young daughters subjects such as music and poetry. In her teens, Burwell's parents sent her to Richmond to attend a finishing school that emphasized manners, dress, and social proprieties. Looking back on her education, Burwell identified its purpose: "At that period a girl was expected not only to be an ornament to the drawing-room, but to be also equipped for taking charge of an establishment and superintending every detail of domestic employment on a plantation." In actuality, Burwell received very little practical education in the overall management of the home and its dependents, including the slaves. Her slaves carried out most of the

² Jabour, "Grown Girls, Highly Cultivated," 32-34.

household chores while her mother oversaw their activities.³

A key part of a young woman's education was the female academy or seminary. In the 1830s, these institutions spread across the nation in response to a growing demand for female education beyond the primary level. With the intensification of the separate-spheres ideology in the early 1800s, middle- and upper-class parents increasingly looked to higher education as a means of both inculcating the ideal of southern womanhood and developing intellectual abilities. By the 1850s, most adolescent females from slaveholding families attended a seminary or academy. They entered the school around the age of twelve or thirteen and graduated at seventeen or eighteen. While many young women attended a school in their community, many others went to an academy far from home, sometimes rooming and boarding with relatives or family friends who lived nearby. Parents paid dearly to send their daughters to such schools: by the 1850s, up to \$200 a year for tuition, room, and board.⁴

³Letitia M. Burwell, A Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1895), 190-94.

⁴Between 1850 and 1859 there began in the South a push to offer college classes at female seminaries. Most young women who took college-level courses, however, never intended to work outside the home, and the courses were introductory-level. Only in the post-Reconstruction era did the South see the rise of female colleges offering upper-level courses. See Christie Ann Farnham, The Education of the Southern Belle, 3-4, 16-18; Christie Farnham Pope, "Preparation for Pedestals: North Carolina Female Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1977), 11-19, 29-30, 54-56.

The curriculum consisted of a variety of subjects dealing with intellectual and “ornamental” subjects. The liberal arts were at the core of a female education. Young women took classes in the classics, language, grammar, rhetoric, literature, composition, math, and science, which together would presumably instill good character in the student and give her the intellectual capabilities to fulfill her future roles as wife and mother. Ornamental subjects included embroidery, needlework, crafts, and music, this last being the most popular.⁵

Most young women did not expect to put their education to use beyond their traditionally prescribed roles in the home and society. Even those such as Sarah Wadley who enjoyed the intellectual challenges of her education did not in most cases consider a career. Class and gender prescriptions in the late-antebellum South shaped a young woman’s expectations about life after graduation. Most parents looked to education as a means to make their daughters a more desirable mate. Few daughters of slaveholding families, furthermore, had professional goals, for taking work outside the home would blur the line separating them from poorer white and slave women.⁶

Schools sent out periodic report cards to students and parents. At the end of the

⁵ Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 72-87; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, January 26, 1860, Sarah Lois Wadley Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Louisiana Wilson Hankins to Virginia Wilson Hankins, October 21, 1859, Hankins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

⁶Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 109-10; Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 45-47.

school year, students participated in public examinations with community members present. Here they exhibited projects in sewing and craft work, gave musical recitals, showed off their knowledge of various subjects such as math and science, and read their best composition pieces or poems. The day of examination was exciting for young women, who, besides displaying their skills, had the chance to interact with the community.⁷

Schools, however, also provided a setting for young women to rebel against authority. Parents emphasized submission in preparing their daughters for domestic life, and they expected little challenge to their rules and guidance. However, once they were at school and away from their parents' influence, young women often acted up. Historian Brenda Stevenson argues that rebelling against school teachers constituted a symbolic challenge to parents' authority. Still, while many young women behaved in ways that seemed rebellious, they quickly submitted to their teachers. Susan Bradford illustrated this point when she played a prank at the end of her algebra class. After completing the last lesson in the textbook, Bradford threw the book out the window. Her teacher immediately censured her and ordered her to retrieve the book, whereupon Bradford remorsefully brought it back to the school room. Educators also attempted to correct young women's deportment by noting their conduct on report cards, thus informing parents about their daughters' behavior. For example, Elvira Lea, a student of Cleveland Masonic Female Institute in east Tennessee, received bad marks for "prompting" a school

⁷Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 89-90; William R. Snell, ed., Myra Inman: A Diary of the Civil War in East Tennessee (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000), chapter one, *passim*.

mate. As a result, her parents made her “stay in” when they went out to visit friends and family members on a Friday evening.⁸

Student life at academies and seminaries, although rigidly structured, did offer young women a chance to socialize with their female peers. Many formed strong friendships while attending school, and these friendships commonly lasted through adolescence and into adulthood. Young women who attended school away from home found that friendships with classmates served as a kind of substitute for familial relationships, partially filling the void created by the absence of family members. These friendships also served as a social outlet for daughters who felt confined by the rules of the academy. Walks after school or conversations at night allowed young women to form female bonds but also to socialize away from the watchful eye of the school mistress. Friendships also provided solace for young women during times of sadness. Olin Davis described how one of her classmates suddenly left the school to attend to her sick aunt. When the aunt died, Davis and the other female students rallied around the young woman by writing letters that offered comfort and advice on dealing with the death.⁹

⁸Brenda Stevenson, Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 84; Snell, Myra Inman, 3.

⁹Pope, “Preparation for Pedestals,” 217-21; Steven M. Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 150; Olin Davis to brother, March 25, 1860, Beale-Davis Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

A young woman's education took place beyond as well as in the classroom setting. Besides a formal education, parents wanted their daughters to receive domestic training to prepare them to be wives and mothers. The home became a pseudo-classroom where mothers and older female kin taught young women domestic skills. Rather than teach the overall management of a household, however, mothers typically taught their daughters a few specific tasks. Before the war, very few adolescent daughters managed a home, and then only on those rare occasions when both mother and older female siblings were away. In most cases when a mother visited relatives, her younger daughters merely increased their share of household duties. Fourteen-year-old Martha Davis, of Murfreesboro, North Carolina, was an example: after her mother left for Richmond, Virginia, Martha helped with housekeeping but was not allowed the responsibility of managing the household and servants.¹⁰

Daughters received training in a variety of household skills. Their regular domestic duties included taking care of their rooms, picking flowers, helping make preserves, and sewing. Some young women experienced difficulty in their domestic training; one was Sarah Wadley, who failed at her first attempt at making a dress, lamenting that "it is quite hard work for me." Many others, however, had a knack for it and found it to be a form of entertainment that filled their day. Myra Inman of east

¹⁰Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 110-11; Kierner, Beyond the Household, 149-151; Sallie Munford Ellis to her brother, undated (1860), Munford-Ellis Family Papers, Perkins Library; Martha Anne Davis to John Davis, January 20, 1860, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

Tennessee, for example, set aside time each day with her sisters to work on sewing. At thirteen, she learned how to make an apron, sew tucks in skirts, and make a quilt. She also practiced sewing by making a shirt for George, one of the family's household slaves. Most young women honed their cooking skills by preparing specialty foods and baked goods. Susan Bradford, for example, learned how to make French rolls with the help of her older cousin. Young women also learned to prepare full meals for their family. On one occasion, Myra Inman "cooked a meal of victuals" for her mother and sisters. For the most part, however, food preparation was left to household slaves and older female family members.¹¹

Among the central concerns in a young woman's education were family honor and material support. Mothers and fathers not only taught their daughter practical matters but also inculcated the importance of ensuring the family's survival and status. If she failed to abide by the prescriptions of gender and class, a young woman risked tarnishing the family's honor. Conduct beyond the household was also scrutinized. Parents emphasized proper dress and manners and encouraged daughters to attend social occasions where they could display their status and wealth.¹²

Relationships in the home taught young women about family responsibility and also gave them a way to escape isolation and boredom. The strong maternal influence in

¹¹ Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 111-13; Louisa Sheppard Recollections, Southern Historical Collection; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, October 5, 1859; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 100; Snell, Myra Inman, 8-11, 32, 36.

¹²Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South, 122-23, 142-48.

a young woman's life produced close relationships between mothers and daughters. From an early age, daughters turned to their mothers for emotional as well as physical comfort. When a young woman reached adolescence, her relationship with her mother took on another dimension. A mother provided the primary training for her daughter's future domestic and maternal roles and directed her in a number of household chores. Daughters likewise looked to their mothers as social and cultural mentors, seeking their advice on dress, manners, courtship, and other aspects of southern womanhood. Myra Inman, for example, went on visits, attended church meetings, and shopped with her mother, thus witnessing firsthand the social and moral responsibilities of a slaveholding woman. Daughters felt a deep sense of devotion to their mothers but always within the context of the hierarchy that characterized slaveholding families. Young women understood that the division of power in the home favored fathers over mothers; nonetheless, they respected their mother's authority and yielded to her decisions.¹³

The frequent absence from home of the man of the household kept many young women from forging the same close bond with their father they shared with their mother. Susan Bradford's father, a politician, traveled often while seeing to his legislative duties. Bettie Alexander of Monroe County, Virginia, saw her father on several occasions leave to attend to plantation business in Texas, spending two months at a time away from home. Even when their fathers were at home, young women spent the majority of their day in the

¹³Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 112-13; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 39-41; Snell, Myra Inman, chapter one, passim.

company of women, learning domestic skills, visiting, or at school.¹⁴

Although often separated from their fathers, young women developed affectionate relationships with them. The dependence that a patriarchal household bred tied young women to their paternal figure. From their earliest childhood, daughters understood that their father's provided financial support. The status of the family also derived from the head of household; thus, young women's social class depended on their father. But the bond between fathers and daughters also came from genuine feelings. Fathers doted on their young daughters and enjoyed attending to their material needs. Most adolescent daughters responded with love and affection.¹⁵

Perhaps the most influential relationship in young women's lives was that between sisters. In many ways, the closeness between sisters surpassed that between husbands and wives and between children and their parents. By providing an escape from the rigid hierarchy of the patriarchal household, sisterhood offered fulfillment and comfort for young women in a world that valued males more than females.¹⁶

¹⁴Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 111-13; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 39; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, chapter 1, passim; Bettie Alexander to her sister, December 3, 1860, Bettie Alexander Papers, Perkins Library.

¹⁵Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 41-44.

¹⁶Few historians of southern families give much attention to the sisterly bond. Lorri Glover's study of early South Carolina families is one of the first to examine it at some length. See Lorri Glover, All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds among the Early South Carolina Gentry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press,

The sororal bond played an important role in the lives of elite young women in the late antebellum era. Susan Bradford, for example, admired her older sister and looked to her for advice. Her relationship with her sister also gave Bradford a social outlet. Isolated on a large plantation in Florida, the young woman never forged close female friendships like those of her peers away at school. Myra Inman developed deep affection for her sister Rhoda, who was close to her in age. The two young women spent most of their free time sewing in the parlor and talking about their social activities and expectations for the future. When Inman began attending social functions, Rhoda accompanied her, often offering advice on proper conduct. Although marriage physically separated younger and older sisters, they generally remained close. Bettie Alexander, for example, was devastated by her sister's departure after marrying but maintained their bond through correspondence.¹⁷

For those attending school away from home, their family remained profoundly important. Educators urged students who boarded at the school to seek their parents' aid in their studies and encouraged regular correspondence between students and their parents. Young women wrote frequently to their parents, especially when homesick, and sought their advice on education, dress, and social conduct. Adolescent daughters also maintained their relationships with siblings while away at school. Olin Tuberville Davis of Murfreesboro, North Carolina, wrote her brother frequently about her courses, and even

2000), 81-85. See also Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 54-55.

¹⁷Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 95-100; Snell, Myra Inman, 6-10; Bettie Alexander to sister, December 3, 1860, Bettie Alexander Family Papers.

solicited his suggestions for a topic for the paper assigned in her composition class. For many young women, letters provided the only link to life back home and they looked forward to news from family.¹⁸

Religious participation and spiritual development played a central role in female education. Because the tenets of southern womanhood emphasized the religious duties of wives and mothers, parents and educators provided spiritual and moral training for young women and the church assumed an essential role in daughters' moral development. Mothers especially viewed church activities and Bible studies as indispensable training for female moral guardianship of the home. The pinnacle of a young woman's religious training, however, was her conversion experience, which signified (among other things) her acceptance of "moral responsibility."¹⁹

When they reached adolescence, young women increased their religious activities. Under their mother's tutelage, they studied the Bible, attended church, and joined in other religious gatherings. A popular activity for young women was attending camp meetings or revivals held by churches in the community. They also taught Sunday school and participated in church charitable work. Olin Davis, for example, joined female church

¹⁸Steven Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Antebellum South, 142-53; John Davis to Olin Tuberville Davis, March 25, 1860, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

¹⁹ Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 256-59; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 95, 137, 162-63; Rable, Civil Wars, 18-19; Jean E. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1930 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 110-27.

members in raising money for benevolent work; her church organized the Washington Street Fair, in which women of all ages made craftwork and food to sell. These activities were not solely religious but also social, offering opportunities for young women to get together with their peers. Davis enjoyed her participation in the fair because it allowed her to mingle with her friends as well as meet potential suitors.²⁰

Parents expected their daughters who attended school away from home to participate in religious activities, and schools generally required religious education and church attendance. The school routine usually included prayer at the beginning and end of each day. On Sundays, students attended a church of their choice or that of their school master or mistress. Some female seminaries offered evening Bible lectures for students. Many schools, furthermore, required students to attend revivals and camp meetings held in the community.²¹

The frequency of death tested the faith of young women as it did the faith of all antebellum southerners. Seventeen-year-old Catherine Louisa McLaurin, for example, lost a family member and four former schoolmates to illness in a single year. Spiritual fortitude helped reconcile young women to the death of a loved one. Those of faith found comfort in the belief that they would one day reunite with deceased loved ones in heaven. Time-honored funeral rituals and traditions also helped them to deal with death. Sarah Wadley,

²⁰ Stevenson, Life in Black and White, 121; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 160-61; Snell, Myra Inman, xix, 10-11; Olin Davis to brother, April 21, 1860, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

²¹ Pope, "Preparation for Pedestals," 231-35.

age fifteen, noted after her aunt passed away in 1860 that her death “has done me good, I feel nearer to heaven since she has gone there and I have learned now to feel resigned at her loss.”²²

Perhaps as important in a young woman’s life as religion was courtship. Young women’s ideals of courtship and marriage were based not only on romantic affection but also on a sense of family honor and responsibility. The choice of a husband reflected on a family’s status and helped to secure it. Parents expected their daughters to marry and advised them on when and with whom to pursue a relationship. Sarah Wadley, for example, noted her father’s concern over whom she would wed. He made it clear that he would tolerate her marrying a minister but preferred someone who could turn her mind “from metaphysics,” to which he felt she was “too much inclined.” He directed her also to wait until she was twenty before committing to marriage. Most parents, in fact, encouraged their daughters to wait until they completed their education or were in their early twenties, and waiting until young adulthood was not uncommon in middle- and upper-class families of the slaveholding South.²³

²² Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 157-58; Catherine Louisa McLaurin Diary, February 1860, Catherine Louisa McLaurin Collection, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, November 24, 1860.

²³Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 208-209; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 61-62; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, October 2, 1860; E. Susan Barber, “The White Wings of Eros’: Courtship and Marriage in Confederate Richmond,” in Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South, Catherine Clinton, ed. (New

Parents kept a close watch over a daughter's interaction with young men to protect her reputation in the community and oversee her choice of beaux. An act of indiscretion could damage her social standing and render her unable to marry within the elite class. Like older married women, daughters traveled only with a male escort. Some, like Mary Conway Shields, of Jefferson County, Mississippi, were required to have a chaperone when attending dances, parties, and community functions. When young men visited a daughter at home parents rarely left them unsupervised; usually a family member or friend remained in the room for the sake of propriety. Occasionally, a young man brought two or three friends along when calling, to forestall gossip among neighbors. A young woman away at school or visiting relatives was subject to the same strict standards of conduct around male peers. When she needed an escort to a social function, she often called on male friends of the family or relatives who lived in the area. Female students received visits from young men but school officials supervised their activities and limited the time they spent together. Although they were under the watchful eye of the school master or mistress, young men and women found ways to circumvent the rigid rules. For example, on some occasions when a young man would call on a female relative at the school, she introduced him to some of her friends, which usually received less attention from school officials.²⁴

York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 121.

²⁴Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 61-63, 101-102, 113-14; Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 61-65, 207-208; Elizabeth Dunbar Murray, My Mother Used to Say: A Natchez Belle of the Sixties (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1959), 64;

While elite young southern women felt constrained to live up to their parents' standards of courtship and marriage, they enjoyed a measure of freedom. Some delayed marriage as long as possible, either because they enjoyed pursuit by beaux or because they had doubts about marriage and motherhood. Sarah Wadley confided in her diary that she intended "to pass a single life," explaining that "my health, or more properly my constitution is too feeble to sustain the burden which a wife and mother must bear." Catherine Louisa McLaurin, age seventeen, expressed similar doubts about marriage after she visited with an older female friend who was a newlywed. "[I]f getting married has such a bad effect upon all girls as it has on her," she wrote, "then all should hold fast their hands."²⁵

Most young women enjoyed the power they wielded over courtship decisions, often pursuing several relationships before marrying. Coquetry was common, and flirtations and declarations of affection filled the discussions and letters between young men and women, but southern daughters, especially early in their adolescence, generally refrained from making any serious commitment to a suitor. Myra Inman, for example, reveled in the attention she received from potential beaux. At the age of fourteen, she had just entered the world of social engagements and courtship. Because of her age, she

Elizabeth Morrow Nix, "An Exuberant Flow of Spirits: Antebellum Adolescent Girls in the Writing of Southern Women" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1996), 16-17; Pope, "Preparation for Pedestals," 223.

²⁵Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 208-209; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, October 2, 1860; Catherine Louisa McLaurin Diary, November 6, 1860.

refrained from considering marriage but enjoyed the many visits she received from young men, including one instance in which a group of her male peers serenaded her. Inman and most other young women relished the period between childhood and marriage as a time of freedom, unburdened by the familial responsibilities that lay ahead after marriage.²⁶

Social activities gave young women an opportunity to interact with young men and practice social skills. At church functions, community get-togethers, parties, balls, and dances, they could visit with male peers without risking their reputation in the community. Family leisure activities also gave daughters an opportunity for social interaction. Sarah Wadley recorded in her diary that during the summer of 1860 she went with her family to Cohutta Springs in Murray County, Georgia, where along with several male and female friends she filled her days with games such as blind man's bluff and her evenings with dances and parties.²⁷

Even when well trained in social graces, young women anguished over their ability to interact properly with young men. Many feared that if they were awkward, peers would brand them a wallflower or would exclude them from activities. Sarah Wadley wrote of her insufficient skills in socializing with young men: "How often have I regretted, so foolishly, that I had not been educated to speak words without meaning and to practice gracefully all those coquettish airs which form such an important part of conversation

²⁶Snell, Myra Inman, 6, 10; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 61-62.

²⁷Kierner, Beyond the Household, 146; Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 61-62; Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 63; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, July 16, August, 9, 14, 1860.

between ladies and gentlemen.” Social graces, young women agreed, were indispensable to one who sought courtship and marriage.²⁸

Adolescent daughters also placed great emphasis on attractive dress, even though most parents encouraged them to dress plainly, avoiding “gaudy” or loud clothing. Their ability to sew often aided efforts to secure the latest fashion in dresses and hats. Myra Inman, for example, embroidered designs on sleeves and waistbands to lend a more stylish appearance to her dresses. Hairstyles, too, concerned young women after they reached adolescence. To distinguish themselves from children, many changed their hair. Mary Conway Shields, for example, recalled that when she reached fifteen she began to wear her hair down like many of her female friends.²⁹

Most young women were insecure about their appearance. Many believed that if their peers thought them unattractive, they would have few opportunities for socializing and courtship. The importance of marriage in a young woman’s future also set the stakes high for finding a partner. Sarah Wadley got upset when a young gentleman flippantly remarked that her large nose and heavy eyebrows were “sure signs of a fine mind”; she thought his comment an attempt “to console me for my ugliness.”³⁰

While most southern daughters sought a relationship based on romantic attraction,

²⁸ Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, August 5, 1860.

²⁹ Pope, “Preparation for Pedestals,” 236-40; Snell, Myra Inman, 11; Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 63.

³⁰ Pope, “Preparation for Pedestals,” 240-41; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, January 4, 1861.

traditional notions of gender played an important role in shaping their interaction with potential suitors. Often a young woman would end a relationship if she believed her beau failed to live up to his masculine duty. During their visits and correspondence, courting couples outlined the roles they expected to play once married. Their vision of marriage combined romantic and material expectations. An adolescent daughter's romantic affection for a suitor was often contingent on his ability to support her once married. If her suitor lacked the ambition or financial means to meet her expectations, a young woman quickly ended the relationship. On the other hand, young men sought a potential mate who would adhere to traditional female roles and carry out her responsibility to the home and family.³¹

A young gentlewoman's training for southern womanhood went beyond domestic, educational, spiritual, and social activities. Parents also expected their daughters eventually to learn the role of slave mistress in the home. At an early age, women absorbed the prevailing wisdom that emphasized the necessity and propriety of slavery. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, parents taught their daughters that the South's peculiar institution was "the necessary price for their own privileged position." Young women learned that "slaves performed the labor that executed slaveholding women's skills."³²

Adolescent females, like their mothers, had an ambivalent attitude toward African-

³¹Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South, 51-84; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 63-64.

³² Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 112, 243.

Americans: they simultaneously cared for them and feared them. They were both racist and paternalistic, believing that as an “inferior” race, blacks needed care and direction to survive. Paternalism, according to pro-slavery advocates, was a reciprocal relationship in which a master provided nurturance and protection in return for the slave’s submission and labor. Slaveholding parents brought up young women to regard slaves, particularly those in the home, as part of the “family, white and black.”³³

Most young women viewed slavery as a benevolent institution that provided care for a race they saw as dependent on assistance. Especially during the holidays, they participated in gift-giving and other events that emphasized the familial nature of the master-slave relationship. Mary Shields, for example, noted that at Christmas-time in 1859 she and her family gave gifts to the numerous field and house slaves at Pecano, the family’s plantation in Louisiana. Shields’s parents gave her fruit and toys to distribute to the slave children. Letitia Burwell believed that paternalism justified slavery and lauded “the mutual affections existing between the white and black races and the abundant provisions generally made for the wants of those whom God had mysteriously placed under our care.”³⁴

³³Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 3-5;

³⁴Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 70-75; Burwell, Girl’s Life in Virginia Before the War, 24. Other historians deny that paternalism was characteristic of slaveholders. For example, James Oakes posits that masters viewed slaves as property and that their right to own property became the primary argument in the defense of slavery. James Oakes, The

The relationship between adolescent females and older slaves reinforced the paternalistic ethos. Girls' first contact with slaves was with the nurses who cared for them as children. Louisa Sheppard noted the closeness she felt with her nurse, Ellen, who helped care for Sheppard after her mother died during childbirth. After she reached adolescence, Sheppard often went to Ellen to hear stories about her mother. Young women also felt a familial bond with older male slaves who worked in the home.³⁵

Although parents encouraged paternalism, they attempted to maintain some separation between their daughters and bondspeople and closely supervised their activities with slaves. When Susan Bradford's father held his annual barbeque for the house and field slaves, he refused to allow his daughter to attend or even watch the event from afar. Discouraged from getting too close to slaves, daughters learned little about their overall management. Many women who married therefore found themselves ill-prepared to

Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1982) and Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990). I believe that while young women understood the economic necessity of slavery they viewed slaves in familial terms. Parents emphasized the paternalistic rather than economic aspect of slavery when teaching children about race.

³⁵ Louisa C. Sheppard Recollections. Young women's devotion to older house slaves and nurses was not always reciprocated; see, for example, Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 13-29.

assume the role of slave mistress.³⁶

Parents also tried to preserve some distance between their daughters and slaves who were close to them in age. Girls played with such slaves, but learned at an early age to treat black playmates differently from white playmates. Parents encouraged daughters to take on the role of mistress when interacting with slaves their age. One who followed the rule was Susan Bradford, who, upon learning of some misbehavior by Frances, a female slave close to her in age, commented that “I tried hard to raise Frances with good principles It was such a disappointment to me.”³⁷

As future moral guardians, daughters were taught that they should act as the conscience of the slave system. Catherine Clinton notes that, like their mothers, young women “would often plead with planters for the humane treatment of slaves.” The separation of slave families through sale disturbed young Letitia Burwell: “Often did I pray that God would make us a way to escape from it.” Yet, she understood that her status as an elite southerner depended on her ownership of slaves and she blamed the market economy for the practice of selling slaves. To ease her concerns, Burwell took the position that if a master could no longer afford his slaves it was best to sell them to someone who could, for the slaves would thereby “exchange unpleasant for agreeable

³⁶ Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 111-12; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 100-101.

³⁷ Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 189; Rable, Civil Wars, 33; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 95-96.

homes.”³⁸

In the late antebellum period, the ideals of southern womanhood permeated young women’s lives and relationships. Assuming that daughters would one day become wives, mothers, and slave mistresses, parents guided their education in domestic and community activities. Parents also closely monitored their daughters’ interaction with male peers to ensure seemly behavior. Yet young women were not without a measure of freedom and even power. They participated in a variety of social activities and had some say in matters of courtship and marriage. The values of their slaveholding society shaped young women’s views on race relations. While they perceived slaves as part of the family white and black, they adopted the racist assumptions of their time, place, and class. And while they were trained by parents and others in specific skills, daughters learned little about the overall management of the home or supervision of slaves and were thus generally unprepared for the demands of adulthood.

Even as Susan Bradford participated joyfully in her sister’s wedding festivities, she was aware of the brewing North-South political crisis. She perceived the activities of abolitionists and the attempts to limit the spread of slavery as a threat to her family’s stability. Bradford perhaps understood the seriousness of the political situation better than most of her peers because of her father’s close ties to southern politics and his desire to teach his daughter about political and civic affairs. But even those young women uninterested in such matters could not fail to see the omens of a coming storm.

³⁸Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 187; Burwell, Girl’s Life in Virginia Before the War, 29.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICIZED BELLE

As Anna Clewell and her schoolmate, Livie Bayard, walked through the occupied town of Salem, North Carolina, in 1865, they noticed a group of Union officers in front of headquarters watching them intently. They understood the reason for this attention when they spotted a man standing on the piazza of his home holding a United States flag over the street. Seeing that the emblem obstructed their path, the two girls looked at each other with a knowing glance and then walked the other way as the officers began laughing. That evening, two of the officers came to the Clewell home to ask the young women why they refused to walk under the flag. Clewell responded, “as for passing under the flag, itself, I don’t care, for I don’t regard the flag any more than I would an old rag. . . . [I]t was because you tried to compel me that I refused.” The officers became enraged, whereupon Bayard’s mother attempted to mediate, remarking, “Gentlemen, you must remember . . . that for four long years these feelings have been growing in their minds, and it will take years to make them forget.” The officers threatened to punish the teenagers by placing a flag over the Clewell’s front door. Anna tartly responded that “there are two back doors, and a half a dozen windows to our house, and I will climb out of the highest window before I will go under your flag.”¹

Clewell’s sentiments exemplified the strong patriotism that characterized many

¹Anna Maria Clewell to Lieutenant Francis Christian Clewell, ca. 1865, Gertrude Jenkins Family Papers, Perkins Library.

young women from slaveholding, secessionist families during the war. Confederate nationalism politicized a generation of southern daughters who, before the war, had remained on the periphery of civic participation. Even as young women worked alongside their mothers in relief societies, hospitals, and military prisons, they found their own political voice. Their youth permitted a degree of freedom in their patriotic expressions much greater than that permitted their mothers and older female kin. Their mothers saw their primary responsibility was to the survival and protection of the family while their daughters, because of their age and position in the family, were free from such concerns. They manifested their political engagement through their knowledge of military battles and leaders, their clothing, their social activities, their relationships with peers, and their interactions with Union soldiers. Moreover, the public rhetoric of Confederate nationalism instilled in young women a sense of civic responsibility and political consciousness that they carried into their adult lives. Even after the South accepted defeat, young women remained at the center of civic life, continuing their involvement in political discussions and other activities as they moved into adulthood.

The environment that provided young women opportunities to participate in politics and civic affairs blurred the lines between public and private life. As historians such as Catherine Clinton, Drew Faust, and Cynthia Kierner have shown, war often heightened women's civic activism and created new spaces in which they could express their political beliefs. In Kierner's study of southern women during the American Revolution, she argues that the politically charged atmosphere that war produced allowed public affairs to invade the domestic arena while the civic domain became what she terms

“the site of actual or figurative exchanges on extradomestic ideas or issues.” Likewise, within the home, women often hosted “quasi-political activities” that allowed them to articulate their political views. Clinton and Faust posit that the Civil War produced a similar environment for Confederate women. Political engagement in the wartime South was manifested not only in formal political participation but also in social and charitable events. The fluidity of home and civic life also shaped the experiences of southern daughters. The home became a classroom where young women learned about the politics of the wartime South and were encouraged to express themselves politically. At the same time, they participated in civic and social activities that ultimately produced a sense of political responsibility.²

Young women’s introduction into the world of politics began with the secession crisis. They were born during the territorial debates of the 1840s and witnessed the sectional tensions come to a head as they reached their teenage years in the 1850s. Calls for secession began to be heard in those years, but adolescent daughters had mixed reactions to the formation of an independent South.

Family loyalty shaped young women’s views on secession. As James Marten notes in his study of children during the Civil War, “parents’ political attitudes deeply influence

²Baker, “Domestication of Politics,” 620-47; Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place,” 9-39; Kierner, Beyond the Household, 2; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 5-7; Catherine Clinton, Other Civil War, 81-82. See also Catherine Allgor, Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Helped Build a City and a Government (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

the politicalization of children.” Most families with large slaveholdings supported the calls for an independent South that followed Abraham Lincoln’s election in 1860. Yet those who owned fewer slaves, especially those in the upper South, resisted secession until Lincoln’s proclamation calling for troops to put down the southern rebellion, which followed the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. Parents made sure that their daughters understood their position on the sectional conflict and its implications for slave owners. Mothers and fathers discussed secession with their daughters and encouraged them to read articles and books supporting their position. Whether their parents supported an independent South before or only after the war broke out, few young women challenged their parents’ loyalties.³

Many daughters in the lower South aligned with their parents on the secession issue before the 1860 election. A member of the slaveholding class in Monroe, Louisiana, Sarah Wadley’s father endorsed secession and made sure his daughter understood why. After several conversations with him, Wadley recorded what she saw as the cause of sectional tensions:

Abolitionists have sowed the seeds of dissension and insurrection among us, those seeds are fast ripening and a bloody harvest seems impending. . . . [T]hey shout Freedom and Union, but they would take away our freedom and give it to the

³Marten, Children’s Civil War, 150-51; Daniel W. Crofts, Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 90-91, 131, 334-36.

negroes.⁴

Susan Bradford received a similar indoctrination in the ideals of secession. In 1858, Bradford's father began teaching his daughter about "the deep feeling of dislike and mistrust . . . between the North and the South." To underscore his point, Mr. Bradford gave her a book by John C. Calhoun on states' rights. By 1860, it was clear the youth had internalized her father's secessionist views. After reading an article on the 1860 election, she concluded that the Republican candidates "have two objects in view, the freeing of the Negroes and the downfall of the South."⁵

The election of Lincoln encouraged young women to support southern independence. As states of the lower South rushed to organize secession conventions, young women there joined the patriotic frenzy. Susan Bradford's father, a delegate to the Florida convention in Tallahassee, encouraged his daughter to attend. She went with him in January 1861 and listened as he explained the proceedings and talked to her about what secession meant for the future of slaveholders. Louisa McCord of Columbia, South Carolina, found secession activities in the state capital too interesting to ignore. Before Lincoln's election, she had given little thought to the sectional tensions that absorbed her parents' attention. But now, as Columbians celebrated the state's decision to secede, she found herself in the center of the political activity. She along with her female peers

⁴Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, August 31, October 26, 1860.

⁵Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 86-87, 125.

donned a blue badge with a palmetto emblem to show support.⁶

Most young women in the upper South committed to secession only after the attack on Fort Sumter. As historian Daniel W. Crofts has shown, many southern Unionists changed their position once Lincoln decided to use force against the seceded states. Even those who wanted the Union to remain intact refused to fight against other southerners. Four states of the upper South eventually voted to secede from the Union and reluctantly joined the lower South in war. While politicians decided the fate of their state, young women throughout the upper South joined in patriotic celebrations of the Confederacy and expressed support for secession. Cloe Tyler Whittle of Norfolk, Virginia, for example, was converted to secession after Lincoln requested troops from her state. The president's request, she wrote, was "appalling," and after it was confirmed she recorded this demand in her diary: "Secession--Immediate--Secession."⁷

In some households, parents disagreed on the secession issue. Mary Conway Shields of Jefferson County, Mississippi, for example, noted that her mother ardently advocated secession from an early date and spoke frequently about its benefits to slaveholders. Shields's father, however, refused to support southern independence until Lincoln's April 1861 proclamation. Because of the conflicting sentiments in her home, Shields wavered on the issue until her brother left for the Confederate army. With her

⁶Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 141-43; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections, South Caroliniana Library.

⁷Crofts, Reluctant Confederates, 334-36, 345-46; Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Green Diary, April 15, 1861, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

closest sibling off to war, Shields became a champion of the Confederate cause and felt proud that her brother was fighting.⁸

Some young women expressed regret over the disintegration of the Union. Although Sarah Wadley ardently supported Louisiana's decision to secede, she felt sorry, too: "how sad to think that we are united no longer, that we are no more natives of one common country." "[N]ecessary as is the separation," she remarked, "how can we think of it without grief?"⁹

As southerners prepared for war, the home became a setting for adolescent daughters' indoctrination in Confederate nationalism. Harriet Grady frequently sat in her parlor and listened to the conversations of male visitors, many of them officers in the Confederate army. Grady felt obligated to entertain the guests but also seized the opportunity to learn about military campaigns and leaders. Daughters of southern politicians, such as Susan Bradford, found that wartime politics were a regular topic in the home. Many times Bradford's family used the dinner table as a forum for political discussions in which her father allowed her to participate. Louise Wigfall, whose father had been a Texas senator before the war, spent several evenings listening to her father's guests debate issues concerning the Confederate government.¹⁰

⁸Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 76-77.

⁹Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, October 26, 1860, February 16, 1861.

¹⁰Harriet (Grady) Ferguson Diary, January 6, 1865, Ferguson Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 138; Mrs. D. Giraud Wright, A Southern Girl in '61: The Wartime Memories of a Confederate Senator's

Evangelical churches also encouraged political involvement among southern daughters, by serving as a medium of war news and by providing a spiritual defense of secession and war. Louisa McCord of Charleston, South Carolina, recalled that young women often attended prayer meetings where they received news of battlefield defeats and victories. Sarah Wadley found the church useful in understanding the ideological basis for the Confederacy, having heard a persuasive sermon on what she called “the mistaken piety of abolitionists.” Wadley, like many other young women of the slaveholding South, absorbed the scriptural and historical defense of slavery that churches promoted; her preacher regarded the institution as “sanctioned by both the bible, and by ancient usage.” Susan Bradford extracted a different message from the church services she attended. She felt a stronger sense of southern patriotism after her preacher prayed for the delegates to the Florida secession convention. The service left her with a feeling of responsibility to help the South in its quest for independence: “it made everyone feel . . . as if some share of the responsibility rested on each one of us.”¹¹

Educators also helped instill a sense of political responsibility and patriotism. Many young women continued their schooling in the early part of the war and classrooms became a forum for political expression and education. Teachers often assigned compositions and debates with the theme of the North-South conflict. Readings included topics on the American Revolution that invited comparisons to the Confederate cause.

Daughter (New York: Double Day Press, 1905), 23-24.

¹¹Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 4, 1860; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 139-40.

Myra Inman, for example, argued after reading The Life of Marion that the American Revolution was similar to the Civil War because both represented a struggle for republican rights and independence. Learning of the various battles and Confederate leaders and following the movements of the armies also took the place of traditional classroom subjects. Sallie Clayton, a student at the Atlanta Female Institute, volunteered for an assignment that required mapping the lines of the armies. To the amazement of her teacher, Clayton exhibited extensive knowledge of the major campaigns.¹²

School activities encouraged expression of Confederate patriotism. At the request of their headmaster, Sarah Lowe and her classmates at the Huntsville Female Academy sewed a banner that she presented to the local company of volunteers before they left for the front. Lowe's teachers also encouraged the students to attend patriotic public addresses. Sally Clayton's teacher had students perform military drills and required them to compete in a march against a cavalry company. Such activities absorbed much of the time and energy of female students. Lowe, for example, confided in her diary that she had trouble studying with "so much war news to occupy our minds" as well as numerous

¹²Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, October 26, 1860; Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Green Diary, April 15, 1861; Elliott Ashkenazi, ed., The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing Up in New Orleans, 1861-1862 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 334; Snell, Myra Inman, 145; Robert Davis, Jr., "Selective Memories of Civil War Atlanta: The Memoir of Sally Clayton," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 82 (Winter 1998): 741.

patriotic public events.¹³

While young women internalized the message taught them by parents, clerics, and educators, they expressed some ambivalence toward war. Daughters recognized that war meant the departure of their fathers, brothers, and other male kin for the front. That the cause they so strongly supported would break up their families led many to question the desirability of war. When Susan Bradford's relative quipped that her newborn nephew was another soldier to fight for the South, Bradford was shocked and responded that "war and bloodshed seem very terrible to me." After some of her family members left for the front, Catherine McLaurin secretly hoped that God would stop the war. As her uncle's company left for battle, Louisa McCord remarked, "we felt as if life itself had gone . . . the misery of all that was to come seemed to settle down upon us." Cordelia Scales felt some guilt over her feelings when her brothers volunteered: "I know it is not right for me to feel sorry that they are gone, and I am glad they have acted so, still I cannot say that I give them up without a murmur."¹⁴

Young women who watched their beaux leave for battle also sometimes expressed

¹³Sarah Lowe Journal, March 22, 24, April 15, May 2, 8, 1861, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; Davis, "Selective Memories of Civil War Atlanta," 741-42.

¹⁴Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 123; Catherine McLaurin Diary, July 19, 1861; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Louie, August 17, 1861, Cordelia Lewis Scales Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

ambivalence. Nettie Fondren of Thomasville, Georgia, told her betrothed that although the “national horizon is dark and threatening” he should remain committed to the cause. “Onward! Onward!” she urged him, “until the vile invader is driven from our sunny South.” Yet a few months later, she expressed horror over “the bloodshed, strife and suffering” caused by war and wondered “what will be the end of it all.”¹⁵

Many family members and friends who left for battle attempted to console young women. Elizabeth Ridley wrote several letters to her brother expressing concern for his safety, to which he responded that she “ought to feel proud that you have a brother in the war. . . . [I]f I die, you know it is a ‘glorious thing’ to die in defense of one’s country.” After Robert Mitchell left for war he instructed his fiancé to “be cheerful and bare [sic] it bravely for it is the will of God.”¹⁶

Many adolescent daughters comforted themselves by denying the likelihood of war or by praying that the conflict would last only a short time. In 1860, Bettie Alexander of Monroe County, Virginia, expressed fear of the possibility of war but at the same time dismissed it as “all talk.” Not long after the war began, several of Susan Bradford’s relatives enlisted in the army, which caused much anxiety among her female kin. Bradford’s hope was that “the war . . . [would] not last long.” Her mother also tried to

¹⁵Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, May 14, October 9, 1862, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

¹⁶Brother to Elizabeth Norfleet (Ridley) Neely, November 19, 1861, Ridley Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, October 24, 1861, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters.

comfort her and her sisters by assuring them that “there would be no fighting--just talk of war and reconciliation would follow.”¹⁷

Although the notion of war frightened many young women, some refused to let it bother them-- a luxury that their youth and class allowed them. Annie Jeter of New Orleans recalled that while parents prepared for war, the youths of the city turned to social activities. “We young folk,” she wrote, “could not realize the horror of war and were as gay as ever with dances and parties, some farewell ones given for soldiers.” Louisa McCord felt excited over secession in South Carolina but admitted that she took a lighthearted approach to the matter; she knew, however, that to her parents “it was serious enough.”¹⁸

Swept up in the homefront enthusiasm, most young women joined with their mothers and older female kin in patriotic activities. Like the older generation of southern women, adolescent daughters participated in such efforts out of a sense of responsibility to their cause. Nettie Fondren described what she saw as the duty of all women on the homefront: “If ever there was on Earth an elevated task for women it is working for the brave men whose lives are offered up for us, and on whom the salvation of our country actively depends.” Elizabeth Pringle shared that sense of responsibility. “[W]hen we know that this is a new country born into the world,” she wrote, “it behooves everyone to exert

¹⁷Bettie Alexander to sister, December 3, 1860; Bettie Alexander Papers; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 150-52.

¹⁸Annie Jeter Caramouche Recollections, Annie Jeter Caramouche Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections.

themselves to the utmost to make men great and our women good. . . . [E]veryone can do something.”¹⁹

Young women viewed participation in homefront activities as a substitute, albeit a poor one, for fighting alongside their male counterparts. They saw it as their duty to serve their nation, but they recognized and bemoaned the limitations their gender placed on them. Elizabeth Collier, for example, expressed her frustration over being unable to fight: “I am but a feeble woman, would God I were a man.” Historians of Confederate women have found that many of all ages expressed similar sentiments, but adolescent females often vented their frustrations differently from their mothers and older female kin. Fifteen-year-old Louise Wigfall, for example, wrote her brother that she wished she could fight with him, but had to resign herself merely to playing “Dixie” on the piano when entertaining guests.²⁰

Mothers and older female kin encouraged daughters to join relief societies and oversaw their participation. Sallie Clayton, for example, became involved in a hospital association in which mothers and daughters worked together to roll bandages, pick lint, and sew. The collective efforts of women of all age groups provided a way for young women to continue their maternal-centered education during the war but also allowed

¹⁹Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, September 23, 1863, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters; Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, March 27, 1862, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

²⁰George Rable, Civil Wars, 151-52; Elizabeth Collier Diary, April 11, 1862; Wright, Southern Girl in '61, 62.

them to learn organizational skills. With the help of other women, Annie Jeter of New Orleans learned to sew a sock a day. Sarah Wadley learned valuable skills when she was elected secretary of her mother's sewing society. Although Wadley had trepidations about assuming an office she knew little of, her mother guided her and even reproached her when she took haphazard notes at the meetings. Her mother's direction paid off when Wadley spent one evening of "considerable labour" documenting the donations and reviewing meeting minutes.²¹

Adolescent daughters also became apprentices to their mothers in fund-raising activities. Under the guidance of older female members, young women visited neighbors and friends to solicit donations for relief organizations. Louisa McCord's mother asked her to collect money to help the local sewing society make a flag. Ellen Renshaw House, along with her father and sister, visited neighbors to ask for blankets for Confederate prisoners of war. House went so far as to organize her friends to collect clothes and other items for prisoners.²²

The many military and private hospitals throughout the South provided other

²¹Robert Scott Davis, Jr., ed., Requiem for a Lost City: A Memoir of Civil War Atlanta and the Old South (Macon: University of Mercer Press, 1999), 81-83, 88; Annie Jeter to William Caramouche, September 25, 1861, Annie Jeter Caramouche Papers; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, July 14, October 7, 1861.

²²Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Daniel E. Sutherland, A Very Violent Rebel: The Diary of Ellen Renshaw House (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 48-50.

opportunities for civic involvement. Daughters often accompanied their mothers when they served as nurses. Yet, because parents feared that contact with the soldiers would place their daughters in danger of impropriety, they refused to allow them to fully care for the men. Consequently, young women participated in nursing mainly by providing food and other materials to the hospitals. Judith Ann Foster of Chesterfield, Virginia, for example, went with her mother to several hospitals but was permitted only to distribute food and milk to the soldiers. Sixteen-year-old Alice Lucas went with her mother to a hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia, but had to remain outside the wards. When hospitals were short-handed, however, young women sometimes found opportunities to do more. Louisa Sheppard assisted her mother in her nursing duties in the wayside hospital established in their home. On one occasion, when her mother was busy with other patients, she asked Louisa to sit with an unattended soldier and “attend to his minor wants.” Louisa wrote a letter for him and brought him food and water, but stayed clear of more intimate nursing duties.²³

Although young women worked with their mothers in some activities, they had a good deal of autonomy in their wartime civic involvement. The picnics, dances, and parties that they had been accustomed to before the war became venues for fund-raising and patriotic demonstrations. In July 1861, for example, Clara Solomon and several female friends attended a picnic to collect funds for destitute families of volunteers. A popular activity among young women was sewing a flag to present to the local company

²³Judith Ann Foster Memoir, Virginia Historical Society; Alice Lucas to her brother, June 2, 1864, Lucas-Ashley Family Papers; Louisa Sheppard Recollections.

of volunteers. These events allowed young women to voice their support for the Confederacy and rewarded them with public recognition. Susan Bradford was filled with pride when she and other young women from her community gathered to sew a flag. She noted that “everyone, did our part in the work, even if the stitches were few, when the fingers unskilled.” Sally Clayton and her female peers proclaimed their support for the southern cause when they presented a flag that read “Never, Never, Never.”²⁴

Adolescent daughters also offered informal tributes to soldiers leaving for war, such as gathering at the train station or town square to see a group of volunteers off or greet a troop passing through the town. Mary Fries Patterson of Salem, North Carolina, wrote that when a military company marched through her town, she and other young women threw bouquets to the men. Sarah Lowe and her classmates at the Huntsville Female Academy received permission from the headmaster on several occasions to greet a company passing through town. Although many young women attended these gatherings in hopes of meeting a potential beau or for social interaction, their primary goal was to show support for the Confederate cause. These informal events, furthermore, allowed them to publicly proclaim their patriotism in a way that suited their age and gender.²⁵

Public performances gave young women another way to express their political support and helped shape their skills as community organizers. Many adolescent

²⁴Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 57; Ashkenazi, Diary of Clara Solomon, 52; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 151; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 44-45.

²⁵Snell, Myra Inman, 96; Mary Fries Patterson Diary, September 9, 1863, Southern Historical Collection; Sarah Lowe Journal, May 1, 4, 5, 14, 1861.

daughters participated in concerts in which they sang “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” Young women played a large role in organizing the events and sent the proceeds to the local soldiers’ aid society. Perhaps their most notable affairs were tableaux. These had been popular among southern youths before the war, but now they were transformed into expressions of patriotism. In one such performance, Cordelia Scales played “Volunteer” on the guitar while a young man costumed as a soldier stood beside her. Sallie Clayton and her peers participated in a similar scene entitled “Young Ladies with the Blues,” posing alongside the “Fulton Blues,” a mock company consisting of boys too young to serve.²⁶

In addition to taking part in community activities, young women displayed their patriotism symbolically through their clothing. Before the war, they had regarded dress purely as a matter of taste and fashion, but as they were swept up in the tide of patriotism they transformed their clothing into statements of Confederate nationalism that gained them public recognition as political actors. When seventeen-year-old Cloe Tyler Whittle went to a neighbor’s house to celebrate Virginia’s secession, she wore what she called her “Secession Dress,” remarking that “it shows what women can do, when all that is in their power is to put a few brass buttons up the front of their dress.” Sallie Clayton and her classmates at the Atlanta Female Institute also expressed support for southern independence when they became “the first to appear in Georgia cotton” at the state fair.

²⁶Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs; Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 101; Cordelia Scales to Loulie, November 24, 1861, Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 40-41.

Sallie McEwen of Franklin, Tennessee, made a military uniform so she could join a mock company that included her friends and classmates. Annie Jeter of New Orleans, along with her female peers, made Confederate flags to wear as aprons and wore cotton blossoms in her hair at a concert to benefit soldiers.²⁷

Young women also adorned their homes and personal items with Confederate symbols and collected war mementoes as a sign of patriotism. Martha Moore bought composition books printed with Confederate emblems and throughout her journal drew the Confederate flag. Clara Solomon hung a flag in her home. "I placed it there with my own hands," she defiantly wrote, "and . . . dare any Federalist to lay his polluted hand upon it." Fannie Lewis Gwathmey of Virginia boldly approached General Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson to ask for a lock of his hair, which he willingly cut off and gave her. When General Robert E. Lee passed through Leesburg, Virginia, in 1862, Alice Janney Harrison made rings from hair taken from the mane of Traveller, Lee's horse. The rings became a coveted symbol of southern patriotism among the young women of the neighborhood.²⁸

²⁷Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Green Diary, April 15, 1861; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 30-31; Sallie McEwen Journal, May 30, 1861, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs.

²⁸Martha Josephine Moore Diary, May 7, 1863, Frank Liddell Richardson Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Ashkenazi, Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon, 61; Fannie Lewis Gwathmey Adams, "Reminiscences of a Childhood Spent at 'Hayfield' Plantation Near Fredericksburg, Virginia," Fannie Lewis Gwathmey Adams Papers, Eleanor S.

The politically charged atmosphere of the southern homefront eventually affected the friendships among young women. In East Tennessee, where strong Union sentiment existed, Myra Inman experienced conflicting emotions when asked if she wanted to participate, along with her female peers, in making a United States flag. Ultimately, her mother interceded and refused to allow her to join in the venture. Even as Inman's schoolmates participated in a flag presentation to a Union company in Cleveland, Tennessee, she chose to remain at home.²⁹

Some young women also found their friendships with northern peers disrupted. When the war began, Louise Wigfall was living in Boston, Massachusetts, with relatives. An ardent secessionist, she had a hard time maintaining her temper amid her northern classmates. When news of Fort Sumter tested her friendship with her classmate Emma, the two agreed to refrain from political discussions. But Wigfall eventually broke the agreement when she felt compelled to give Emma a copy of a public statement delivered by Jefferson Davis. Wigfall's breach of the agreement could have stemmed from her family ties. As the daughter of a southern politician, the young woman supported the Confederacy. Living amid Union supporters, perhaps Wigfall felt compelled to voice her patriotism even at the expense of a friendship.³⁰

Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy; Alice Janney Harrison, "Account of Lee's Visit to Leesburg and Harrison Hall," Alice Janney Harrison Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

²⁹Snell, Myra Inman, 93-94.

³⁰Wright, Southern Girl in '61, 57-59.

Young women's political loyalty also influenced their relationship with southern men who remained on the homefront. While many men of the slaveholding class joined the army early in the conflict, some avoided serving by hiring a substitute or invoking the twenty-slave exemption law. Some young women whose brothers or fathers served in the army viewed these men as shirkers and cowards. Annie Jeter, for example, criticized the "stay at homes" in New Orleans and refused to socialize with them unless they had "a mighty good reason for so doing." Louise Wigfall also expressed contempt for those "who had never 'smelt powder.'" Amanda Worthington resented a family friend who avoided joining the army and regarded him as a "cowardly sluggard." Kate Foster of Natchez, Mississippi, remarked that the young men in her community who used the exemption laws "ought to be drummed out of society."³¹

The realization that their loved ones would remain on the front longer than expected challenged some young women's patriotism. After her brother reenlisted, Amanda Worthington exclaimed "how I do long for peace to be declared!" The reality of war shocked Worthington. "I never thought in times of peace what an awful thing war was," she wrote, "but now that I have two brothers and four cousins in the army I can realize it." Nevertheless, while the seventeen-year-old wished for peace so her family could reunite, she believed that "the South must be victorious, her cause is the right." Sallie Independence Foster secretly wished the war to end after hearing news about family

³¹Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs; Wright, Southern Girl in '61, 150-51; Amanda Worthington Diary, April 13, 1862, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Kate D. Foster Diary, June 25, 1863, Perkins Library.

friends wounded or killed in battle. “My God do let this horrible war end,” she remarked, “and let sweet, sweet ‘Peace’ reign over our beloved country once more.”³²

As the war continued, many young women faced the prospect of living amid their enemies. The thought of Yankee soldiers in their towns appalled and frightened young women. When soldiers occupied Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Alice Ready wrote that the “only relief from them will be death, and then I pray for it.” Amanda Worthington swore that she would “rather die than submit to the Yankees.” Sarah Wadley likewise vowed that she “would rather die than see our armies humiliated by flight, our country ruined by submission. . . . [W]orse than death would be our conquest by the Yankees”³³

The politicization of young women and their freedom of expression were most apparent in their interactions with Union soldiers. As the northern army occupied southern territory, young women’s contact with Union soldiers increased. Those in conquered towns, especially, rubbed shoulders with Union soldiers on a daily basis. Such encounters encouraged political expression. Living in or near enemy lines also gave young women opportunities to defy Union authority and aid the Confederate army.

Daughters often saw their own mothers defy Union authority and harass soldiers. For example, in occupied New Orleans, women, believing their gender exempted them from punishment, insulted Union soldiers. They refused to sit in the presence of officers

³²Amanda Worthington Diary, January 5, 29, 1862; Sallie Independence Foster Diary, September 30, 1864.

³³Alice Ready Diary, March 22, 1862, Southern Historical Collection; Amanda Worthington Diary, April 30, 1862; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, March 2, 1862.

or walk under the U.S. flag, and, in extreme cases, spat on soldiers in the streets or dumped chamber pots on them. Such defiance was common in other occupied towns, too, in the early part of the war.³⁴

While their mothers often used gender to negotiate their way out of punishment, young women found that their age in combination with their gender allowed them a larger degree of freedom to defy Union authority and aid the Confederate army. By invoking conventional notions of female behavior and claiming inexperience as adolescents, young women avoided forced oaths of allegiance to the U.S. and punishment for defiance. However, while Union officials generally excluded young women from orders concerning female conduct, they still recognized the women's political agency and tried to correct their behavior without resorting to punishment.

Although young women usually escaped retribution for their defiance, their mothers risked punishment. Mary Dunbar of Natchez, Mississippi, for example, played tricks on Union soldiers who visited the plantation to forage. On one occasion in 1863, when a soldier asked her how to eat a pomegranate, she told him to bite right into it, knowing the fruit would yield a bitter taste if one ate more than the seeds. Although the soldier became enraged as the seventeen-year-old began to laugh at him, he eventually left without punishing her. Dunbar's mother, however, had a much different experience when she refused to walk under a Union flag: a federal officer ordered her to leave the city and

³⁴Faust, Mothers of Invention, 207-12. For more on southerners' reactions to Union occupation see Stephen V. Ash, When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

confiscated her house.³⁵

Emma Cassandra Riely took full advantage of the freedom her age allowed her. Born in 1847 in Winchester, Virginia, Riely had just entered adolescence when the war began. After Union troops occupied Winchester, Riely's parents sent her to live with relatives in nearby Luray. The youth soon tired of life away from home and decided to go back. Because she would be passing through Union lines, she viewed the trip as a way to help the Confederacy. Confederate soldiers gave her letters to carry to Winchester, which she hid in her shoes. As she approached the town, Union soldiers stopped her and demanded that she take an oath of allegiance. Riely refused and asked to speak with the general who issued the orders. That officer immediately noted her age and exempted her from the order, stating that it applied only to those over twenty-one. Riely then brought the letters into Winchester undetected.³⁶

Riely also used her ability to move unhindered about Winchester to help Confederate prisoners of war in the local federal hospital and at the same time secretly defy the occupiers. Two Union officers were quartered in her home, and on several occasions she stole food and brandy from them and smuggled the goods to Confederate soldiers in the hospital.³⁷

Many adolescent females used their dress as a way to defy Union authority. In

³⁵Murray, My Mother Used to Say, 170-73.

³⁶Emma Cassandra Riely Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1911), 10-12, 32-51.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 107-108.

New Orleans, where Union commanders cracked down hard on manifestations of southern nationalism, women risked punishment for wearing Confederate emblems. After General Butler's order of 1862 threatening to punish any woman who insulted a Union soldier, many women refrained from public displays of patriotism or tempered their activities. Yet teenage girls in the cities continued to flaunt their Confederate sentiments by using their dress. For example, Annie Jeter and several female peers wore red and white roses in their bonnets as a show of southern defiance. In occupied Iberia Parish, Louisiana, Martha Moore and her classmates wore black crepe on their shoulders as a sign of mourning on the anniversary of the Union navy's passage of Forts Jackson and St. Phillips.³⁸

When young women witnessed the confiscation or destruction of their family property, their resentment toward Union soldiers intensified. Ida Barlow of Winona, Mississippi, for example, was consumed with hatred when a company of Union soldiers burned her family home after accusing her father of aiding Confederate soldiers in an ambush. Homeless and destitute, the family moved in with her grandfather. While living there, Barlow met several Union soldiers who used the home as sleeping quarters. Along with her cousin, Elizabeth Read, she resented the soldiers' presence and took pride in letting them know it. On one occasion, Read ordered a soldier sleeping on the piano to leave. He responded jokingly that he would oblige but in return she must play a song for him. Read refused to play for him, but said she would play to honor Confederate prisoners in the Yankees' custody. As she began to play, the soldier turned the pages of

³⁸Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs; Martha Josephine Moore Diary, April 24, 1863.

the sheet music. Elizabeth noticed a diamond ring on his finger and told him she was sure he had taken it from “some southern girl.” He offered the ring to her if she would take it from his finger, whereupon she asked for his knife and threatened to cut it off his finger. Yet the soldier found her more an amusement than a threat, because of her age. Rather than force her to submit to his authority, he encouraged the young woman’s rage. As a result, Read continued to assert her support for the Confederacy amid Union occupation without fear of punishment.³⁹

Even when soldiers threatened to punish young women for their defiance, they typically relented. When Union soldiers occupying Iberia Parish visited Martha Moore’s school and demanded that all “secession emblems, flags or anything treasonable be handed over,” Moore and her classmates hid their composition books bearing Confederate flags before the soldiers could confiscate them. One classmate, Lizzie Davis, was quite open in her refusal to relinquish the contraband. As Moore reported, Davis “sat on her desk hugging a book, as tho’ it were her dearest friend, and, declaring she would not give it up . . . for it had a flag in it, and she would not resign the emblem of her country.” The soldiers left without forcing her to give up the book.⁴⁰

Cordelia Lewis Scales of Holly Springs, Mississippi, likewise treated Union occupiers with hostility and continued to flaunt her Confederate patriotism. Even when the army used the Scales home as officers’ quarters, she refused to temper her words and

³⁹Ida (Barlow) Trotter Reminiscences, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

⁴⁰Martha Josephine Moore Diary, May 7, 1863.

actions. One evening an officer's wife asked Scales to play something on the piano. She complied, but only after warning the woman that she played only "rebel songs." The next day, Captain Flynn of the 90th Illinois Regiment visited Scales. Hearing of her talent on the piano, he asked her to play "My Maryland." At first she refused, but when her father reminded her that Flynn had provided food for the family, Scales relented. After she finished playing, she wrote out the words of the song at the officer's request, but also took the opportunity to send him a message: she drew a Confederate flag above the lyrics and wrote "no northern hand shall rule this land."⁴¹

Although most soldiers she met viewed Scales as harmless, some did not. One officer warned her that her rebel defiance might provoke the federals to shoot her. Scales replied that she "did not expect anything better from Yankees, but he must remember that two could play at that game." Before the matter went any further, however, Confederate major general Earl Van Dorn and his troops drove the Union army from Holly Springs.⁴²

In extreme cases of defiance, some adolescent daughters were punished. Ellen Renshaw House of Knoxville, Tennessee, exemplifies young women's freedom to express their patriotism amid Union soldiers but also the limits of that freedom. On one occasion, when a Union officer came by, House engaged him in a discussion about "reconstructing the Union." She called the idea "simply ridiculous," and argued that "southern children

⁴¹Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, January 27, 1863, Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers.

⁴²Ibid.; James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 578.

hated the Yankee nation from the time they were born, and the hatred grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength.” This and similar declarations by House soon earned her a measure of notoriety among the occupiers. Eventually, a Union general sent word to her and her parents that she would be banished from town unless she tempered her behavior. She insisted, however, that “the only thing I have ever done was to wave to our poor fellows as they were going north to prison.”⁴³

In actuality, House had done more than just wave to Confederate soldiers. She had worked with others in Knoxville to collect blankets and other goods for prisoners of war, had visited prisoners in the hospital, and had brazenly spoken her mind to Union soldiers. House went too far, however, when she insulted the wife of a Union officer. Officials retaliated by ordering her to leave Knoxville. Although her mother wanted to go with her, House chose to go by herself, eventually making her way to Eatonville, Tennessee, where she continued to aid the Confederate war effort.⁴⁴

Although House was eventually banished for her actions, her age and gender allowed her to defy the enemy and aid the Confederacy for over a year. Seventeen when the war broke out, she had matured into a young adult by the time the Yankees occupied Knoxville in 1863; but she was still considered a young woman, unmarried and under the protection of her family. She used this fact to escape punishment, until the occupiers’ patience ran out altogether. The decision to exile House, furthermore, shows that under certain circumstances the occupiers recognized the political power of young women and

⁴³Sutherland, Very Violent Rebel, 54-55, 113-14.

⁴⁴Ibid., 21, 36, 48-50, 127-29, 165-63.

held them accountable for their actions. Unlike the women of New Orleans, who fell back on ideas of female vulnerability to escape punishment, House exulted in her banishment and flaunted it like a badge of honor.

Social activities provided a means of political expression in the midst of Union occupation. Many Union officers and their wives hosted social events while stationed in a town, often extending invitations to the younger female citizens. Officers who boarded in citizens' homes also expected to visit with the young women there. Some young women enjoyed the attention of Union soldiers, attended their social events, and welcomed their courtship. Many others, however, used such occasions to assert their Confederate patriotism and rebuff the enemy. Ellen Renshaw House recorded her disgust with her female peers who willingly attended Union officers' parties and dances, while Myra Inman turned away Yankees seeking to court her. Inman wrote that a lieutenant stopped by to visit but she refused to see him because "he is a yank." Maria Smith Peek resisted socializing with Union soldiers even after the war had ended, out of respect for her kinsmen and friends who fought in the Confederate ranks. "I cannot forget I do not wish to forget," she wrote, "that [the Yankees] are the People who have been fighting for the last four years in deadly conflict against my brother and my friends."⁴⁵

Some young women had to struggle against the temptation to pursue flirtations with Union soldiers, especially amid the absence of other potential suitors. Emma Riely,

⁴⁵Sutherland, Very Violent Rebel, 145, 163; Snell, Myra Inman, 261; Maria Smith Peek to Daniel Marrow, May 20, 1865, Marrow Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

for example, was the object of attention from officers staying in her home. “[I]t was oftentimes hard to resist,” she recalled, “and required all the loyalty I could bring to bear to do so.” One evening a Union colonel asked her to go on a sleigh ride, suggesting she wear a veil if she wanted to go unrecognized. Riely responded that her “conscience would be behind that veil” and turned the colonel down. The decision was difficult for her, however: “what a severe test it was to my loyalty and devotion to my country to be able to resist my enemies when I might have enjoyed so many privileges dear to a young girl’s heart.”⁴⁶

Kate Foster experienced some difficulty resisting the company of Union officers stationed around her home near Natchez, Mississippi. With few potential suitors in Natchez, many of Foster’s friends socialized with the Union soldiers. Foster disliked the idea of mingling with men she regarded as “our enemy.” Yet she made a point to learn the names of the lieutenants and described them as gentlemen. She confided to her diary that she welcomed the attention from the officers but refused to pursue a serious courtship out of respect for the “relatives, friends or lovers in our army.” Foster worried that if her friends and family in the military knew that Union soldiers courted the women in her community “it might weaken a strong arm in time of battle and sicken a stout and loving heart.”⁴⁷

Young women often disagreed with their friends’ choice of a beaux if he was a Union soldier. While some adolescent females found courtship opportunities with Union

⁴⁶Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 115-16.

⁴⁷Kate D. Foster Diary, September 20, 1863.

men in occupied areas, they did so at the risk of losing friendships. Nannie Haskins, for example, became enraged at an acquaintance who continually discussed her engagement to a “Yankee beau.” She observed that the young woman “carried on shamefully and . . . any girl that had one particle of modesty would not have talked as she did.” After she left, Haskins resolved not to allow her back in her home and promised never to visit her again. When Ellen Renshaw House heard that one of her friends had become engaged to a Yankee soldier, she expressed her disappointment: “how a southern girl can marry a Yankee I cannot see.”⁴⁸

While most young women rejected socializing with Union soldiers, some on occasion empathized with them. Nannie Haskins, for example, lived near a federal hospital in Clarksville, Tennessee, and after listening to the cries of the sick and wounded one evening she decided no longer to regard such unfortunate soldiers as enemies. Other young women noted that upon meeting Union soldiers for the first time they were shocked by their similarities to southern men. Although they remained loyal to the Confederacy, some forged amicable relationships with Union soldiers stationed in their town.⁴⁹

As the war continued, it took a severe toll on the southern homefront. Families endured rampant inflation and dire shortages of critical resources, and women struggled to manage the household economy and provide for their dependents in the absence of their husbands. As Drew Gilpin Faust and others have shown, these hardships eventually

⁴⁸Nannie Haskins Journal, July 24, 1863, Nannie Haskins Williams Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Sutherland, Very Violent Rebel, 145.

⁴⁹Nannie Haskins Journal, July 24, 1863; Marten, Children’s Civil War, 141-43.

eroded women's support for the war. The death of fathers, brothers, and sons, furthermore, wore down the emotional strength of women. Imbued with traditional notions of gender, women came to view the absence of men from the home as undermining the reciprocal relationship between husbands and wives, for the men were unable to fulfill their role as provider and protector of the family.⁵⁰

Young women, on the other hand, viewed the war through a much different lens. Their mothers, as guardians of the home and primary caretakers of its dependents, believed their first responsibility was the survival of the family. Their daughters, however, felt they had a duty to support the southern cause no matter what. This attitude stemmed from their age and their position in the family. Single and still under parental protection, young women were in some ways shielded from the psychological effects of war that eroded the patriotism of mothers and wives, and they believed they had no worldly duty that superseded their obligation to the Confederacy. Young women, unlike their mothers, perceived the material hardships in the final stages of the war as bearable afflictions. Anna Green of Milledgeville, Georgia, for example, declared that "we would give our Luxury if even in homespun garments and with coarse fare [that] we might be

⁵⁰Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 139-40; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 234-47; Rable, Civil Wars, 202-20. Non-gendered studies on the failure of Confederate nationalism include Paul D. Escott, After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978) and Richard E. Beringer, et. al., Why the South Lost the Civil War (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

free.”⁵¹

Although the absence of fathers and brothers took a terrible emotional toll on young women, most regarded it as a necessary sacrifice for independence. Pauline DeCaradeuc of Aiken, South Carolina, knew firsthand the worst effects of war on a family, for two of her brothers died in battle. Nevertheless, the young woman refused to accept Lee’s surrender. “[M]any think the war is over, and we are subjugated entirely, I won’t believe that,” she wrote. “Subjugation! Never.” The loss of family members in fact often strengthened young women’s support for the cause. Kate Foster’s disdain for the Union grew after her two brothers died in battle. “God grant that I may some day feel they were taken for some good,” she wrote, “how can I ever love the Yankees as brothers when they made these deep and everlasting wounds in my heart?” Elizabeth Collier of Hillsboro, North Carolina, declared that she would never accept defeat at the hands of an enemy who had killed so many southern men: “Reconstruction! how the very word galls-- can we ever live in peace with the desecrators [sic] of our homes and the murderers of our Fathers, Brothers, and Sons--Never--We are bound to rise again.”⁵²

The same notions of gender that eroded older women’s support for the war

⁵¹Maria Smith Peek to Daniel Marrow, May 9, 1865, Marrow Family Papers; James C. Bonner, ed., Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 74.

⁵²Mary D. Robertson, ed., A Confederate Lady Comes of Age: The Journal of Pauline DeCaradeuc, 1863-1888 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 74-75; Kate D. Foster Diary, July 18, 1865; Elizabeth Collier Diary, April 25, 1865.

sustained their daughters' patriotism even as the war came to an end. Using traditional ideals of masculinity, young women criticized political and military leaders for the South's surrender. They envisioned the Confederacy as metaphorical family and its leaders as the patriarchs. When the South surrendered, young women accused southern leaders of shirking their masculine duty and handing them over to what many regarded as "northern despotism." This gendered language provided a way for young women to remain politically vocal in the postwar period without challenging traditional notions of female behavior.

Anna Green used traditional notions of gender to criticize Georgia's political leaders. As Sherman's troops neared the state capital in November 1864, she attended a meeting of the legislature both to show support for the Confederacy and to see how the legislators would respond to the crisis. The scene she encountered was "truly ridiculous," she wrote. Instead of a "display of cool, wise, legislation and undaunted courage and exalted patriotism," she saw weakness and cowardice. Rather than stand and fight, the legislators voted to evacuate Milledgeville if Sherman came near, thus, in Green's view, abandoning their masculine duty to protect the community. "[T]hey could not stand for the defense of their own capital," she wrote in disgust.⁵³

When news of Appomattox made its way through the South, young women continued their gendered criticism of southern leaders. Elizabeth Collier, for example, declared that the masculine honor of Confederate soldiers was tarnished by surrender:

you are a disgraced and ruined people--and yet men of the South you are content--

⁵³Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 60.

content to be slaves--content to be ruled by the vile in blood . . . shame on you

forever--Think of the great heart of Jefferson Davis as it breaks hour by hour.⁵⁴

Pauline DeCaradeuc expected southern leaders to remain faithful to the Confederate cause and found a glimmer of hope in Jefferson Davis. When she heard of Davis's plan to regroup and continue the war in Texas, she insisted that all soldiers had a responsibility to follow him: "every man is a traitor and coward who doesn't go with him and fight to the death to keep us from this disgraceful union."⁵⁵

Young women also used their social activities to protest the South's surrender. DeCaradeuc, who spent many of her days involved in social activities, refused to attend a picnic marking the end of the war, saying "I . . . never thought of going, now, that the country for which I have worked, suffered, and prayed for . . . has met with the greatest of all trials." DeCaradeuc underscored her protest when she rejected the invitation of some returned Confederate soldiers to attend the picnic. She believed that the soldiers had shirked their masculine duty to protect the nation by not "rallying on the trans Mississippi," and was appalled at their intention to "dance and be merry over the death of their country, shame! shame!" Rather than decline their invitation through a message, however, DeCaradeuc used a symbolic gesture to protest their actions. When the soldiers sent a buggy to carry her to the picnic, DeCaradeuc sent it back empty.⁵⁶

While young women criticized military leaders, many lauded returning soldiers for

⁵⁴Elizabeth Collier Diary, April 25, 1865.

⁵⁵Robertson, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 74-75.

⁵⁶Robertson, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 76.

their participation and regarded them as heroes. Emmeline Crump believed that “there cannot be found a better hero than a Confederate soldier.” Janet Weaver of Warrenton, Virginia, thought that the South’s decision to surrender betrayed the sacrifices soldiers had made. “The thought is sickening,” she wrote, “that after all the hardships, and suffering our noble men have endured, and the many precious lives, that have [been] sacrificed . . . that at last we should have to submit.”⁵⁷

In the postwar era women continued their participation in civic affairs. As historian Lee Ann Whites shows, the destruction of slavery coupled with economic devastation eroded the social hierarchy of the antebellum South. Men lost their position as slaveholders, which had given them social status. They turned to the domestic sphere, as Whites argues, to reestablish their dominance by subordinating the women who had learned to function for four years without their protection. Yet Whites shows in her analysis of women’s postwar memorial and charitable activities that in spite of the rhetoric that exalted women’s domestic endeavors, they were “permanently frozen at public attention” and rose “with ever greater clarity and commitment onto the public stage.”⁵⁸

Historian Laura Edwards agrees that women remained at the center of civic life in the postwar era. In her study of Granville County, North Carolina, she contends that out of a desire for social order in the wake of emancipation and the erosion of the planter

⁵⁷Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot, “The Evacuation of Richmond,” Virginia Historical Society; Janet Weaver to friend, July 12, 1865, Janet Weaver Papers, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library.

⁵⁸Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 134-36, 185-86.

class, men and women emphasized the importance of home and family. The new ideal of the proper household included clearly defined gender roles in which women remained in the home and men labored industriously to provide for the family and their consumer needs. Edwards, however, asserts that because of this new gender ideal, domestic issues pervaded the politics of the postwar South. Caring for the home and providing for the family made their way into political discussion and civic activities. Women remained active in community life by using the rhetoric that relegated them to the home.⁵⁹

The sense of political responsibility young women gained in the war shaped their civic involvement after the war. As they entered their early twenties in the postwar period, young women took advantage of the new gender ideology to continue their work in the community. They had accepted the ideals of southern womanhood prior to the war, but the conflict reshaped their view of proper gender behavior. The war instilled in them a sense of political responsibility that they viewed as an extension of the female ideal, and in the aftermath of the struggle they believed they had a moral and maternal responsibility to help rebuild their communities. Moreover, efforts to memorialize the Lost Cause encouraged them to shift their political energies away from criticizing southern politicians and toward accepting the idea of reconstruction. Although young women embraced the new domestic ideology of the postwar period, they were not willing to relinquish their newfound sense of political responsibility.

Daughters joined their mothers in raising funds to rebuild institutions hit hard by

⁵⁹Laura Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 107-44.

the war. The war effort had channeled young women's religious activities into relief efforts for soldiers and destitute families, and the church had become the central location for their activities and had served as a training ground for future charitable endeavors. After the war, they put their skills to work aiding financially-strapped churches. Members of the congregation who formerly had sustained the church with their donations could, in many cases, no longer afford to do so. Young women therefore used their organizational skills to spearhead fund-raising activities and in some cases took it upon themselves to do the work needed for their church. For example, in 1867, Sarah Chaffin's church in Amelia County, Virginia, needed a parsonage for the minister, but the congregation had few resources. She, along with several women in the town, held a fair to raise money. Four years later, they joined forces to sew items needed to decorate the parsonage. In 1866, seventeen-year-old Sallie Independence Foster helped her female peers organize a tableau to aid their church in Florence, Alabama. Foster and her peers also organized a concert to benefit the church relief fund intended to help destitute orphans and widows in the town.⁶⁰

Many women who came of age in wartime took up the postwar challenge of aiding schools. During the war, many schools in the South struggled to remain open and some were forced to close their doors. Continuing economic troubles after the war also affected schools. A good example of young women's ingenuity in raising funds for postwar education was the work of Nannie Davis of Hickory Hill, North Carolina. In 1876, the

⁶⁰Friedman, Enclosed Garden, 110-13; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wright, March 11, 1867, June 20, 1871, Chaffin Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Sallie Independence Foster Diary, September 24, 1866.

school where she was teaching experienced financial problems. In response, Davis and the other teachers organized a concert and lecture to raise funds. Calling on her earlier experience in relief drives for the war effort, Davis planned and carried out the benefit.⁶¹

The movement to memorialize the Confederate dead also allowed women to play a vital role in civic affairs. Memorial associations organized by southern women helped ex-Confederates reconcile themselves to defeat while honoring the sacrifices of soldiers. These organizations, according to Lee Ann Whites, aided in reconstructing southern manhood by transforming the image of ex-soldiers from defeated men into heroes of the South. Women's efforts to honor the Confederate dead, furthermore, gave them justification for remaining in civic affairs and gave them public recognition.⁶²

Organizations that venerated the Lost Cause also provided justification for young women to remain in civic life. As they entered their adult years, southern daughters joined the effort to honor all the men who served in the war and thus abandoned their earlier criticism of those who laid down their arms. Fresh from relief associations, they used their organizational and fund-raising skills to help create memorials. Anna Green, for example, collected sixty-seven dollars from patients and staff members in the asylum where her father worked to fund a memorial in Milledgeville. Sally Clayton, along with her sister and mother, organized an association dedicated to establishing a memorial day in Atlanta

⁶¹Scott, Southern Lady, 110-11; Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 181-84; Nannie Davis to John Davis, March 26, 1876, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

⁶²Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 182-95; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252-53.

and served as recording secretary. Susan Bradford joined with the women of Tallahassee to organize the Southern Woman's Memorial Association; its aim was to build a memorial for ex-Confederate soldiers, whom Bradford regarded as "our heroes."⁶³

Social events in the postwar period also became a scene for memorializing ex-Confederates. For many young women, the war's end meant the revival of social activities. Susan Bradford noted that after the war she and her peers attempted to "turn over a new leaf . . . to drown our troubles in a sea of gaiety." The youths organized a Shakespeare Club, a Bezique Club, and a monthly dancing party. The most popular of their organizations, however, was the riding company, half women and half men. The members met regularly to practice equestrian skills and learn cavalry drills, but in doing so they also honored the Lost Cause. The young men wore their military uniforms and led tributes to Jefferson Davis, Lee, and other leaders, whom they regarded as "martyred heroes." Some young women in the postwar South accompanied their fathers to reunions and exhibitions held by ex-Confederate soldiers. Margaret Ridley of Madison County, Mississippi, for example, attended a reunion of her father's company of the 1st Mississippi Regiment. In recognition of her attendance, the men made her the first honorary member of the company.⁶⁴

While young women participated in community efforts in the postwar period, they

⁶³Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 126; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 171-73; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 324.

⁶⁴Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 286-88; Margaret Ridley Gooch Memoirs, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

continued to use the home as a venue for informal political participation. Cloe Tyler Whittle found such opportunities through her father, a lawyer in Norfolk, Virginia. In August 1866, Whittle accompanied him to Fort Monroe to visit the imprisoned Jefferson Davis. Awestruck by the former Confederate president, Whittle recorded in her diary details of his accommodations and his treatment by Union officials. She took the opportunity to learn about the politics of the Confederacy and the current state of the South as she dined with Davis and his family. After the meal, Davis's younger daughters left the dining room while Whittle and her father remained to discuss such matters as Lincoln's assassination, Reconstruction, and Davis's conflicts with the Confederate Congress.⁶⁵

Young women who married during or after the war found similar opportunities to participate in political discussions through their husbands. Annie Jeter Caramouche of New Orleans, who married just months before the war ended, noted that her husband's political involvement in the community transformed her social activities into forums for civic discussions. In 1877, when the last of the Radical-dominated southern state governments collapsed, Caramouche's husband was elected to the state legislature. She noted that among the duties of a politician's wife, she enjoyed entertaining her husband's colleagues and their wives. On these occasions, she was privy to conversations about the state government and often contributed her opinions. Although Caramouche adhered to the new postwar ideology that emphasized the domestic roles of women, she found

⁶⁵Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Green Diary, August 22, 1866.

opportunities for political expression through her social activities in the home.⁶⁶

The process of politicization that began with the creation of the Confederacy ushered a generation of southern daughters into civic affairs. These daughters brought their new political identity with them as they entered womanhood in the postwar period. Using the education in organizational efforts and political affairs they had gained during the war, they continued to make themselves heard in public matters and to forge new female associations. Their continuing civic involvement, furthermore, helped reshape the South. The sense of political responsibility that transformed their lives during the war and postwar period ultimately produced a generation of females who believed civic participation was an extension of their feminine identity. These young women of the Civil War assumed a major role in civic life as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the church missionary movement, and eventually the woman suffrage campaign transformed the South in the 1880s and 1890s.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs.

⁶⁷Scott, Southern Lady, 150-84; Friedman, Enclosed Garden, 114-27; Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1993); Elna C. Green, Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PERFECT WOMAN: COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

In 1862, fourteen-year-old Janet Weaver of Warrenton, Virginia, penned a description of the qualities she believed characterized the ideal woman. “A perfect woman,” she wrote, “must be amiable, kind, and affectionate” and must manifest “all the love of a mother” in raising her children. “When her husband comes home from a hard days work,” Weaver added, “she does not go to meet him with a troubled brow but tries to look cheerful and bright and make him feel that he is always welcome at home.” An ideal wife and mother also ran her household “like clock work” and kept peace among family members. The young woman concluded her essay by observing that a perfect woman “fears God and loves to walk in his Holy ways.” Weaver’s essay illustrated her acceptance of antebellum gender norms. Although the war had expanded their feminine identity to incorporate their new sense of political and civic responsibility, young women such as Weaver continued to view marriage and motherhood as the final stages in their maturation.¹

From their earliest education, daughters understood the expectations concerning their gender and class, and often used them to their advantage. Parents saw their daughter’s marriage as a means to secure their own status in slaveholding society. Educators and church leaders taught young women to accept the ideals of southern

¹Janet Weaver composition, Janet Weaver Papers, Museum of the Confederacy, Ellen Brockenbrough Library, Richmond.

womanhood by preparing them for their future roles as mothers and wives. Absorbing the ideals of their class and gender, southern daughters sought a mate who could fulfill the role of protector and provider while exemplifying the attributes of the southern gentry. While parents kept a watch over their daughters' courtship activities, they allowed them a measure of freedom in their decisions. Young women were free to enjoy a period of social activity and to pursue as many courtships as they wanted before marrying. They attended parties, dances, and balls, and hosted visits from young men in their community.²

The Civil War, however, called into question traditional courtship practices and attitudes toward marriage. Most young women expected eventually to marry, but they saw their prospects diminish with the departure of potential beaux. Yet the lack of suitors did not produce in young women the sense of urgency regarding their marital opportunities that older single or widowed women experienced. On the contrary, most young women were willing to postpone marriage until after the war. Social activities, furthermore, continued during the war, which eased their concerns about finding a husband. Wartime disruptions also gave young women greater freedom in their relationships and created new courtship rituals. Those who married during the war did so not out of a sense of urgency but rather out of impatience in waiting for the war to end. These changes in attitudes and practices, however, failed to alter young women's expectations about marriage and motherhood as they entered adulthood in the postwar period. Even though economic and social conditions after the war diminished their

²Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 207-208; Clinton, Plantation Mistress, 61-63.

marriage opportunities, young women accepted the postwar ideology that emphasized women's domestic and maternal roles. They turned to traditional notions of southern femininity to restore a sense of stability and normalcy to their lives.

Recent scholarship on courtship and marriage in the Confederacy emphasizes the diversity of women's experiences. Historians such as Drew Faust and E. Susan Barber argue that the availability of suitors depended to a degree on location. Young women in the cities, especially cities where Confederate soldiers were numerous, found more opportunities for courtship. As a result, marriage patterns in places such as Richmond, Virginia, changed very little after the war began. Faust shows that young women in the rural South, with fewer men in their communities, were forced to contemplate their future as wives and mothers. These studies of single women in the Confederacy, however, place women of all ages in the same category and focus predominantly on widowed or older single women. Few studies employ age as a category of analysis when examining changes in courtship and marriage practices. Case studies of courting couples do illustrate differences between the experiences of older women and the experiences of those coming of age during the war, but these studies are limited in scope, focusing mainly on couples from the Upper South and northern states.³

³Rable, Civil Wars, 51-54; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 139-41; E. Susan Barber, "White Wings of Eros: Courtship and Marriage in Confederate Richmond," in Clinton, Southern Families at War, 119-20; George M. Anderson, S.J., "The Civil War Courtship of Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose Anderson of Rockville," Maryland Historical Magazine 80 (Summer 1985), 119-38; Sidney Hovey Wanzer and Anna Bradford Agle,

Despite the lack of beaux in their community, young women continued to uphold traditional notions of “proper” gender roles. They endorsed the reciprocal structure of marriage in which women submitted to the will of their husbands in exchange for protection and support. Elizabeth Collier identified the main characteristic of a woman in marriage as dependency on her husband. “A man may be self sufficing,” she wrote, “he may, independent of the other sex, devote himself to fame or the pursuits of intellect . . . while women learn the necessity of dependence on Him by the necessary resting of their nature on men.” Young women also continued to believe that their roles within the marriage included that of moral guardian. Lucy Breckinridge, for example, argued that women possessed greater religious faith than men and thus had an obligation to bring a spiritual and moral influence to their marriage: “I rather incline to the opinion that women are purer and better than men . . . [men] have not the moral courage that women have.”⁴

Likewise, young women wanted their future husbands to meet their class and gender obligations. The ideals of masculine honor weighed heavily in their choice of suitors. Anna Cagdell Howell, for example, described her “perfect man” as “intelligent, smart, brilliant, attractive, gentlemanly, and everything a lady most wishes to see in a

eds., “Dearest Braddie: Love and War in Maryland, 1860-61,” Maryland Historical Magazine 88 (Spring 1993), 337-58; Chris Fordney, ed., “Letters from the Heart,” Civil War Times Illustrated 34 (September-October 1995), 28, 73-82.

⁴Elizabeth Collier Diary, June 28, 1862; Mary D. Robertson, ed., Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 30.

gentleman.” Young women also expected their beaux to exhibit a sense of family responsibility and an ability to provide economic support. When Janet Weaver visualized the perfect woman, she saw her as dependent on the financial and emotional support of her husband. Without a responsible partner, Weaver argued, a woman would be hard-pressed to fulfill her role as mother and wife.⁵

Opportunities for courtship continued during the war. The stationing of Confederate soldiers in southern towns and cities increased a young woman’s chances for meeting a potential suitor. The Confederate capital of Richmond, for example, experienced an increase in male population with the influx of soldiers and government workers. Margaretta Ellen Wise and her peers attended several parties and dances where she found courtship opportunities. When Pauline DeCaradeuc visited family in Augusta, Georgia, she received more social invitations than while living on her parents’ plantation. “I really didn’t recognize Pauline DeCaradeuc in the character of a belle,” she wrote, “she has been so long in quiet and retirement, that I had almost forgotten her in society.” DeCaradeuc became infatuated with several soldiers who came through Aiken and Charleston, South Carolina, where she also visited kin. She promised to correspond with many young men she met, and made mementos and gifts for some.⁶

⁵Anna Cagdoll (Howell) Hollowell Journal, January 28, 1861; Janet Weaver composition, Janet Weaver Family Papers.

⁶Annie Jeter Caramouche Reminiscences; Mary C. Bell Claytor, “Personal Recollections of Hunter’s Raid, Virginia Historical Society; Barber, “White Wings of Eros,” 119-32; Margaretta Ellen Wise Mayo Reminiscences, Virginia Historical Society;

The passing of military units through a town also encouraged the mingling of soldiers and young women. Mary Fries of Salem, North Carolina, went with a group of friends to toss bouquets at a regiment when it arrived. Some of the soldiers returned the gesture by serenading the young women one evening. Alice Ready likewise found a changed social scene when a unit came to her town. "It is delightful to see our soldier friends," she wrote; "I think the girls here must appreciate their visits more than almost any others, because beaux are a very scarce article." Sarah Wadley's social activities increased while a company of soldiers stayed in her community. She and other young women in her town held events such as dances and parties for the officers and soldiers.⁷

Class biases often dictated the interaction young women would have with soldiers. Daughters of slaveholding families sought courtship with men of their own social class. Yet the presence of soldiers from various backgrounds exposed glaring class differences. Young women who deemed a soldier an unacceptable suitor refrained from inviting him to certain social functions and turned down his invitations. Sarah Lowe, who joined several of her classmates in passing out bouquets to soldiers as they arrived in Huntsville, Alabama, observed that "some of them were very rough looking . . . others were very nice looking men"; she ignored those who she presumed did not meet the standards of her class.⁸

Robertson, *A Confederate Lady Comes of Age*, 72-73.

⁷Mary Fries Patterson Diary, September 9, November 6, 1863; Alice Ready Diary, February 13, 1862; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, April 8, May 16, 1863.

⁸Sarah Lowe Journal, May 4, 1861.

Other young women abandoned class prejudices when mingling with soldiers.

Young women's patriotism and the dearth of male suitors made any man in uniform an attractive prospect for some. Amanda Worthington, for example, enjoyed socializing with all the soldiers in her Mississippi town. Like many of her peers, she viewed Confederate soldiers as heroes and was awestruck by their stories of the battlefield. Although many she met were clearly not of her own social class, she confessed that "I love all Confederate soldiers."⁹

Opportunities for social interaction were scarcer for young women isolated from the military presence. While attending school in Monroe County, Virginia, Bettie Alexander saw her social life diminish with the departure of young men her age. Attending a friend's wedding, she found it boring because only a few members of the family showed up. Harriet Grady also lamented the loss of men in her town: "The streets looked quite deserted. Such a contrast to the first of the year, some five years ago." Alice Lucas described the social scene for the youths of Charlottesville, Virginia, as "very dull."¹⁰

Some young women refrained from social activities as the devastations of war affected southern families. Many parents believed that attending social events was

⁹Faust, Mothers of Invention, 146-47; Amanda Worthington Diary, September 23, 1863, January 19, 1865.

¹⁰Faust, Mothers of Invention, 145-52; Bettie Alexander to sister, August 2, 1861, Bettie Alexander Papers; Harriet (Grady) Ferguson Diary, January 5, 1865, Ferguson Family Papers; Alice Lucas to brother, October 24, 1864, Lucas-Ashley Family Papers.

disrespectful to family members who were away at war or had lost their lives in battle. Daughters in afflicted families often refrained from attending dances or parties and dressed in mourning. After Susan Bradford's brother died from wounds, she concluded that "it is not suitable that we should be seen in gay places" and turned down invitations until several months had passed. Sarah Wadley also refused to attend social events in her community after her brother died in battle. Some young women who accepted social invitations felt guilty about it. After attending a party with dancing, Virginia Wilson confessed to her diary that "I can not fully enjoy myself in such scenes now, it looks like recklessness or carelessness in respect to the sorrow and terrors around us."¹¹

Although avenues for social interaction existed during the war, the temporary nature of potential suitors' presence posed a problem. When troops eventually left a community, they created a void in the population. Forced to consider life without courtship opportunities, many young women questioned their future as wives and mothers. Myra Inman, for example, bemoaned the absence of potential beaux after volunteers in her community left for the front, and she and several female friends thus resolved "to live by ourselves and never marry." Pauline DeCaradeuc noted that a friend of hers thought spinsterhood likely because of the absence or death of so many men. "I don't doubt it," was DeCaradeuc's comment, "neither do I care very much." The absence of suitors

¹¹Daniel W. Stowell, "A Family of Women and Children: The Fains of East Tennessee," in Clinton, Southern Families at War, 158; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 219; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 21, 1863; Virginia Wilson Hankin Diary, June 27, 1863; Nannie Haskins Diary, February 27, 1863.

prompted Nannie Haskins to ask “if I will ever marry or if I will always be simple Nannie Haskins.”¹²

Age also was a factor in a young woman’s decision to postpone marriage. Most daughters of elite and middle-class families waited until their early twenties to marry, and the war did very little to change this custom. E. Susan Barber, in her study of marriage patterns in Richmond, found that the average age of young women who married continued to remain around twenty-two during the war. Most young women coming of age during the war were still in their teens and saw themselves as too young to marry. Of the young women included in this study, only 8 percent married before the war ended and they tended to be in the latter years of their adolescence when the war began. Sally Independence Foster turned down many courtship opportunities throughout her teenage years. At the age of nineteen, Anna Cagdell Howell confided to her diary, “I don’t think I ever would feel old enough to be married unless I were an old maid of course.” Clara Solomon saw little benefit in marrying at a younger age. After hearing of a friend’s short engagement and subsequent marriage, Solomon criticized her decision: “She is foolish to get married, while a girl she was the admired of admirers—but a married belle is detestable.”¹³

¹²Snell, Myra Inman, 110; Robertson, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 19; Nannie Haskins Diary, March 23, 1863.

¹³Barber, “White Wings of Eros,” 121. Calculations of marriage patterns are based on the ninety-eight young women included in this study. Information on when they married comes from their personal papers. Foster Diary, December 12, 1862; Anna

Romantic affection also served as a determinant in choosing a suitor. Older single or widowed women also sought romantic affection and companionate marriage, but their sense of urgency was aggravated by a lack of suitors during the war led them often to choose a mate out of necessity rather than romantic attraction. Younger women, however, were willing to postpone marriage until they found a suitor who met their romantic expectations. Elizabeth Collier, for example, wanted to find a beau who fulfilled her romantic desires: "I long more intensely if possible for human love, which it would seem that I am fated never to have." Rather than rush to the altar out of fear of never finding a mate, Collier, like many of her female peers, contemplated living without marriage altogether. "I feel that I am growing strong in self-confidence," she wrote, "that I can live without love." Cordelia Lewis Scales broke off several engagements when she found her romantic expectations unfulfilled. "I do not love nor never have loved a man well enough to marry him," she confessed, "I think I shall be an old made [sic]." Anna Green turned down a proposal from a man several years her senior. She believed that her suitor, a widower and father of four, was searching for "a mistress in his home." "In courting me," she told him, "the argument that shall win must be I love you."¹⁴

Cagdell (Howell) Hollowell Diary, September 2, 1862; Ashkenazi, Diary of Clara Solomon, 50.

¹⁴Ellen K. Rothman, Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 103-107, 111-13; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 147-50; Rable, Civil Wars, 52-53; Barber, "White Wings of Eros," 120-22; Sutherland, Very Violent Rebel, 168; Elizabeth Collier Diary, September 2, 1863; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie,

Some young women approached courtship cautiously from fear of being left alone. They worried that by marrying a soldier they risked widowhood. Others disliked the idea of beginning a marriage separated from their husbands. Youth allowed most young women the luxury of putting off marriage until after their beaux returned from battle or the war's end. Annie Jeter Caramouche, for example, found that many of her peers refused to marry "for fear of being left widows." Witnessing several women of her community rush to marry soldiers, Catherine McLaurin resolved to put off marriage until after the war: "I do not believe in the fashion of marrying and then your husband leaving right off for the wars."¹⁵

Young women turned to the affections of sisters and female friends in the absence of male suitors. Historian Drew Gilpin Faust notes that "young girls deprived of the distractions and excitements of heterosexual courtship and romance turned increasingly to one another for a surrogate interior life." Female friendships provided an emotional substitute that enabled them to put off marriage until the war's end. Most young women developed these close friendships with peers from school or with visiting family and friends. Pauline DeCaradeuc had a young friend join her at her home for the duration of the war. DeCaradeuc's family invited her friend, Carrie Griswold, to stay with her to help ease Pauline's anxieties and loneliness. Sally Independence Foster developed close relationships with several young family members who stayed with her for extended periods

November 24, 1861, Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers; Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 46-47.

¹⁵Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs; Catherine McLaurin Diary, July 5, 1862.

during the war.¹⁶

In some cases, the affections between young women had romantic undertones, but few admitted in their letters or diaries that their relationships were sexual. Lucy Breckinridge had long visits with female friends whom she felt closer to than to her suitors. She confided to her diary one evening that she had “fallen in love” with one of her friends and wondered if “there was a mistake made about me by Mother Nature. . . . I fall desperately in love with girls and do not care a straw for gentlemen.” Close, platonic bonds between young women were common in the antebellum era, and the war often strengthened them.¹⁷

Those who pursued relationships found that the war disrupted traditional courtship practices. Separated by war, courting couples devised new courtship activities. Wartime romances became a source of comfort for those dealing with death and homesickness. Young men and women also had greater freedom to express their romantic affections. Despite parents’ continued attempts to oversee their daughters’ behavior, they found that

¹⁶Faust, Mothers of Invention, 142; Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 16; Robertson, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 28-29; Sally Independence Foster Diary, passim.

¹⁷Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” Signs 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29; Mary D. Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 177.

the war inhibited their ability to keep a close watch over them.¹⁸

Correspondence between young men and women replaced traditional courtship activities. Letters filled the void absent suitors left and became an essential part of wartime courtship rituals. Myra Inman found a wartime correspondent when she met a soldier as he passed with his unit through Cleveland, Tennessee. Sally Independence Foster's first courtship was through letter-writing with a young soldier, John Martin, who had passed through Florence, Alabama. Cordelia Lewis Scales bought cards to send on Valentine's Day to soldiers whom she had met and promised to write. Robert Mitchell saw letters from his fiancée as "visits from home" and scolded her when she wrote infrequently.¹⁹

Courtship letters also served as a way for couples to assert what they saw as their "proper" gender identity. Young women saw themselves as helpmates providing comfort and support to their beaux away at war. Nettie Fondren, for example, believed it was her duty to keep her fiancé, Robert Mitchell, cheerful and his mind off the dangers around him. Likewise, Mitchell believed he was fulfilling his masculine role in defending not only his political cause but also his family and future wife. "I will freely sacrifice my very life,"

¹⁸Faust, Mothers of Invention, 142-45; Rable, Civil Wars, 51-52; Barber, "White Wings of Eros," in Clinton, ed., Southern Families at War, 123-24.

¹⁹Snell, Myra Inman, 156; Sally Independence Foster Diary, December 5, 12, 1862; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, February 9, 1862, Cordelia Lewis Scales Collection; Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, December 16, 1861; Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters.

he wrote, “defend and protect you . . . be cheerful and bear it bravely for it is the will of God.” Fondren was grateful to Mitchell for living up to his masculine duty. “You with the other noble men,” she wrote, “have behaved nobly . . . and we, the weak perhaps timid ones at home thank you . . . how much for your bravery, gallantry, and heroic conduct never shall we forget.”²⁰

Moral concerns also permeated young women’s letters. They saw the role of moral guardian as an extension of their feminine identity and felt a responsibility to counsel their beaux. Nettie Fondren, for example, was concerned that camp life would corrupt her fiancé and encouraged him to “overcome all the temptations.” In one letter, she scolded Mitchell for reading romantic novels. “It is much more interesting,” she wrote, “to read of the deeds of some noble warrior, than a love sick Italian.”²¹

While young women upheld traditional female roles in principle, they found that the war changed courting practices. For one thing, couples gained more freedom of romantic expression. With little parental supervision over their letter writing, daughters openly professed their love to suitors. Louisa McCord, who became engaged during the

²⁰Louisa McCord Smythe *Reminiscences*; Frodney, ed., “Letters from the Heart,” 73-82; Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, October 5, 1863, May 24, 1862, Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, July 28, October 24, 1861, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters.

²¹Faust, “Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army,” *Journal of Southern History* 53 (February 1987), 63-90; Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, April 2, May 18, 1862, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters.

war, saw her fiancé for a total of only two weeks throughout their courtship. While he was away at war, she wrote him several letters conveying her devotion. Robert Mitchell wrote frequently to Nettie Fondren expressing his love and received similar letters from her. In one letter, he described a dream in which he returned from the battlefield to greet Fondren and “exchange tears of joy at the happy meeting of two of the warmest hearts on earth.” George Washington Nelson, Jr. and Mary “Mollie” Scollay also conveyed their romantic feelings in their letters. Scollay described her letters as “a few lines of love” while Nelson addressed her as “my beloved” or “my love.”²²

Courtship between a soldier and young woman offered comfort amid the horrors of war. Robert Mitchell credited letters from his betrothed with easing his homesickness. “My heart was filled with sadness dark dismal and gloomy were my thoughts,” he wrote, “but your letter like a sweet messenger of love dispelled all the dark and dismal thoughts.” He also confided to her the hardships he endured and his fears of never seeing her again. Fondren turned to Mitchell for consolation after her brother died in battle, telling him of the overwhelming emotions she experienced when the news reached her family. George Washington Nelson, Jr. found solace in the letters he received from his fiancée while he was a prisoner of war:

It is not a happy time with me at present . . . with what delight I look
at the one bright place in my heart, which even in this sad time consoles

²²Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, August 26, 1861, Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, May 20, 1862, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters; “Letters from the Heart,” 73-82.

me beyond all description. You, my darling, have for the last few days been more in my thoughts than ever. And though made happier the more, I think, from the conviction of possessing your constant love.²³

Separation caused a new set of concerns for courting couples. Young soldiers worried that their fiancées would find another suitor in their absence. Robert Mitchell, for example, believed that his sweetheart was losing interest after several weeks passed without a letter from her. He confessed his fear that the distance between them would cause her to break their engagement. Richard Mortimer Williams worried that his fiancée, Rose Anderson, was still in love with her previous suitor, who had given her a ring before he left for the army. George Washington Nelson, Jr. was afraid that his fiancée, Mary Scollay, had found another beaux while he was a prisoner. Scollay assured him, however, that she had “not thought of bestowing my youth and beauty upon any other soldier.”²⁴

Young women sometimes did little to allay their suitors’ insecurities. By making a

²³Stephen W. Berry II, All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173-92; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, July 28, October 12, December 16, 1861, Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, April 2, 1862, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters; Fordney, “Letters from the Heart,” 80-81.

²⁴Judith Ann Foster Memoir; Robert Mitchell to Nettie Fondren, December 22, 1861, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters; George M. Anderson, S.J., “The Civil War Courtship of Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose Anderson of Rockville,” Maryland Historical Magazine 80 (Summer 1985), 129-30; Fordney, “Letters from the Heart,” 74.

beau jealous, a young woman could sometimes force him to make a proclamation of love that might lead to engagement. When Scollay's fiancé went over a year without a furlough, she wrote that their time apart was testing their relationship. "I don't know what might happen," she warned, "if you don't get out of prison before the Summer is over." Judith Ann Robertson told her future husband that she had many suitors when their relationship began. When she stopped writing to him for several weeks, she received a proposal from him. Richard Mortimer Williams became jealous after his fiancée refused to give back the ring from a previous suitor. When he learned that she still spoke with the man, he declared his intention to ask her parents for permission to marry her.²⁵

Parents grew increasingly concerned with the freedom their daughters had in their relationships. Some historians argue that social restrictions lessened during the war. The frequent absence of parents from the home and the mobility of southern families weakened control over women's behavior. Many daughters traveled with groups of women rather than the traditional male escort and gained more privacy in their relationships. Younger women, however, found that despite changes in their courtship practices, their parents attempted to guide their social interaction. In many cases, the struggle between parents and daughters over their courtship created tensions.²⁶

Parents worried foremost about their daughters' conduct with Confederate

²⁵Fordney, "Letters from the Heart," 74; Judith Ann Robertson Foster Memoirs; Anderson, "Civil War Courtship of Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose Anderson," 129-30.

²⁶Rable, Civil Wars, 51-52.

soldiers. Hearing about instances of women rushing to marry soldiers, parents grew concerned that their daughters would place themselves in danger of impropriety. Jane Silvey's mother warned her about engaging in a hasty courtship with a soldier. "It really looks like the girls will marry anybody these days," she wrote, "my dear daughter keep a strict watch over your affections and don't be deceived, men are very deceiving." She urged Jane to stay clear of "strange soldiers" who married young women then never saw them again.²⁷

Concerns about social class and age sometimes played a role in parents' disapproval of a suitor. Lucy Breckinridge broke her engagement after her family "objected strongly to the match." When her father found a letter discussing her engagement, he demanded she end the relationship, believing that his daughter had made a bad choice in a suitor. Sally Independence Foster likewise ended her relationship with a young soldier after her brother told her he was "not a suitable boy." Foster's parents also tried to keep a close watch over their daughter's interaction with soldiers because of her youth. They feared that unless closely guarded, their daughter might harm her reputation by entering into an engagement at too young an age.²⁸

Even as wartime demands increasingly called mothers and fathers away from the home, they insisted that their daughters follow traditional standards of female behavior

²⁷Mother to Jane Silvey, January 21, December 5, 1864, Silvey Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

²⁸Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 58-59, 99, 123-24; Sally Independence Foster Diary, September 19, 1863.

with their suitors. Fear of impropriety and the loosening of social restrictions heightened parents' sensitivity to their daughters' actions. Clara Solomon's mother reproached Clara's sister for receiving a letter from a soldier that she considered too familiar and sentimental by elite standards. Jane Silvey's mother wrote her advising her to "go into society as much as possible and try and improve your manners." Fearing that her daughter's unsociable habits would discourage any suitable marriage prospect, she warned Jane that "without good manners you will never show off to a good advantage" and told her to act "more dignified and graceful" at social events.²⁹

Some daughters attempted to circumvent their parents' guardianship. The reliance on correspondence and the privacy it granted encouraged clandestine relationships. Many courting couples waited to tell their parents about their intentions to marry until they were sure to gain their approval. Lucy Breckinridge, for example, kept her engagement with a lieutenant secret for several months. She eventually told her mother, who advised her to keep the relationship hidden from her father until the couple were sure about their engagement. Later her father intercepted a letter between Breckinridge and her sister discussing the engagement and began opening Lucy's mail. Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose Anderson kept their relationship hidden from their families because of their conflicting loyalties. Williams served in the Union army while Anderson and her family were ardent Confederates. When the couple became engaged, they continued to keep

²⁹Ashkenazi, Diary of Clara Solomon, 137; mother to Jane Silvey, November 4, 1863, Silvey Family Papers.

their relationship secret out of fear that Anderson's father would disapprove.³⁰

Some couples engaged during the war grew impatient waiting for the conflict to end. Thus, despite concerns about absentee husbands, death, and financial hardships, some young women went to the altar. Nettie Fondren, for example, informed her betrothed that she could no longer wait for the war to end and wanted to marry despite his absence. Annie Jeter also chose to marry during the last year of the war. Immediately after her wedding, her husband, Emile Caramouche, returned to the front, leaving Jeter with her family until he returned. Mary Fries's uncle advised her to marry her fiancé in May 1864, arguing that no one knew when the war would end.³¹

Some young women married their fiances following their medical discharge from the army. Alice Bailey's fiancé, Simon Boozer, lost his leg at Gettysburg. After his release from the army hospital, he married Alice, whom he had been courting through correspondence. Sarah Wadley attended a wedding of a friend who married a soldier whom she met while nursing in a hospital. At the wedding, Wadley noted that the soldier

³⁰Sue Montgomery to Moultrie Reid Wilson, November 11, 1864, Moultrie Reid Wilson Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 41-42, 107; Anderson, "Civil War Courtship of Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose Anderson of Rockville," 119-20.

³¹Nettie Fondren to Robert Mitchell, November 21, 1862, Mitchell-Fondren Family Civil War Letters; Annie Jeter Caramouche Recollections; Mary Fries Patterson Diary, May 2, 1864, Patterson Family Papers.

was still weak from injuries and could barely stand up at the altar to say his vows.³²

As sense of family and female duty also swayed some young women in favor of marriage. Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill plantation in the Shenandoah Valley saw marriage as fraught with hardships and misery for women. After she became engaged, Breckinridge confided to her diary that she was “not at all anxious to hurry the event.” Eventually she broke the engagement, her romantic affections having diminished, and resolved to become a “sweet old maid.” Later, however, she abandoned her determination to remain single and became engaged to a young officer. Yet she continued to question the desirability of marriage and pondered her future with gloom:

I do not look forward to that time with much pleasure though I do love him a great deal more than he loves me— more than any selfish, wicked man can love. . . . [I]t is woman’s nature to love in a submissive, trusting way, but it is better and safer to rely altogether upon themselves— poor creatures!

Although Breckinridge believed that the hardships of marriage would erode her romantic affection, she married her soldier-fiancé in 1864.³³

Wartime financial hardship affected many elite and middle-class weddings. Antebellum slaveholding families typically had enjoyed elaborate weddings that displayed their wealth and status, but the war imposed constraints. The blockade, scarcity, and

³²Clara Bowen to Alice (Bailey) Boozer, December 24, 1864, Alice Boozer Letters, South Caroliniana Library; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 25, 1862.

³³Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 33-34, 180, 175.

inflation constricted the availability of gifts, clothing, and food. Moreover, elaborate ceremonies struck some as frivolous amid the financial and emotional devastation of war. Mary Washington Cabell noted that she attended a wedding in which the wedding party “made a far less showy appearance.” Mollie Simpson described her own ceremony as a “calico wedding” in which the bridal party wore homemade dresses. Louisa McCord recalled the difficulties she encountered in preparing for her wedding. With little money to spend, she borrowed a veil, gloves, and ring from a family member, while her mother bargained with a shopkeeper for a white dress and sold household items to pay for it.³⁴

Transportation problems also complicated wartime weddings. Many young women married with only a few family members present. Mollie Simpson exchanged her vows without her sisters in attendance. Alice Bailey also had a small wedding with only a few family members who lived in her community present. Her sister was unable to attend because her husband was away at war and she could secure no other chaperone. Sarah Wadley attended a wedding that she described as “very small.”³⁵

When the Civil War ended, young men and women faced an uncertain economic and emotional future. Material losses drove many to the brink of poverty and despair.

³⁴Mary Washington (Cabell) Early Recollections, Early Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Mollie Simpson to sister, January 4, 1862, Simpson-Brumby Family Papers, Southern Historical Society; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

³⁵Mollie Simpson to sister, January 4, 1862, Simpson-Brumby Family Papers; Clara Bowen to Alice Boozer, December 24, 1864, Alice Boozer Letters; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, September 10, 1863.

Elizabeth Waties Allston and her mother were forced to open a school to provide an income after Union troops destroyed their rice plantation. Rising costs forced Myra Inman's family to close their Cleveland, Tennessee, home to boarders, leaving the family to seek help from relatives.³⁶

The emotional and physical scars of returning soldiers also took a toll on southern communities. Historians have recently examined post-traumatic stress in Civil War veterans and its effects on employment, family life, and mental health. Many Civil War veterans experienced symptoms such as depression, alcoholism, and anger in the postwar years. Moreover, those wounded in combat bore physical scars.³⁷

Many southerners responded to the problems of returning soldiers by focusing inward on the family. They found that the home and family offered the best means by which to reestablish a social and racial hierarchy. Because the war had eroded traditional validations of elite, white, male power, they attempted to reconstruct a masculine identity by reaffirming the patriarchy and relegating women to the home and family. This new

³⁶Scott, Southern Lady, 106-107; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 242-54; Rable, Civil Wars, 242-44; Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, December 31, 1865, January 1, 1866; Snell, Myra Inman, 332.

³⁷Drew Gilpin Faust, "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army," Journal of Southern History 53 (February 1987), 83-85; Eric Dean, Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 8, 202-207; John E. Talbott, "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War," History Today 46 (March 1996), 41-47.

domestic model excluded African Americans and poor whites, who depended on the work of women outside the home, and gave credence to the authority of elite, white males. Although women had gained entrance into civic and political life through a variety of activities during the war, they supported the postwar domestic ideology.³⁸

Young women attempted to uphold the new social creed that lauded women's maternal and domestic roles but social and economic conditions often hindered them. The consequences of four years of bloody and destructive war presented obstacles to courtship and marriage. One was the decline in the male population, which forced many young women again to reconsider their futures as wives and mothers. Economic difficulties, furthermore, prohibited many from marrying after the war. As a result, young women in the postwar period faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they reaffirmed traditional gender norms by seeking marriage and motherhood. On the other, they confronted the increased likelihood of a spinster's life. Most, however, eventually managed to resolve, or at least adjust to, this dilemma.

Demographic changes forced many young women to alter their courtship expectations in the postwar period. With the severe loss of life on the battlefield and in the hospital, southern society experienced an unbalanced sex ratio. At the end of the war, 260,000 Confederate soldiers were dead and another 190,000 were left wounded. As a result, young women reconsidered their courtship standards. While social class continued to strongly influence a woman's choice in suitors, age became less important.

³⁸Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 134-36; Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion, 107-44.

Before and during the war, women who married older men were typically in their mid-twenties or widowed; younger women chose men close to their own age. But after the war, some young women relaxed this standard. Young belles in postwar Columbia, South Carolina, for example, were seen socializing with men younger than themselves. With few men at their social club near twenty years old, the young women had little choice but to mingle with those once considered too young.³⁹

The psychological scars of war also affected postwar courtships. Alcoholism and depression afflicted many returned soldiers. Some young women seeking courtship found their potential suitors wracked with emotional problems. As a result, they adjusted their expectations of the ideal marriage partner. Instead of rejecting men who suffered from depression and alcoholism, they accepted their emotional problems as part of the female burdens of war. Anna Green met her future husband while he was in the Milledgeville, Georgia, asylum, where her father worked as a doctor. Samuel Austin Cook had gone to the asylum seeking treatment for alcoholism after he returned from war. His treatment completed, Cook approached Green's father to ask for her hand. Although Green expressed concerns about Cook's alcoholism, she agreed to marry him.⁴⁰

Young women also confronted a generation of men physically scarred and lamed by war. They had to revise their expectations of a suitable beau to accommodate the

³⁹Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs, eds., Mason Smith Family Letters (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), 238-40.

⁴⁰Dean, Shook Over Hell, 202-207; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252; Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 4.

bodily damage to southern manhood. Here too, rather than reject these men they accepted their scars and disabilities as a necessary burden. Ellen Cooper, for example, married Charles L. Johnson, who had lost a leg in the battle of the Wilderness in 1864. The couple met a few years after the war and pursued a short courtship before Cooper agreed to marry him in 1869.⁴¹

Courtship allowed young women to participate in reconstructing southern manhood in the postwar period. Social events not only provided a diversion from the aftermath of war but also encouraged young women's expectations of marriage and motherhood. Susan Bradford, for example, witnessed the return of social activities after the war. Young men and women, she observed, attempted to bring some stability to their tumultuous environment by holding dances and parties at which they could seek courtship opportunities. Sally Independence Foster enjoyed the return of soldiers because it afforded chances to attend dances and parties.⁴²

Despite increased social activities, some young women continued to face the probability of life without a husband. The dearth of men and economic hardships in the postwar period made it difficult to find a mate. Young women's fears, however, reveal their support for the postwar domestic ideology. In expressing concerns about marital opportunities, they upheld the belief that a woman's primary goals were marriage and

⁴¹Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252; Clara Bowen to Alice Boozer, December 24, 1864, Alice Boozer Letters; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs, South Caroliniana Library.

⁴²Smith, Mason Smith Family Letters, 238-40; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 286-87; Sallie Independence Foster Diary, August 31, 1868.

motherhood. Anna Green was one who worried about spinsterhood: "I almost feel that death were preferable to remaining alone in the world." Kate Foster was similarly troubled: "An old maid's life is one of struggle," she wrote, which "presents no allurements to a woman who feels that a woman's life is incomplete without Man's sustaining influence . . . a woman alone, in this cold world, how sad it is."⁴³

Romantic interest and companionate marriage remained important ideals in postwar courtship. Although willing to revise their expectations about a mate in other ways, young women continued to seek a marriage based on mutual affection. Economic hardships in the postwar period, furthermore, did very little to alter their expectations. The courtship letters of Mary Walker Gibson and John Chamberlayne of Virginia exemplify the tenacity of romantic ideals. In several of her letters to Chamberlayne, Gibson expresses her desire to do more than assume the role of housekeeper; she wanted him to regard her as a partner and companion.⁴⁴

Economic concerns, however, often forced courting couples to consider postponing marriage. Although young women and men supported the new domestic ideology that upheld traditional roles within a marriage, they found that the war had shaken the foundation on which those roles had rested. If a man was to assume the role of family provider, he needed an income; yet many returning soldiers had a hard time

⁴³Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 116; Kate D. Foster Diary, April 8, 1866, December 7, 1871.

⁴⁴Mary Walker Gibson to John Chamberlayne, July 11, September 8, 1873, Chamberlayne Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

securing employment. Many returned home to find slaves and other property gone and little capital with which to rebuild their wealth. Thus some courting couples postponed marriage until they secured an income. Eldridge Foster wanted to establish himself as a merchant before marrying his fiancé. Susan Bradford and her fiancé also waited due to financial concerns; only after her future husband got a job with Bradford's father did the couple marry. Ellen Cooper's betrothed put off marrying until he found a job, a search complicated by the loss of his leg. He finally got the position of auditor for Horry County, South Carolina, in 1868, and married Cooper the following year. Sarah Chaffin wanted her cousin to postpone his marriage until he accumulated some savings. "I rather think Willy contemplates an early consummation of his engagement," she wrote "I am sorry for it, as he has nothing to support a wife and the expense must fall heavily upon his father."⁴⁵

In some cases, young women postponed marriage after the war out of reluctance to give up the freedom that courtship allowed them. With the return of soldiers young women saw more opportunities for social interaction, and often were loath to abandon those opportunities. Sallie Independence Foster, for example, welcomed the return of the beaux with whom she had corresponded during the war. She received three proposals over two years, but turned them down, arguing that "girls must have some fun." Emma Hodge also relished the freedom a single life gave her. She carried on three courtships

⁴⁵Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 149-50; Judith Ann Foster Memoir; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 319; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, March 11, 1867, Chaffin Family Papers.

after the war before marrying in 1868.⁴⁶

While young women enjoyed much freedom in their courtship decisions, their parents and older kin continued to supervise their activities. The war had loosened social restrictions on female behavior but also provided a new set of concerns for parents. Fears regarding female impropriety survived the war, and parents wanted to ensure that their daughters would remain true to elite standards governing courtships. Emma Hodge's aunt and uncle, for example, worried that her many suitors would jeopardize her reputation as a pious and chaste young woman. On one occasion her guardians reproached her for allowing a young man to visit her repeatedly. They feared that the suitor was becoming intimate with Hodge without proclaiming any intention to marry, and thus forbade his visits.⁴⁷

Although postponing marriage had its allurements, many couples chose to marry after the war. The new domestic ideology, like the old, regarded marriage as an essential aspect of woman's role. Moreover, marriage provided a sense of stability for single men returning from the war. Restoring patriarchy provided comfort in the midst of postwar hardships, at least on the surface. Susan Bradford accepted her fiance's poverty as a consequence of his military service. As the dutiful wife, Bradford argued, she would make the material sacrifices needed until he could earn an income. Sarah Chaffin noted that the

⁴⁶Sallie Independence Foster Diary, September 24, 1866, August 31, 1868; Emma Hodge Diary, January 25, February 21, May 6, 1867, February 21, 1868, Southern Historical Collection.

⁴⁷Emma Hodge Diary, February 23, 24, 1868.

young women in her community paid little attention to financial issues when deciding to marry. "It seems poverty doesn't restrain people from getting married," she wrote, "judging from the frequency of such occurrences."⁴⁸

The quality of weddings in the postwar period improved with the southern economy. The years immediately following the war were hardest in this regard. Economic hardships and transportation problems made it difficult for family members to attend a ceremony. With little money to spare, Sarah Chaffin was unable to purchase gifts for her friend's wedding and bemoaned traveling a long distance to attend the service. She criticized the couple for marrying when "everyone is so hard pressed." Judith Ann Robertson settled on a small wedding and relied on her mother to supply food and clothing for the service. Susan Bradford asked her guests to refrain from bringing gifts, knowing that many were destitute. When the southern economy began to improve, however, the scale and expense of weddings increased. Toward the end of the Reconstruction era, elaborate displays of wealth and prestige like those of the antebellum times returned. Mary Washington Cabell, for example, described her wedding as a grand affair with family, friends, and neighbors present. She purchased a wedding dress and

⁴⁸Barber, "White Wings of Eros," 128; Rable, Civil Wars, 271; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 336; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 4; Fordney, ed., "Letters from the Heart," Civil War Times Illustrated 34 (September-October 1995), 82; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, February 22, 1868, Chaffin Family Papers.

received numerous gifts from guests.⁴⁹

Newly married couples experienced financial obstacles when establishing a home and livelihood. Those who took up farming often found the prospect daunting, given the high prices for supplies and equipment and the uncertain labor situation. Judith Ann Robertson Foster's husband tried to make the transition from merchant to planter, but could not muster sufficient capital and thus had minimal success. Louisa McCord Smythe and her husband invested all their money in a farm and found themselves thereafter financially strapped. Sarah Chaffin's husband decided to become a merchant and invested most of his money in the business, leaving the couple likewise on the edge financially.⁵⁰

Young couples often relied on their parents for financial help. Some newlyweds chose to live with their families until able to afford their own home. Susan Bradford and Nicholas Eppes settled on her family's estate and relied on her father for financial support. Nicholas wanted to establish a plantation but was unable to save enough money to purchase the land. Her parents offered to let the young couple stay with them and her father gave Nicholas work on the estate until he found employment elsewhere. Mary Cabell Early and her husband lived with his family until his business began to yield a profit. Louisa McCord Smythe and her husband had enough money to purchase their own plantation but found that living in her hometown near her parents offered additional

⁴⁹Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, February 22, 1868, Chaffin Family Papers; Judith Ann Foster Memoirs; Mary Washington (Cabell) Early Diary, September 28, 1876.

⁵⁰Judith Ann Foster Memoirs; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, March 11, 1867, Chaffin Family Papers.

financial security.⁵¹

Although young women sometimes expressed reservations about their husbands' business ventures, they generally yielded to their husbands' decisions. Sarah Chaffin disliked the idea of her husband becoming a merchant, worrying that the new business would place them in financial jeopardy. Yet in the end, she decided that she "must acquiesce cheerfully in his plans and shall aid him in every way I can." Many young women whose husbands turned to plantation life after the war also expressed concerns, for not only was success uncertain but also financial and labor problems resulted in a larger emphasis on women's domestic tasks and increased their work in the home. Despite their misgivings, however, most women in that situation went along with their husbands' choice. One was Susan Bradford Eppes, who witnessed the hardships of running a plantation after the war and thus felt uneasy when her husband took up farming but who nevertheless ultimately supported his decision.⁵²

The trials newlyweds faced in the postwar period did little to alter their views toward raising a family. The new domestic ideology, again like the old, regarded motherhood as the fulfillment of a woman's purpose. Young women had been prepared since an early age to accept the maternal ideal. At the same time, fatherhood provided a

⁵¹Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 319; Mary Washington (Cabell) Early Diary, September 28, 1876; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

⁵²Rable, Civil Wars, 271-72; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, March 11, 1867, Chaffin Family Papers; Censer, "Changing World of Work," 38-39; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 319.

way for men to validate their role as patriarch in the home and restore their masculine identity after the war. Birth rate patterns of a child every two years or so continued well into the 1870s. As historians of Confederate women have shown, only in the 1880s did the birth rate begin to drop. The willingness of couples to have children despite their financial woes suggests that the ideal of maternity remained influential. Eleanore Eulalie Fleming married her fiancé in 1866 and by 1868 they had their first child. Jeannette Garnett Ryland and Joseph Hardin Gwathmey began their family within the first year of their marriage. Judith Robertson Foster had four children in the ten years following their wedding.⁵³

Few women in the mid-nineteenth century South attempted to control their fertility. Some historians contend that the patriarchal structure of the South encouraged this phenomenon. A large family added to a husband's power in the home and reflected the prosperity of a family. Moreover, limiting the number of children contradicted traditional gender prescriptions that lauded motherhood. By the mid-1800s urban, middle-class women of the Northeast practiced birth control more than their southern sisters because of their desire for upward mobility; restricting the number of children placed less

⁵³Rable, Civil Wars, 272-73; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, October 25, 1867, Chaffin Family Papers; collection summary, Eleanor Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Jeannette Garnett (Ryland) Gwathmey Diary, October 9, 1875, Gwathmey Family Papers; Judith Ann Foster Memoirs; collection summary, Chamberlayne Family Papers. The incompleteness of family records makes it difficult to offer a broader assessment of birth patterns among middle- and upper-class young women.

economic strain on families attempting to improve their status. Northern feminists also advocated limiting family size out of concern for women's health. The "voluntary motherhood" campaign, however, won few converts in the South. Although contraceptive devices such as rubber condoms existed, few southerners used them. Abstinence served as the most reliable form of birth control but not many married couples in the South accepted this method. Breast-feeding became the most widely used form of birth control; it allowed women to postpone pregnancy for as long as two years while continuing to fulfill their role as nurturer. Yet, most women in the South continued to give birth as long as their bodies could withstand the physical hardships.⁵⁴

Those who married during the war typically waited until the conflict ended before starting a family. Between 1862 and 1866 the childbirth rate dropped significantly, less because of the use of birth control than because of the separation of couples. Many marriages between soldiers and their fiances occurred while they were home on a furlough and thus had to return to the battlefield. Many war brides therefore had few opportunities to become pregnant until after the war. Although Annie Jeter had the comfort of her family while her husband was at war, she had little choice but to wait until after the conflict to start a family since her husband was still at the front. Her experience was part of a broader pattern among war brides. The decline in pregnancies was temporary; as

⁵⁴Scott, Southern Lady, 39; Clinton, Other Civil War, 153-55; Sally G. McMillen, Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 107-108.

soldiers returned from the battlefield, the birth rate rose to its antebellum level.⁵⁵

Child-bearing imposed burdens that young women were well aware of even before marrying. Starting a family not only strained a young couple's budget but also increased the woman's domestic labors. During the war, Lucy Breckinridge wrote of motherhood as a difficult task that tested the patience and strength of women: "the children are constantly getting hurt, and crying and tearing their dresses, thereby keeping 'Mamma' miserable and busy." Nevertheless, she, like most of her female peers, viewed motherhood as a duty. Financial strains in the postwar period, however, sorely taxed the resources of young couples. To help defray the cost of raising children, young women often relied on family members for items such as clothing and furniture. Sarah Chaffin, for example, was unable to afford a new dress for her daughter's photograph and had to ask a relative for assistance. Frequent childbirth also strained the physical health of young women. Besides their expanded domestic duties, they endured the health risks that accompanied pregnancy and childbirth in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶

Despite their misgivings, young women tried to take a positive approach to motherhood. Many used the help of their mothers and older female kin to ease their concerns during pregnancy. Sally Foster McDonald, of Linden, Arkansas, spent the last

⁵⁵Rable, Civil Wars, 272; McMillen, Motherhood in the Old South, 107-108; Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs.

⁵⁶Rable, Civil Wars, 272; Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 124; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, April 21, 1869, April 6, 1873, Chaffin Family Papers; McMillen, Motherhood in the Old South, 54-56.

few months of her pregnancy with her mother in Alabama. Although the young woman had an uneventful pregnancy, she found that the familiarity of her childhood home and constant care from her mother helped ease her anxieties about giving birth. Some young women focused on their future as mothers as a way to alleviate their fears and misgivings. Harriot Wight was relieved to give birth after a difficult pregnancy and viewed her role as a mother as the reward for enduring the physical hardships. After giving birth, many young women celebrated by recording the births and sending announcements to friends and family.⁵⁷

Economic and social conditions during and after the Civil War altered courtship and marriage practices but did little to undermine young women's acceptance of the domestic and maternal ideals of southern femininity. At an early age they began their preparation for marriage and motherhood, and as the war began they continued to view these roles as the last phases of their growth into womanhood. The war temporarily called into question the likelihood of finding a husband and forced many young women to postpone marriage. The absence of male suitors also altered traditional courtship practices, allowing young women greater freedom in their choices and conduct. Although parents tried to regulate their daughters' choice in beaux, they found that conditions on the homefront often frustrated their attempts. And yet, while the war altered courtship practices, it did not change young women's world view. As the South entered the

⁵⁷McMillen, Motherhood in the Old South, 54-56; Sally Independence Foster Diary, October 1, 1871, February 25, 1872; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, October 25, 1867, Chaffin Family Papers.

postwar period, society turned to the home and family as a source of stability. In the face of economic and social upheavals, young women found comfort in the new-yet-traditional domestic ideology.

Beneath the surface, however, there were changes. The war and its aftermath diminished patriarchal hegemony. Amid economic and social upheavals, young women assumed greater responsibilities in the home. Although they continued to regard domesticity as a cornerstone of their feminine identity, young women achieved a self-reliance and self-sufficiency that transgressed the boundaries of the traditional gender order.

CHAPTER FIVE

SELF-SUFFICIENT DAUGHTERS: FAMILY AND WORK

The war transformed the structure of slaveholding families and the distribution of power in the home. At the outset of war, the absence of fathers and brothers altered gender roles in the household. Mothers assumed masculine roles traditionally held by their husbands, including provider and protector of the family. These duties conflicted with the image of the dependent southern woman. With their men away from the home, women learned to live without the reciprocal relationship between husbands and wives. Material hardships and relocation forced slaveholding families into a state of self-sufficiency and weakened the patriarchal grip on dependents. Daughters, who witnessed this transformation in the power relations between parents, became the beneficiaries of the new female independence.¹

The war ultimately altered young women's attitudes toward their role in the family and their view of work outside the home. Before the war, their age and class had allowed them to avoid wage-earning work and the household chores reserved for older kin and slaves. But the war transformed daughters' roles within the home and economic necessity propelled them into the southern workforce. As a result, they learned to function outside the patriarchal structure of the southern slaveholding family. Such self-reliance often

¹Henry Walker, "Power, Sex, and Gender Roles: The Transformation of an Alabama Planter Family During the Civil War," Clinton, ed., Southern Families at War, 175-188; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 51-52, 248-53; Scott, Southern Lady, 100-102.

became troublesome to parents who needed a daughter's support but resented the disruption of the traditional distribution of power in the family. By examining their experiences at school, in the home, and as refugees, this chapter will show how young women of the upper and middle class challenged notions of "proper" female behavior and adopted a different attitude toward women's roles in the home and women's wage-earning work. This new view of southern womanhood, furthermore, helped a generation of women adjust to the new social and economic landscape of the postwar South.

Scholars have debated how the Civil War transformed women's roles in and outside the home. Beginning with Ann Firor Scott in The Southern Lady, some have argued that the war was a watershed in women's lives. Others, such as Jonathan Wiener and George Rable, suggest that the war thrust women into new roles only temporarily. Taking into account age, however, complicates the story. Jane Turner Censer's study of elite women in postwar North Carolina posits that age determined how women's lives and beliefs were reshaped in the postwar era. Once their husbands returned from the war, older women embraced a new domestic ideology based on traditional gender roles. The shift from slave to free labor, furthermore, placed more of a burden on older women, who had relied on the assistance of slaves in their domestic chores. The younger generation, however, underwent a greater change in attitude toward family roles and paid employment. It was this generation that adjusted easily to domestic work without the aid of slaves and viewed employment outside the home as necessary for the family's survival.²

²Scott, Southern Lady, 107-109; Rable, Civil Wars, 254-55; Jane Turner Censer, "A Changing World of Work: North Carolina Elite Women, 1865-1895," North Carolina

Most young women spent a significant portion of the war without parental supervision. Many parents, worried that wartime disruptions would cause their daughters to fall behind in their education, went to great pains to send them to school during the war. Schools in the South remained open in those years and, in some cases, even saw an increase in enrollment. Parents thought schools provided a safe haven for daughters from the dangers of war, especially in areas under Union occupation.³

When economic hardships threatened to end a young woman's education, many parents made sacrifices. Ellen Cooper of Conway County, South Carolina, recalled that after she and her sister, Adie, finished the tenth grade they wanted to attend the Spartanburg Female College, but the family had insufficient money to send both. Her father decided to borrow the money from Cooper's older sister and brother-in-law, and the daughters agreed to pay it back after graduation. Jane Silvey also relied on outside sources for money for school. In 1864, her family experienced financial hardships that

Historical Review 73 (January 1996): 28-55. Suzanne Lebsack shows that only 9.5 percent of white women in Petersburg, Virginia were in the workforce on the eve of the war. Those involved in paid labor tended to come from poorer economic classes and worked solely out of economic necessity. Suzanne Lebsack, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1984), 185.

³Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 182; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 39; Lucy Blackwell Malone Reminiscences, Thompson Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

threatened to keep Silvey from attending school. In desperation Silvey's mother turned to her eldest brother for tuition and asked the headmaster to provide for her daughter's living expenses.⁴

When enemy armies came close to a school, parents feared for their daughters' safety and in many cases called them home. Mary Rawson, who attended Pine Hill Seminary in Atlanta, recorded that the boarders left the school as news of Sherman's impending arrival spread throughout the city. Some schools closed as the fighting made its way to southern communities. Sally Clayton recalled that by 1863 the enrollment in her school had dropped considerably. With too few students to keep the school open, administrators decided to allow the building to be used as a Confederate army hospital.⁵

Those who remained at home also found themselves separated from parents and older kin. The war took many fathers and brothers away from home and to army or government duties. Sarah Wadley's father, for example, served as a Confederate superintendent of railroads, which required him to leave home for about a month at a time. Sallie Walker's father was colonel of the 2nd Tennessee Regiment and was away from home for even longer stretches. Sallie Independence Foster watched her father and uncle

⁴Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; mother to Jane Silvey, February 26, 1864, Jane Silvey Papers.

⁵Sarah Lowe Journal, February 24, 25, 1862; Mary Rawson Diary, September 3, 1864, Rawson-Collier-Harris Family Papers, Atlanta History Center; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 66.

leave home after Union officials arrested them for aiding the Confederate army.⁶

Mothers also left the family for extended periods during the war. Some traveled to hospitals to serve as nurses while others went to care for sick or wounded relatives. Isabella Middleton Smith's mother spent time away from her family to care for relatives who had fallen ill, and after one of her sons was wounded in a battle she went to the hospital to nurse him back to health. Moreover, for at least the first year of the war, women of the upper and middle class continued the tradition of extended visits to faraway friends and relatives. Sarah Wadley's mother, for example, stayed with relatives for several weeks, leaving the children at home.⁷

A daughter in a single-parent household likewise faced the prospect of spending the war alone. Some young women were already familiar with the loss of a parent long before the war commenced. While many fathers and mothers remarried, some continued to run the home as a single parent. When the war began, daughters of single-parent homes were often left without the guidance of a father or mother. Sallie Walker, for example, whose mother had died before the war, was left at home with only her older

⁶Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 18, 1862; Sallie Walker Boone Memoirs, Civil War Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Sallie Independence Foster Diary, August 20, 22, 1862.

⁷Smith, et. al., Mason Smith Family Letters, 19; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December, 17, 1861.

siblings and several slaves while her father served in the Confederate army.⁸

Some daughters spent long periods of the war living as refugees with family friends or relatives. The threat of Union occupation or close proximity of battles prompted many parents to send their daughters away. Louisa Sheppard had to leave her family behind when military engagements threatened her home in Missouri. Anxious about her safety, Sheppard's parents sent her to live with relatives in Mississippi until they thought it was safe for her to return. Anna Cagdoll Howell of Nashville faced living without her parents after the governor recommended that all women and children leave the city following the surrender of Fort Donelson. Howell and her sister packed their clothes and a few valuables and went to live with relatives while their parents stayed behind. Sue Montgomery of Columbia, South Carolina, had to leave her home and parents behind when the news came that Sherman's troops were approaching the city.⁹

Other young women experienced refugee life with their family intact. As Union invasions threatened southern communities, many families of the slaveholding class left for a safer location. The possibility that slaves would leave for Union lines also prompted

⁸Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, May 20, 1864; Sue Richardson Diary, October 13, 1863, Special Collections Library, Emory University, Atlanta; Sallie Walker Boone Memoirs.

⁹Mary E. Massey, Refugee Life in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 15; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 37-39; Louisa Sheppard Recollections; Anna Cagdoll (Howell) Hollowell Diary, February 27, 1862; Sue Montgomery to Moultrie Wilson, undated (1865), Moultrie Wilson Papers.

many slaveholders to move their families further into the southern interior. With access to transportation and the financial means to relocate, parents packed up their families “black and white” and headed for what they saw as safer ground. Emma Cassandra Riely, for example, recalled that when her hometown of Winchester, Virginia, was threatened, the family gathered as many clothes and valuables as possible and moved in with friends in Luray. After Union troops occupied Atlanta, Mary Rawson’s family evacuated the city and reestablished their home in Iowa until the war ended. Sarah Wadley’s father helped his family make the move from Monroe, Louisiana, to Georgia after hearing that Union troops were approaching.¹⁰

Separation from parents and home caused anxiety among young women. For those at school, the physical distance from home along with the difficulty of receiving news from home led to concerns about the well-being of their families. When parents lived within Union lines there were problems in sending their daughters news from home as well as clothes and supplies. Daughters in occupied areas likewise found mail hard to send and often went weeks without a letter from their families.¹¹

Young women living away from home worried that their mothers and fathers might be in danger. Anna Cagdoll Howell’s parents, for example, sent her to live with an uncle after news of the surrender at Fort Donelson reached their home. Howell confided

¹⁰Massey, Refugee Life, 28-29; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 21-23; Mary Rawson Diary, September 8, 1864; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, September 22, 23, 1863.

¹¹Lucy Blackwell Malone Reminiscences; Massey, Refugee Life, 132-33.

to her diary that the idea of leaving her father and mother frightened her, especially as Union troops approached the city. While living with relatives, Elizabeth Pringle Smith “suffered from anxiety” over leaving her parents behind. Sue Montgomery also feared for her mother’s safety, knowing she would face Sherman’s troops in Columbia without her.¹²

Mothers in turn worried about the well-being of their daughters while separated from them. Foremost in their minds was the physical safety of their children. Emily Wight’s mother, for example, wrote that while her daughter traveled near Richmond she felt anxious about the possibility of her crossing paths with Union soldiers. Sallie Coles’s mother also expressed concern over her daughter’s being left home alone. Many mothers felt guilty about leaving their daughters behind without their guidance. They worried that in having to fend for themselves, and in many cases their younger siblings, their daughters would be deprived of the joys of youth.¹³

Many adolescent daughters dealt with the separation from loved ones by attempting to recreate a familial structure. Those who attended school often turned to their classmates to fill the void left by absent siblings. Expressions of deep devotion and love for another female student were common in the diaries and letters of schoolgirls.

¹²Anna Cagdoll (Howell) Hollowell Diary, February 27, 1862; Smith, Mason Smith Family Letters, 167-69; Sue Montgomery to Moultrie Wilson, undated (1865), Moultrie Wilson Papers.

¹³Margaret (Brown) Wight Diary, November 12, 1864, Wight Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society ; Sallie Coles Reminiscences, Mrs. Albert Rhett Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Massey, Refugee Life, 30-31.

While in some cases bonds between young women were substitutes for romantic relationships, many viewed their friends as sisters or part of a larger family. Lucy Blackwell recognized the “spirit of home” that the students helped to create with their friendships. Jealousy and rivalry between young women at school also illustrate the familial ties they attempted to create as a way to overcome their homesickness. In extreme cases of emergency, students looked to their headmaster or teachers to offer the same protection they would find from parents. If a military engagement came near the school, educators moved their students to a safer area. Teachers also guarded their female students from impropriety, especially in occupied areas. The teachers of Ellen Cooper, for example, restricted her guests to family members. If she left school, she had to go about under a teacher’s watchful eye.¹⁴

Students’ efforts recreated a family structure, however, only in regard to their relationships. Economic and material support remained primarily the duty of parents. As conditions worsened in southern communities and students found themselves cut off from family, they came to rely more on themselves to meet their needs.

Some daughters left at home without parental supervision also attempted to recreate a traditional family structure. Sallie Walker of Shelby County, Tennessee, was fourteen when the war began. After her father, a widower, became colonel of the 2nd Tennessee, Walker was left at home with only her sister, brother, and a number of house and field slaves. In adjusting to the absence of their father, the children redistributed

¹⁴Farnham, Education of a Southern Belle, 182; Lucy Blackwell Malone Reminiscences; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 39; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs.

duties within the home but without disrupting traditional gender roles. Walker's older sister, Maria, ran the household while her brother oversaw financial matters and plantation business. The young women in the Walker home, however, were forced once more to redistribute roles in the family when their brother turned seventeen and enlisted in the Confederate army.¹⁵

Many of the young women who spent time as refugees initially viewed the experience as exciting. When Sarah Wadley's family prepared to leave for their new home in Georgia, she felt fear over leaving her home behind. Once embarked on her journey, however, she was enchanted by the different environment she encountered and noted various unfamiliar plants and animals in her diary. Mary Rawson of Atlanta also took the opportunity to document the attractions and people she saw on her journey. Even as Rawson's parents struggled to maintain a household while traveling as refugees, the young woman enjoyed herself. When Louisa McCord's family joined the ranks of refugees, Louisa visited happily with family friends who accompanied them.¹⁶

The refugee experience also provided new opportunities for socializing. Most young women preferred to travel with family members or friends their own age, which allowed for some diversion from the tedium of relocating. While their parents labored to provide food, shelter, and transportation for the family, daughters often saw their travels as a way to make new friends and run within different social circles. Louisa McCord

¹⁵Sallie Walker Boone Memoirs.

¹⁶Massey, Refugee Life, 67; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, September 23, 1863; Mary Rawson Diary, September 17, 18, 1864; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

recalled living in a refugee household with several female peers who often spent their evenings laughing and gossiping about potential beaux. When McCord's mother decided to take the family on an extended visit to Charleston, South Carolina, to be near her sons, McCord and her sisters were excited about the prospect of seeing soldiers and attending social events in a new city. Mary Rawson's journey as a refugee required an extended boat ride during which she and the other young women aboard organized a dance. After Union officers ordered Emma Cassandra Riely's family to leave Luray, Virginia, her parents worried about where they would stay. But, Riely, along with the other female relatives her age, viewed the opportunity to travel with excitement. "We were rather elated at the prospect of seeing all our friends," she wrote.¹⁷

After living as refugees for an extended time, young women generally found the excitement diminished. Material hardships along with anxieties over Union occupation of their home made it difficult to maintain their enthusiasm. Moreover, many young women became homesick after the reality of refugee life set in. Ida Barlow began her refugee life enthusiastically, especially since she shared a room with a female cousin close to her age. Yet as the family moved around to escape the advancing enemy, Barlow's sense of adventure wore thin, especially when the family had to live off rations "just like the soldiers." Emma Cassandra Riely grew tired of refugee life, especially the dearth of food and clothing. When Riely and her sister first set out to move in with family, they saw it as a great opportunity to socialize with relatives their own age. But the longer she lived in

¹⁷Louisa McCord Smythe *Reminiscences*; Mary Rawson *Diary*, September 20, 1864; Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 21-23.

the refugee household the more she longed to return to the comforts of home. In desperation, Riely decided to organize a traveling party and acquire a wagon to return to her hometown without help from her parents or older sister.¹⁸

The experiences of young women at school, in the home, or as refugees eroded traditional standards of female behavior. The absence of parents from the home weakened the patriarchal structure of the household. Those at school learned to adapt to life away from the comforts of home and family. With their fathers and mothers gone, young women encountered a world in which they had to provide for themselves. The financial hardships and deprivation wrought by war forced daughters to assume new responsibilities in the home. Young women, however, were ill-prepared for the changes in their home life. While young women's education in the antebellum era emphasized domestic training, they generally relied on their parents or guardians to provide for their needs. Their parents, furthermore, took primary responsibility for the slaves so that daughters learned very little about their overall care or management. The war, however, changed young women's position in the home and propelled them into a number of new responsibilities that conflicted with the traditional distribution of roles in slaveholding families.¹⁹

With fathers and brothers off at war, many families found it difficult to maintain a household without the help of their adolescent daughters. When Cordelia Lewis Scales's

¹⁸Massey, Refugee Life, 125-26; Ida Barlow Trotter *Reminiscences*; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 32-51.

¹⁹Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 3-4; Davis, "Selective Memories of Civil War Atlanta," 85.

brothers joined the army, her parents were emotionally devastated and the young woman decided to leave school. "Duty prompts me to stay at home and do all in my power to cheer my parents," she wrote; "I have never seen two people break as fast as they have done since the boys left home." Although her parents insisted that she return to school, Scales believed that her proper place was at home and that, in any event, "with anxiety for my brothers and parents . . . there would not be very much studying done." Judith Foster's mother refused to let her daughter return to school after her older brother enlisted in the army. Her father had died when she was thirteen and the family relied on the eldest son to support the family. After her brother left, her mother's health declined and she felt obliged to stay home to care for mother as well as manage the household.²⁰

As mothers and fathers increasingly left the home, young women assumed new domestic responsibilities. Prior to the war, daughters typically took care of minor household chores, such as cleaning their rooms and helping with preserves, while their mothers oversaw major responsibilities such as planning meals, caring for children, and cleaning. Young women's domestic training emphasized specialty skills, such as needlework, baking, and gardening. The war, however, disrupted the traditional distribution of household duties. In the four years of war, young women learned the skills needed to manage a household without the traditional reliance on slave labor.

Especially when mothers were absent for extended periods, daughters assumed their mothers' housekeeping responsibilities. Myra Inman, for example, took on additional

²⁰Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, August 17, 1861, Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers; Judith Ann Foster Memoir.

chores while her mother was away visiting relatives. Moreover, when mothers and older female kin fell ill, young women took on the majority of the housework. Sue Richardson filled the role of housekeeper while her mother was bedridden for several days. Daughters also ran the household when slaves were sick. Frances La Rue of Clarke County, Virginia, found that with the maid ill and her temporary guardian unskilled in household duties, she had to do the cooking and cleaning. When Sarah Wadley's house servant fell ill while her mother was away visiting relatives, Wadley took over the duties of housecleaning and cooking for her younger siblings.²¹

The disintegration of slavery during the war increased young women's duties in the home. As slaves left for Union lines families relied more on daughters to act as housekeepers and cooks. Emma Cassandra Riely recalled that after an exodus of slaves from her plantation, only one house servant remained, placing the responsibilities of dusting, washing, and cooking on Riely and her sister. Sue Richardson's family moved their house slaves to the fields after several field hands left, forcing Sue and her mother to take over the housework. Louisa McCord also took on dusting and washing after several of her family slaves left for the Union lines.²²

Daughters also assumed the role of caretaker of children. The absence of mothers

²¹Snell, Myra Inman, 125, 148; Sue Richardson Diary, October 13, 20, 21, 22, 23, 1863; Frances James (La Rue) Dorsey Diary, September 14, 1863, Virginia Historical Society; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, July 19, 1864.

²²Rable, Civil Wars, 118-19; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 57; Sue Richardson Diary, April 21, 1864; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

along with the loss of slaves in the home forced young women to learn maternal responsibilities earlier than was customary. Caroline Mason cared for her two young sisters while her mother was away taking care of their wounded brother. The young woman woke the children each morning, fed and clothed them, and listened to them recite their school lessons. Louise Wigfall took care of her younger sister while her parents were absent from the home. While she was in charge of her sister's welfare, news of Sherman's army approaching Macon sent a wave of fear throughout the town. Gathering a few personal items, the young woman left with her young charge and sought temporary refuge with strangers.²³

Some young women found their new roles difficult. Housekeeping, cooking, and caring for younger siblings placed unaccustomed physical demands on daughters. When Louisa McCord and her sister, for example, took over the dusting and laundry after their slaves left, they complained about blisters and made many mistakes in cleaning the bedrooms.²⁴

In areas under Union occupation, daughters also found themselves in the role of protector of home and family. Rumors of Union atrocities contributed to their apprehensions about being a household of women. Fear of molestation or rape added to their anxieties about living among their occupiers. Sarah Wadley feared encountering

²³Smith, Mason Smith Family Letters, 159, 160-61; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 7, 1861; Wright, Southern Girl in '61, 201.

²⁴Rable, Civil Wars, 118-19; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 57; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

Union soldiers after hearing stories of their mistreating women and threatening them with bodily harm.²⁵

Many young women responded to these perceived dangers by learning to use a pistol. Fathers and other male kin in many cases entrusted daughters with a pistol and taught them how to use it. Very few young women who carried a gun expressed reservations about using it to protect the home. Alarmed by rumors of soldiers threatening and robbing women, Cordelia Scales of Holly Springs, Mississippi, armed herself with a pistol while Yankee troops occupied her community. Alice Ready became apprehensive about her family's safety after Union soldiers imprisoned her father. He had left his pistol with her and had taught her to use it. Ready felt a sense of empowerment carrying the pistol, and fantasized about using it. "I could do as David Crockett," she boasted, "pile their dead bodies at the door as they attempted to enter."²⁶

Some young women actually used their weapons in defense of family and home. Ellen Cooper of Conway County, South Carolina, used the family gun when Union army deserters attempted to break into her home. When one deserter began shooting at the house, Cooper grabbed her gun and fired back. After engaging in a brief exchange of fire, Cooper crawled into another room and hid from the men until they left.²⁷

²⁵Faust, Mothers of Invention, 198-201, 207-14; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, August 31, 1863.

²⁶Cordelia Scales to Loulie, October 29, 1862, Cordelia Scales Papers; Alice Ready Diary, March 11, April 30, 1862.

²⁷Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs.

Daughters also used other means of guarding the home from theft. With little, if any, male protection around, they felt obliged to protect their family's possessions when soldiers entered the home. They went to especially great lengths to protect the crops and food supply. While staying in a "refugee household" with her family, Ida Barlow came face to face with Union soldiers as they entered the house. Barlow had her aunt lie on a mattress, underneath which their food was hidden, and feign illness while Barlow pretended to nurse her. The ruse worked: the soldiers left without taking any of the family's rations.²⁸

Some young women found themselves defending the family home from destruction. Ellen Cooper exemplified the determination of young women to save their homes from fire and looting. When Union soldiers came looking for food and valuables, Cooper realized that they intended to destroy her family's property as well. When they set fire to the turpentine still, Cooper attempted to put it out. With the help of a male slave, she threw water on the fire and moved burning barrels away from the house to keep it from spreading.²⁹

Daughters also used ingenious methods to hide their valuables. Rumors of soldiers stealing gold and silver and other possessions prompted families to secure everything they could before soldiers entered their homes. With her father gone on government duty, Emmeline Allmand Crump's family scrambled to save their valuables from soldiers. Crump helped move their silver to a relative's home before Union troops occupied

²⁸Ida Barlow Trotter Reminiscences.

²⁹Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs.

Richmond in April 1865. Her mother placed her in charge of hiding the family gold, which she tucked beneath her clothing. When officers used Louisa McCord's home as a headquarters, she hid her jewelry and clothing in a bag she could easily conceal. Myra Inman sewed pockets in her chemise to save her jewelry and other items in anticipation of Union soldiers occupying her hometown.³⁰

Financial hardships beginning in the second year of the war also threatened the security of slaveholding families. The devaluing of Confederate currency made it harder for families to purchase crucial items for the household. The Union blockade kept merchants from adequately supplying their stores. Scarcity and currency devaluation led to enormous inflation despite government efforts to curtail rising costs. These economic problems affected primarily the poorer classes. Yet slaveholding families whose wealth was in land and slaves began to feel the pressure, too, particularly if their slaves ran off. Between 1860 and 1870 southern wealth declined 60 percent. In response, plantation households relied more and more on family members remaining at home to produce necessary items.³¹

Daughters played an especially important role in supplying clothing for the family and dependents. Many families relied on weaving to provide clothing. Young women, under the direction of their mothers or older female kin, learned the process of cloth

³⁰Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot, "The Evacuation of Richmond"; Louisa McCord Smythe *Reminiscences*; Snell, *Myra Inman*, 114.

³¹McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 437-42; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 45-51; Rable, *Civil Wars*, 92-95.

production. Eventually daughters became adept at making cloth and did it on their own. Sarah Wadley, for example, congratulated herself on producing cloth for the first time. Louisa Sheppard and her family likewise turned to weaving when the scarcity of clothing in her hometown made it hard to replenish her wardrobe. When Margaret Ridley's trunk of clothes was stolen, she had to rely on weaving in order to replace the items.³²

While their mothers generally set aside fashion concerns during the war, young women worried about new clothes. Interest in dress provided daughters with a distraction from the hardships of war and allowed them to put the skills they learned in the sewing societies to use. Susan Bradford found that serving in the local society improved her skills. Before the war, she, like many other young women of the upper and middle classes, had purchased their clothing and spent little time learning to sew beyond needlework. By the end of the war, however, she had learned to sew garments with ease and used her skills to make her own clothes. Ellen and Adie Cooper used their weaving and sewing skills to provide dresses for their school wardrobes. Other young women away at school learned to weave and sew their own clothes. Homespun garments, although coarse, were common among many female students. Susan Olivia Fleming also resorted to making her own clothes in an effort to keep up with fashion trends. During the war, young women continued to use hoops with their skirts. Since Fleming's family was unable to purchase hoops for her, she cut and scraped oak strips to make her own. Emma Cassandra Riely found that by altering a particular dress, she could supply an outfit for any social event:

³²Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, August 23, 1864; Louisa Sheppard Recollection; Margaret (Ridley) Gooch Memoirs.

My ingenuity was sorely taxed . . . as I had only one good dress . . .

I would appear one night with a choking collar and basque, with the basque tails put inside, and a belt. Third I would make a “V” neck by ripping off the collar; fourth, out would come the sleeves and then I would repeat each style in succession.³³

When the exigencies of war forced young women to assume greater responsibilities in the home, their newfound sense of self-reliance created tensions between family members. While parents needed their daughters to take on their roles in the home during their absence, they were not always willing to relinquish control. Daughters learned to manage the home and children yet parents often refused to grant them complete independence in making decisions concerning the household and family. Mothers especially worried that their daughters were unable to shoulder the burden of caring for younger siblings and managing finances. Isabella and Anna Smith, for example, had taken over their mother’s domestic duties in her absence. Although she admitted that her daughters would have to attend to their own needs, she refused to hand over complete control of certain decisions. In several letters, she set out detailed instructions on how to manage the household finances, what clothes to wear, which items to purchase for the home, and how to manage the slaves. While the two daughters welcomed the advice, they

³³Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 179; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 182; Susan “Livie” Olivia Fleming to Lalie, January 25, 1865, Eleanor Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 117-18.

frequently wrote their mother assuring her that they were managing the home with little difficulty. After living without parental supervision for over a month, they had gained a sense of autonomy that their mother found difficult to accept.³⁴

Daughters away at school experienced similar tensions with their parents. Although under the care of school officials, many received detailed letters instructing them on how to care for themselves and their money. While Jane Silvey attended school, her mother wrote frequently about how to manage her money. She also urged Silvey to focus on her education and be good to her teachers since she might not be able to return to school. Silvey's mother echoed many of the concerns other mothers expressed while separated from their daughters. What parents failed to recognize was that the war had cut their daughters off from the material and emotional support of family members. Left with only school officials and their peers, young women learned to manage their money and provide their clothing and other supplies while at school.³⁵

When fathers were away, many brothers felt it necessary to advise their sisters on family matters. While Isabella Smith managed the household during her mother's absence, her brother attempted to offer direction regarding household chores, which she resented in light of her new sense of self-reliance. After several instances in which her brother instructed her on how to handle the slaves, the tension came to a head. Isabella vented her frustrations to her mother: "he presumes to advise me about keeping the servants in order, assuring me that good temper is of the greatest importance." Eventually she retaliated:

³⁴Smith, et. al., Mason Smith Family Letters, 80-81, 86-87, 117-18.

³⁵Mother to Jane Silvey, October 22, 1863, Silvey Family Papers.

after witnessing her brother scold a slave, she decided to give him the same “lecture.”

While Jane Silvey attended school, her brother and an older male cousin offered advice on matters such as her study habits and behavior in class. Silvey’s brother worried that his sister would lose interest in her studies with all the war excitement. Like many other older kin, he wanted his sister to excel at school so that she would be able to support herself if necessary after the war.³⁶

The changing economic landscape of the Confederacy also propelled women into new roles outside the home. Most women of the upper and middle class resisted working for wages in the first year of the war. Work outside the home conflicted with the ideal image of the elite southern woman, whose work was supposed to remain solely within the domestic arena. Yet scarcity and inflation forced many to find jobs. Moreover, the dearth of men on the homefront created a void in a number of positions. Southern society accommodated women’s entrance into paid employment by encouraging their participation in certain jobs, such as teaching, nursing, and clerking. Southerners increasingly accepted women into these occupations because they were seen as an extension of women’s domestic and maternal roles.³⁷

Daughters followed their mothers into the world of paid employment, but with greater ease. Because those coming of age during the war were free from marital and

³⁶Smith, et. al., Mason Smith Family Letters, 117-18; Cousin to Jane Silvey, March 12, 1863, Willie to Jane Silvey, November 12, 1863, Silvey Family Papers.

³⁷McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 437-42; Rable, Civil Wars, 121-35; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 80-113.

maternal constraints, they could more readily take jobs to help the family. Moreover, young women were suited for jobs in areas such as teaching and clerking since they were educated.³⁸

The Confederate Treasury Department provided many daughters with the opportunity to work. With few men available, government officials turned to women to fill positions. Although women held a number of jobs in the Post Office, Quartermaster Department, office of the Commissary General, and elsewhere, their main source of government employment was the Treasury Department. Their duties included signing bank notes and cutting sheets of currency. In some cases, government work helped provide money for tuition as well as to supplement the family income. Emily Wight went to work after completing her education in Richmond. By 1864, economic setbacks left the family with little income, and Wight felt a duty to help her family. She took an appointment in the Treasury Department making \$4,000 a year.³⁹

Working in a government department posed little threat to their “proper” role as women of the upper and middle classes. Government officials enforced traditional female subservience. Most of the women found themselves in low-level clerking positions with little, if any, opportunity for advancement. Young women, furthermore, received considerably lower wages than their male counterparts. The inequalities in pay and promotion grew out of the officials’ attitude that women’s presence in the government

³⁸Faust, Mothers of Invention, 86-92; mother to Jane Silvey, February 26, 1865, Silvey Family Papers.

³⁹Faust, Mothers of Invention, 88; Wight Diary, October 29, 1864.

workforce was only temporary as well as their belief in female inferiority. Work in the Treasury Department also reinforced, in a sense, the young women's elite status. The skills required of a clerk included reading and writing well, skills that few women outside the elite class could boast of. Moreover, many young women secured their government positions with the help of letters of recommendation from people of influence.⁴⁰

Teaching offered the best opportunities for paid employment. As men left for the battlefield, school administrators faced a shortage of teachers and thus called on women to fill teaching posts. Southern education leaders recognized the need to train young women to teach both male and female students and thus a movement to restructure female education in the South began. Female seminaries and institutes that had previously served as "finishing schools" became training grounds for future teachers. Wartime curriculum in the schools focused more on reading, math, grammar, history, and philosophy. Since many young women of the middle and upper class continued their education during the war, they took full advantage of the changes to the curriculum. The great demand for teachers along with the changes in female education during the war allowed many young women to move into teaching positions with greater ease than those of the preceding generation.⁴¹

Many young women found opportunities for teaching in informal neighborhood schools or in homes as a private tutor. As regular schools struggled to remain open, parents increasingly relied on their older daughters to teach younger children at home or

⁴⁰Faust, Mothers of Invention, 90-91; Rable, Civil Wars, 131-32.

⁴¹Faust, Mothers of Invention, 86-88.

called on other young women in the neighborhood. Caroline Mason, for example, taught her two siblings in the morning before heading off for school. At her father's request, Susan Bradford taught her neighbor's young sons two hours each morning before attending to her own studies. Such home and community teaching served as training for many young women who later took jobs in regular schools or began schools of their own. While Louisa Sheppard was home from school, she taught her aunt's two children. After word spread throughout her neighborhood, Sheppard's class increased to more than twenty students.⁴²

Jobs in established schools offered more benefits for a young teacher, including a better salary with more job security. Moreover, the income and board allowed young women to ease the financial burdens their families experienced during the war. When Ellen and Addie Cooper finished their education they found jobs teaching in order to help their parents pay back the debt they had incurred for tuition. Those young women who married during the war found that teaching offered a regular salary to supplement the expenses of a new household. Newly-married Nettie Lucas, determined "not to be a burden" to her husband, took a teaching job in a local school where she received \$100 each session.⁴³

Some daughters expressed apprehension about entering the world of paid

⁴²Smith, et. al., Mason Smith Family Letters, 164-65; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 182; Louisa Sheppard Recollections.

⁴³Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; mother to Emma Lucas, February 28, 1864, Lucas-Ashley Family Papers.

employment. Louisa McLaurin, for example, feared that teaching might change her character for the worse. Parents likewise had doubts about their daughters' going to work outside the home, for it challenged traditional gender and class ideals. Parents viewed marriage and motherhood as the final points in their daughters' maturation and frowned on any activity that would interfere with those achievements.⁴⁴

Although young women of the Civil War entered the teaching labor force with greater ease than their mother's generation had, they experienced some of the old problems as a result of their class and gender. Especially in situations where they taught a large number of boys, young women had difficulty asserting their authority. Sarah Wadley struggled to teach her younger male relatives, who often refused to read or listen to her lessons. On one occasion, a young scholar refused to acknowledge her as the teacher and began questioning her intelligence and teaching ability. Wadley, who had been afraid to assert any authority over the boy, now began to punish him. He eventually submitted to her and took her instructions. Louisa Sheppard likewise confronted problems teaching male students, especially those close to her age. She recalled one such student who refused to remove his hat in class and kept the students "in an uproar with his pranks." When he refused to obey Sheppard's requests to remove his hat, the young teacher reprimanded him in front of the class and noted that "it completely quelled young Joe to

⁴⁴Louisa McLaurin Diary, February 2, 1861; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 86-87; Rable, Civil Wars, 129-30.

be laughed at instead of with.”⁴⁵

When the war ended, southern society expected women to return to their former roles in the home. As fathers and brothers came home, they set out to reclaim their authority in the household. For women of the older generations, the transition back to their former lives came easy. Before the war, these women had been fully engaged as wives and mothers and had relied on their husband’s paternalism. They did not, as a rule, protest the resumption of that relationship after the war’s end.⁴⁶

Although women willingly accepted a return to prewar gender roles and relations, they found the shift fraught with difficulty. The loss of slaves and other property forced many to seek new sources of income. Many returning husbands were physically or emotionally wounded and unable to return to work, and thus relied on support from family members. Furthermore, financial hardships in the postwar period hindered many younger husbands who were in the early stages of establishing their business or plantation; consequently, they needed the help of their new wives in running the family enterprise.⁴⁷

As young women entered adulthood, they accepted the increase in domestic responsibilities caused by the loss of slaves. Having assumed new roles in the home in

⁴⁵Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, February 4, June 5, 1863; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 86-88; Rable, Civil Wars, 131; Louisa Sheppard Recollections.

⁴⁶Censer, “Changing World of Work,” 30-33; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 253-54; Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 146-47.

⁴⁷Censer, “Changing World of Work,” 52-53; Scott, Southern Lady, 107; Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 133-34.

wartime, they faced the demands of a home without slave labor with greater equanimity than did their mothers and older female kin. Emma Hodge, for example, lived with her aunt and uncle after the war while finishing her education away from home. During her stay, she assumed the duties of maid and cook, her aunt having proved unable to handle those unaccustomed duties. Olin Davis, living with her parents after the war, took over the duties of the departed house slaves. During the war, she had learned how to garden, prepare food, and clean the home, which proved useful for the family during their hard times in the postwar period. Susan Bradford, whose house had once had a large slave workforce, similarly took over many housekeeping chores.⁴⁸

Some found changes in their domestic responsibilities too daunting and were glad to get slaves to help with household chores. Families who had financial means to hire outside help often did so, which freed many young women from taking on additional housework. Maria Smith Peek seemed relieved that her family hired a servant to cook and clean after the war ended. With tongue in cheek, she admitted how easy life had become since the hired servant began working: "I flatter myself I am an excellent housekeeper, if making someone else do all the work is considered a good requisite."⁴⁹

Although young women had mixed reactions to the changes in their domestic responsibilities, they continued to show ingenuity in providing material goods for the

⁴⁸Emma Hodge Diary, January 6, 1868; Olin Davis to mother, April 16, 1874, Beale-Davis Family Papers; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 309-10.

⁴⁹Maria Smith Peek Marrow to Daniel Marrow, September 19, 1865, Marrow Family Papers.

family. Economic difficulties in the postwar South forced many families to continue relying on household production, especially in providing clothes. Supplying a wardrobe with new dresses or skirt for many young women meant calling on the sewing and weaving skills they had learned during the war. Susan Bradford understood that her family's economic hardships after the war kept her from purchasing new clothes. She continued to be resourceful in providing clothes and "remodeled" her older sister's dresses to look new.⁵⁰

Daughters of the planter class also contributed to the household economy by assisting with farm work. With the loss of slave labor and the transition to paid labor, some families relied on the help of all their members in running the plantation. For many young women, this was a familiar chore since they had watched their mothers and older female kin manage the plantation during the war. Those who married in the postwar period found their skills useful as their husbands struggled to establish themselves as planters amid downturns in the postwar southern economy. Olin Davis, for example, who had watched her mother help with the family farm during the war, played an important role during the years after in preparing and planting the cornfields. While her father had attended to his ministry, he had left his wife in charge of preparing the corn for sale, which entailed shucking it and storing it in barrels. When Davis married, her own farm became an enterprise where husband and wife worked together in complementary roles to earn an

⁵⁰Susan "Livie" Olivia Fleming to Lalie, August 29, 1872, Eleanor Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 291, 298-99.

income.⁵¹

Young women also helped oversee laborers. Although they usually had stayed clear of managing the slaves in the antebellum period, daughters understood the basic relationship between mistress and servant. They saw in their parents a model for managing a labor force. Moreover, left to tend the home in their parents' absence, young women had gained more responsibilities in caring and directing slaves, particularly those in the home. In the postwar period, young women's skills in managing a labor force were needed as families worked together to run the plantation. Susan Olivia Fleming, for example, took charge of paying the day laborers on her family's cotton plantation. Olin Davis took control of the labor force on the farm she ran with her husband. In many of her letters, she detailed the directions she gave the workers for preparing the fields and planting.⁵²

Household production provided young women with other opportunities to supplement their income. Susan Olivia Fleming and her family experienced hard times after the war and could afford very little beyond basic necessities. By the early 1870s, her family had once again focused their energies on their cotton plantation and hired African-

⁵¹Censer, "Changing World of Work," 35-36; Scott, Southern Lady, 106-10; Olin Davis to J.W.C. Davis, November 27, 1868, Olin Davis to mother, April 16, 1874, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

⁵²Censer, "Changing World of Work," 38; Susan "Livie" Olivia Fleming to Lalie, August 29, 1872, Eleanore Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers; Olin Davis to mother, April 16, 1874, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

American day laborers to help in the field. Fleming, who was in her early twenties, began making clothes to sell to the workers and their families. Her income proved crucial after a caterpillar outbreak destroyed the crop. In addition to sewing, the young woman also made frames and vases.⁵³

A few young women worked out of their home as writers for newspapers and magazines. Mary Washington Cabell worked as a special correspondent for a Richmond newspaper. Writing from her home in Lynchburg, Virginia, Cabell recalled her experiences and those of other Virginians for a special series on life during the war. Perhaps the best-known female writer was Frances Christine Fisher of North Carolina, who published several novels such as Valerie Aylmer (1870) and Morton House (1871). Using the pen name Christian Reid, the young woman found success as a writer by drawing on her experiences as a daughter of an elite planter. Moreover, writing allowed Fisher to help support her family after her father's death in the Civil War.⁵⁴

The need to work in the postwar era allowed many young women to continue teaching. Younger women tended to keep or seek jobs in education more than women from the preceding generation. Older women usually returned to their traditional role within the home after the war and refrained from paid employment outside the domestic

⁵³Susan "Livie" Olivia Fleming to Lalie, August 29, 1872, Eleanore Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers.

⁵⁴Censer, "Changing World of Work," 40-41; Mary Washington Cabell Early, "The New Women of Virginia," Early Family Papers; Richard Walser, Literary North Carolina (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970), 27.

setting. However, many daughters who had received an education during the war and held jobs as teachers in formal and informal schools found teaching a desirable profession. Those who married after the war also viewed teaching as a suitable way to provide for the family while their husbands established themselves in their profession.⁵⁵

Most young women who taught continued to view teaching as a rewarding job and enjoyed the opportunity to work. Elizabeth Waties Allston detested the idea of her mother taking in boarders after Union soldiers had destroyed the family's rice plantation during the war. But when her mother decided to open a school, Allston felt excited over the prospect of teaching and confided to her diary that she had "longed for active employment either of mind or body." With a school of twenty boarders and twenty-five day scholars, Allston enjoyed her work and, after some initial nervousness, she felt at ease in the classroom. Ellen Cooper chose to continue teaching once her tuition debt to her brother-in-law and sister was paid off. Even after her marriage in 1869, Cooper continued to teach until she gave birth to her first child. She saw teaching as a way to help purchase items for her new home.⁵⁶

Teaching also served, for some, as a suitable alternative to marriage in the postwar period. With a large portion of the male population killed during the war, young women had fewer marital opportunities than earlier generations. Southern society in the postwar

⁵⁵Farnham, Education of the Southern Belle, 183; Censer, "Changing World of Work," 44-52; Rable, Civil Wars, 277-80; Scott, Southern Lady, 110-12.

⁵⁶Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, December 31, 1865, January 1, May 2, 1866; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs.

period still viewed marriage as the proper goal for women. Yet some daughters delayed marriage in order to find a suitable husband. Others put off marriage until their beaux had gained some measure of financial security. Teaching also allowed a young woman to put off marriage in order to help supplement her family's income and provided her with opportunities to stay close to home. Thus, unmarried Nannie Davis lived with her parents while working as a school teacher and contributed her earnings to the family income. Elizabeth Waties Allston also lived with her mother during her tenure as a teacher. Allston, who was entering her twenties when she took up teaching, was unattached and used the money she earned to help her hard-pressed family.⁵⁷

In 1878, Mary Washington (Cabell) Early wrote an article in which she explored what she called the greatest transition the women of her generation made during the Civil War. Reflecting on her own life in the Confederacy and the lives of other young women who came of age during the war, she concluded that their experiences had left them with a new sense of self. "Nowadays they [women] are often called on to think and decide and act for themselves," she wrote, "hence they are much more self-reliant than formerly, and in conduct as well as conversation take a much more decided stand." Yet Early did not argue that the war had prompted a revolution in women's attitudes toward their roles in and outside the family. She regarded the women of her generation as strong and resilient but also "feminine" and "domestic." This description of the "new woman" was an

⁵⁷Censer, "Changing World of Work," 50-52; Nannie Davis to J.W.C. Davis, March 29, 1876; Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, December 31, 1865, January 1, May 2, 1866.

insightful characterization of young women who had come of age during the war. The new woman accepted most traditional notions of femininity but adopted new attitudes toward women's capabilities.⁵⁸

Although Early stopped short of calling the war a watershed in women's lives, she acknowledged that the war transformed traditional attitudes toward family and work. Members of the female generation reaching womanhood during the war experienced a disruption of family life that forced them to become self-sufficient daughters. With their fathers and mothers absent for long periods of time, young women could not rely on the traditional paternalistic relationships of the slaveholding family. Whether alone or with their families during the war, young women became skilled in domestic duties formerly reserved for older women and slaves. They learned to clean, cook, care for children, and protect the household. Young women also played an essential role in providing financial assistance for the family. While parents sometimes resisted their daughters' independence in making decisions concerning the home and family, they understood that they had little choice but to entrust their daughters with adult responsibilities. Thanks to their wartime experiences, young women faced the postwar period with greater confidence than the preceding generation. Young women's new attitudes toward work in and outside the home allowed them to adapt to the transformed social and economic landscape of the postwar South.

⁵⁸Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, "The Women of New Virginia," Early Family Papers.

CHAPTER SIX

“OUR STRENGTH, OUR DEPENDENCE IS GONE”: RACE RELATIONS

War and emancipation changed the structure of slaveholding families. As young women came to terms with the absence of fathers and brothers, they also confronted the departure of slaves from the home. Union military presence in the South and Lincoln's eventual Emancipation Proclamation were, for the slaves, the answer to a prayer, giving them the opportunity to break free from bondage. Yet for southern daughters the freedom of their slaves held a different meaning. The disintegration of slavery temporarily eroded the racial and class boundaries that separated daughters of slaveholding families from African Americans and poor whites.

Kate Foster exemplified the varied emotions young women experienced as they watched the nurses who had raised them and the slaves they had played with as children leave for freedom. “Good riddance,” Foster declared after a favorite household slave joined his family in a Union camp, “he is too lazy to work for himself and the biggest liar I ever knew.” Foster, however, confided to her diary her wish that all the slaves would remain loyal to the family; “for if they are not,” she wrote, “I shall lose entire faith in the whole race.” In the young woman's view those who stayed with the family were testimony to the benevolence of paternalism and those who left were victims of malign Union influence. Only after the close of the war did Foster finally confront the reality that the slaves she had considered part of her family valued freedom more than the South's

“peculiar institution.”¹

The relationship between mistresses and slaves has garnered much attention from historians of Confederate women. George Rable and Drew Gilpin Faust show how the war brought women into the role of plantation manager and changed their relationship with slaves. At the same time, the war forced women to confront the disintegration of the “peculiar institution” that had afforded them their status. Rable, however, contends that many women secretly welcomed emancipation because it freed them from the physical labor and economic burden of maintaining the slaves. Faust, on the other hand, emphasizes how women relied on their slaves’ assistance during periods of material deprivation and felt betrayed when slaves ran away.²

Studies of elite and middle-class women in the postwar South document themes of continuity and change in race relations. Lee Ann Whites argues that such women continued to uphold the southern racial order and helped reinstate white supremacy. But freed men and women refused to relinquish their autonomy and resisted attempts to control their social, political, and economic activities. Laura Edwards provides a brief discussion of elite women’s reactions to emancipation in Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore. Edwards, like Whites, shows women’s efforts to help restore white, male

¹Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 5-6; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (New York: Alfred Knopf Press, 1970), chapters 1 and 3, passim; Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore, 179-81; Kate D. Foster Diary, July 16, 1863.

²Rable, Civil Wars, 115-20; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 53-79.

authority. Yet Edwards suggests that the domestic, in addition to the civic, arena became a place where women helped to reestablish racial boundaries. Although Edwards's assertion adds a new dimension to the historiography of southern women after the war, she refrains from a more detailed examination of how women went about establishing a racial hierarchy in their homes. What emerges from these studies, nonetheless, is a fuller understanding of the intersection of race and gender in the Civil War South.³

Although historians have examined the changing relationship between mistresses and slaves in wartime, few focus on children of slaveholding families. James Marten provides a brief discussion of the relationship between white children and their slaves during the war. Yet his scope is limited to younger children, leaving a gap in the understanding of wartime race relations. Marten, furthermore, fails to consider gender in children's responses to the changing status of slaves.⁴

³Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 127-31; Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 179-81. Other historians approach the Civil War era through the perspective of African Americans. Clarence Mohr, Leon Litwack, and Leslie Schwalm, for example, examine the transition from slavery to freedom during and after the war, showing the distinctive approach that slaves took to war and emancipation. See Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long; Clarence Mohr, On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Leslie Schwalm, A Hard Fight For We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁴Marten, Children's Civil War, 221-33.

Daughters coming of age during the Civil War viewed the emancipation of slaves and the postwar racial order ambivalently. They clung to the paternalistic ideals of slavery they had learned as children; but the willingness of slaves to escape to freedom and the material deprivations and economic difficulties families experienced during the war weakened young women's support for slavery. Although the domestic skills they learned during the war helped them adjust to emancipation more easily than their older female kin, young women found themselves caught between the traditions of the Old South and the new status of African Americans in the postwar period. As southern communities adjusted to the freedom of former slaves, many young women again embraced paternalistic ideals in their relationships with blacks. The conflicts that emerged in the Reconstruction South, however, prevented the reestablishment of familial bonds with African Americans. Young women eventually replaced paternalism with a harsher treatment of African Americans, protested Reconstruction measures that aided blacks, and supported efforts of elite men to restore white supremacy.

Even before the secession crisis gripped the South, young women began to worry about the stability of slavery. Rumors of slave insurrections circulated through southern communities after the 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in which an armed band of abolitionists led by John Brown seized a federal armory in hopes of sparking a slave rebellion. Although Brown's plan failed, the raid fueled white southerners' fear of a northern conspiracy against slavery and led them to question the loyalty of African Americans to their masters. When Louisa McCord returned from an extended trip overseas, she learned of the attempted revolt. As she listened to her brother and mother

discuss the possibility of a similar incident in their community, McCord became anxious about her family's safety. For Jennie Chambers, a school girl in Harper's Ferry, the raid signified nothing less than the beginning of Armageddon. Chambers encountered the raid in progress on her way to school. Seeing men in the streets brandishing guns, the young woman ran home to warn her mother, fearing all the while that one of the "evil" abolitionists her parents had told her about would jump out from behind a tree and attack her. "They were cannibals, for all I knew," she wrote, "like the Hessians, of whom I had been reading in history." After the raid, Chambers recalled, the relationship between slaves and masters changed: "masters were uneasy" and believed that "the slaves were not as reliable as before."⁵

After Lincoln's election and the secession of southern states that followed, concerns about slave insurrections increased. Sarah "Sally" Clayton recalled that anxieties ran high as talk of war circulated among Atlanta citizens. The young woman and many of her female peers grew increasingly fearful that the slaves of the city would attempt an uprising. One evening on their way to a concert, she and her friends crouched down in the carriage "like frightened hares" out of fear of an attack.⁶

⁵Paul Finkelman, ed., His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Raid (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Jenny Chambers, "What a School-Girl Saw of John Brown's Raid," Harper's 104 (January 1902): 311-18.

⁶Rable, Civil Wars, 117; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 119; Davis, Requiem for a Lost City, 32-33.

As they listened to their parents discuss the possibility of slave revolts, young women contemplated their relationship with their own slaves. Susan Bradford, whose family owned more than one hundred slaves, remarked that a “horrible. horrible time . . . has come to us,” adding that “we feel that we can trust none of the dear black folks who, before this, we had relied on at every turn.” She was afraid to speak to the slaves “for fear it will prove just what should have been left unsaid,” and she wondered anxiously if “the people we have always loved [will] put the torch to our homes and murder us when we seek to escape.”⁷

After the war began, young women continued to express concern about possible rebellions but also managed in some ways to reassure themselves. The close physical contact between women and slaves in the domestic sphere and the paternalistic ideals of the slaveholding class created a sense of familial closeness with household slaves. Many young women from slaveholding families had developed a great fondness for the nannies, cooks, and other slaves in their homes and sincerely sought to be kind to them. (Slaves, however, rarely felt the same familial bond with their master and his family. Female slaves in particular experienced a double burden of caring for their master’s children as well as their own, which fueled resentment over their roles as nannies and nurses.) Elizabeth Collier, for example, believed that teaching her family’s slaves “something about God” would ease tensions on the plantation. Having witnessed many of her family’s slaves leave for a Union army camp, she hoped the religious lessons would keep others from doing the

⁷ Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 119.

same.⁸

Holiday celebrations and weddings for the slaves encouraged young women's faith in the paternalistic bonds between slaves and their owners. Sarah Wadley believed that her father's willingness to arrange a Christmas celebration for the slaves underscored what she saw as familial ties between slaves and masters. Sue Richardson boasted of the Easter celebration that her family provided for the slaves and interpreted their enjoyment as a sign of loyalty.⁹

Many young women also helped their mothers nurse sick or injured slaves. Myra Inman described caring for Stephney after another slave accidentally cut some of his fingers off with an ax. She spent several evenings bathing and dressing the wounds, and kept watch over him. Mary Fries Patterson spent several evenings caring for a slave child who was ill. After the youngster died, Patterson prepared the corpse for burial and attended the funeral service.¹⁰

As the war progressed, the presence of Union soldiers in southern communities eroded the slaveholders' control over their slaves. Lucy Blackwell Malone watched more than one hundred slaves on her father's plantation leave with Union soldiers who passed through her neighborhood. Sally Independence Foster learned that several field hands had

⁸Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 129-45; Elizabeth Collier Diary, March 6, 1865.

⁹Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, December 26, 1862; Sue Richardson Diary, March 31, 1864.

¹⁰Snell, Myra Inman, 154-55; Mary Fries Patterson Diary, May 12, 1864.

run away to Union camps in Florence, Alabama. Sarah Wadley found that the longer Yankee soldiers remained in her community of Monroe, Louisiana, the more slaves attempted to escape.¹¹

Young women struggled to come to terms with the changing status of slaves. Rather than admit that their slaves had renounced the “benevolent” institution of slavery, many slaveholders chose to blame outside forces. In particular, slaveholders believed that Union soldiers forced slaves to leave against their will. Young women used the same rationalization but created new ones as well. Sarah Wadley explained away her household slaves’ departure by blaming Union soldiers and “the false idea of freedom” they promised the slaves. Amanda Worthington believed that the Union presence in her town “demoralized” her family’s slaves by tempting them to leave the plantation. Sally Independence Foster saw the slaves who chose to leave as victims of coercion rather than willing seekers of freedom. She accused Union soldiers of “taking” or “stealing” the slaves from their home. When Union soldiers failed as an excuse for the loss of slaves, Foster turned to other rationales. When one of her family’s slaves left to “go fishing” and was still gone after several days, she dismissed reports that he had run off and instead assured herself that he had drowned.¹²

Many young women were stunned by their slaves’ flight. Bettie Alexander could

¹¹Lucy Blackwell Malone Reminiscences; Sally Independence Foster Diary, August 22, 1862, November 3, 1863; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, April 11, 1864.

¹²Ash, When the Yankees Came, 157; Foster Diary, August 11, 23, 25, 26, 1862; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, April 11, 1864; Amanda Worthington Diary, June 10, 1863.

scarcely believe that her slaves ran away when Union troops occupied her community. Her shock and sense of betrayal turned to anger when she learned that one of her favorite household slaves was among those who escaped. She saw the fugitives as traitors, insisting that “the country is very well rid of some of them.” Sarah Wadley was likewise surprised that many of her family’s slaves left when Union soldiers occupied Monroe. After hearing rumors of poor conditions in the contraband camp, she told herself smugly that the blacks would soon see that they were better off as slaves. “The negroes say that they have to eat in the ditch,” she wrote, “when they are sick the Yankees . . . do not give them any medicine . . . they have a guard over every twenty four negroes.”¹³

Many slaveholding families had little choice but to give up their slaves. Material deprivation and the devaluation of currency stripped some slave owners of the means to provide for slaves and forced them to let some of their slaves leave or to hire them out. As Sarah Wadley’s family prepared to seek refuge in Georgia, her father gave the slaves the choice of going with her brother or with the Union soldiers. Jane Silvey’s father hired out his remaining slaves to the Confederate army because he could not afford to support both them and his family.¹⁴

Young women resented the loss of their slaves because it added to their domestic labor. In the absence of their parents, they relied on the assistance of their slaves. When

¹³Bettie Alexander to sister, January 13, 1862, Bettie Alexander Papers; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, April 15, 1864, July 13, 1862.

¹⁴Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, August 29, 1863; mother to Jane Silvey, February 26, 1865, Silvey Family Letters.

the slaves began to leave, young women took on their chores, which they found physically demanding. Emma Florence LeConte realized that she could no longer rely on the only household servant who remained after the fall of Columbia, South Carolina, to Union troops: “[I]f Jane offers to clean up our room, all very well,” she wrote, “if not, we do it ourselves.” Sarah Wadley found that taking over her mother’s duties along with the tasks of her former slaves was difficult. Amanda Worthington also complained about added domestic chores after several slaves left with Union soldiers passing through Washington County, Mississippi.¹⁵

Young women, however, had little choice but to adjust to the increased demands. The loss of slaves combined with the absence of mothers and older female kin in the home forced southern daughters to learn skills traditionally done by menials or reserved for older, married women. Sue Richardson and Emma Cassandra Riley, for example, learned the task of housekeeper after their slaves left the plantation. Richardson and her mother managed the home without help from their slaves. When her mother experienced health problems during the war, Richardson oversaw all the domestic chores. Riley likewise gained new skills in cooking, dusting, and washing after her slaves left. With her mother absent from the home, Riley had little choice but to assume the role of housekeeper. Although young women resented the increase in their domestic duties, they adjusted to their new responsibilities by acquiring slaves’ skills altogether unfamiliar to elite women

¹⁵LeConte, When the World Ended, 54; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, July 19, 1864; Amanda Worthington Diary, June 10, 1863.

and by learning household management earlier than was customary.¹⁶

Some daughters were sad over losing their household slaves. They felt genuine affection toward those who had raised them and those they had played with in childhood. Alice Ready lamented the loss of two household slaves who left with Union soldiers: “I feel as if the family was broken up.” When Isabella Smith learned that her mother had asked the maid to leave, she became upset over losing the servant who had nursed her as a baby.¹⁷

Young women viewed slaves who remained on the plantation as faithful members of the family. Emma Florence LeConte lauded the behavior of the slave Henry as Union troops in Columbia brought the opportunity for freedom. She recorded that although Henry’s wife and children were preparing to leave with Union soldiers, he assured the family that he would remain unless the soldiers threatened his life. Pauline DeCaradeuc praised the loyalty of her house slaves as Union soldiers looted her home. One slave, Solomon, chose to face a soldier’s gun rather than disclose the whereabouts of the DeCaradeuc gold and silver. “Solomon is as true to us as steel,” DeCaradeuc wrote gratefully, “so are they all, all faithful and friends to us.”¹⁸

¹⁶Rable, Civil Wars, 118-19; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 57; Sue Richardson Diary, April 21, 1864.

¹⁷Alice Ready Diary, April 30, 1862; Smith, et. al., Mason-Smith Family Letters, 150.

¹⁸LeConte, When the World Ended, 53-54; DeCaradeuc, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 67.

The slaves' decision to remain often had little to do with loyalty, however. For some, the uncertainty of life beyond the plantation was a consideration. Elizabeth Waties Allston learned that, given the choice, her family's slaves preferred to remain on the plantation.

You want to know what the negroes think of the war. I think the generality of negroes in the neighborhood are nearly scared to death they think now that the North are trying to take them and sell them. Some of ours say they would rather stay with the master they have as to be taken to some other man they did not know anything about.

Others chose to stay because they took pity on their mistress who was left to fend for the family in her husband's absence.¹⁹

Acts of kindness performed by slaves reinforced young women's belief in slave loyalty. Some slaves showed compassion toward their mistresses as food became scarce and as Union invasion threatened to dislocate families. When the sacking of Columbia left Emma LeConte and her family with barely enough provisions to survive, their slaves willingly gave food. "The negroes are very kind and faithful," LeConte wrote, "they have supplied us with meat and Jane brought Mother some rice and crushed sugar for Carrie. . . . How times change! Those whom we have so long fed and cared for now help us." Sue Richardson's family likewise ran short of food after soldiers destroyed their crops, and

¹⁹Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary, March 27, 1862; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 180-81.

thus they turned to their slaves for help. Anna Green noted her slaves' loyalty not only to her family but to the Confederate cause as well. When one slave gave her own shoes to a Confederate soldier, Green proclaimed with satisfaction that "if the Yankees knew of . . . one of our negroes doing that act of kindness to a soldier and because he was a Confederate soldier they might feel a little less kindly to our servants than they pretend."²⁰

As the war went on, however, such manifestations of loyalty were overshadowed by whites' concern for the survival of slavery. The growing instability of the South's racial order created in young women a sense of anger toward and fear of African Americans, especially those outside the "family white and black." Anxiety over slave revolts intensified among young women left at home without the protection of their mothers and fathers. Myra Inman, whose father had died before the war, worried about her family's safety after an uncle informed her of rumors of a planned slave uprising in Cleveland, Tennessee. In the occupied city of New Orleans, Clara Solomon felt vulnerable to slave unrest with her father away on business. She confided to her diary that she feared the slaves more than the Union army. Oranie Virginia Snead recalled that after Union soldiers raided her community in Fluvanna County, Virginia, she grew increasingly concerned about the slaves. "We realized that we were in the lines of the enemy," she wrote, "and worse still on a large plantation of negroes suddenly inflated with the prospect

²⁰LeConte, When the World Ended, 41; Sue Richardson Diary, October 11, 1864; Green, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 65.

of freedom.”²¹

As the war progressed, some young women questioned the desirability of slavery. While their mothers and fathers continued to rely on the labor of slaves, young women saw their presence as the source of their family’s anxieties. Alice Ready noted her father’s worries about keeping his slaves away from Union troops. Seeing her home broken up and her family subjected to hardships, she came to see slavery as the cause. “I should be very willing to do without the slaves,” she declared in her diary, “I am not willing to have them taken from me, but would gladly see them all free, if this war ended with it.” Lucy Breckinridge also saw slavery as a “troublesome institution” and secretly wished that “for the sake of the masters . . . it could be abolished in Virginia.” Kate Foster believed that without the responsibilities of maintaining slaves, southerners could concentrate more on the war. “Let the foe take all our negroes,” she argued, “they are welcome to them and the sooner we are rid of them the quicker we will whip our enemy.”²²

The increased economic burdens of maintaining their slaves also caused some young women’s support for slavery to wane. Sue Richardson, for example, grew increasingly concerned that her family could no longer support their slaves. When several

²¹Faust, Mothers of Invention, 57-60; Snell, Myra Inman, 96-97; Ashkenazi, Diary of Clara Solomon, 355; Oranie Virginia (Snead) Hatcher Memoir, Virginia Historical Society.

²²Rable, Civil Wars, 118-19; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 72-73; Alice Ready Diary, March 22, 1862; Robertson, Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill, 35-36; Kate Foster Diary, July 28, 1863.

slaves returned from working on another plantation, Richardson confided to her diary that they had little food to give them. To help ease the financial strains, Richardson's mother chose to lend the slaves to another plantation.²³

As slavery grew more unstable, slaveholders attempted to preserve their control over blacks. White citizens in occupied communities witnessed former slaves asserting their independence, which to them signified the demise of social order. Southerners everywhere took steps to limit the freedom and mobility of blacks. Home guards, for example, established early in the conflict under the guise of protecting citizens, became a tool in controlling slaves. While the old paternalistic order persisted on plantations in areas spared enemy invasion, southerners adopted a different view of African Americans outside the family. White southerners replaced their paternalistic ideals with more severe notions.²⁴

Young women resented blacks' attempts to assert their autonomy. Reports of individual acts of rebellion against masters signified to young women that the traditional racial order of their society was falling apart. Pauline DeCaradeuc heard stories that she regarded as proof that without slavery African Americans would abuse their former masters and mistresses:

The ladies whom circumstances unhappily compelled to take the oath of allegiance to Lincoln, had to sign it before a Negro man, one

²³Sue Richardson Diary, December 3, 1863, January 2, November 2, 1864.

²⁴Mohr, On the Threshold of Freedom, 20-67; Ash, When the Yankees Came, 156-

lady's hand trembled whilst she was writing, and the impudent demon--perhaps fresh from a cotton plantation,--had the audacity to take her hand and hold it down, while talking most insolently and abominably the while.

Attending church, Kate Foster angrily witnessed a former slave attempting to take a seat among the white members of the congregation. She blamed his boldness on the influence of Union soldiers: "I should not be surprised if some one of our enemies had sent him the church as an insult to us."²⁵

Sixteen-year-old Alice Williamson also expressed disgust with the newly freed slaves in her hometown. After Union troops occupied Gallatin, Tennessee, northern humanitarians established a school there for freed men and women. As the daughter of a slaveholding family, Williams had absorbed the paternalistic lessons her parents taught her about slavery. But after the Yankees came, Williamson renounced her familial approach to race relations. When a regiment of east Tennessee Unionist soldiers garrisoning the post clashed violently with local African Americans, Williamson lauded their treatment of the freed people, remarking that "the soldiers are behaving very well I do not suppose the negroes think so." The presence of the Yankee teachers added to Williamson's disdain for the blacks in her community. On one occasion, when the head of the freedmen's school came to her classroom asking for benches, Williamson and her classmates indignantly

²⁵DeCaradeuc, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 34; Kate Foster Diary, July 28, 1863.

hurled a bench outside in protest.²⁶

Young women especially resented the presence of black soldiers in their communities. Some feared that African American troops would entice their slaves to revolt. Susan Bradford grew uneasy when a black unit marched through her community, believing that seeing armed African Americans would provoke her slaves to leave, or even attack her family. Judith Ann Foster recalled that the presence of black soldiers during a Union raid on her community frightened her so much that she hid her valuables and refused to leave her home when they asked to search it. Cloe Tyler Whittle felt resentment, which she directed toward the Union government, over seeing African-American soldiers in her hometown of Norfolk, Virginia. “Yankees in their insolence and wickedness,” she wrote, “have armed the negroes. A regiment of them have come to pollute Norfolk with their detested presence.”²⁷

After Lee’s surrender, southerners had to come to terms with the collapse of slavery. Throughout the South, whites who still retained their slaves were forced to tell them that they were free to leave. Many blacks chose to remain with their former masters and sign labor contracts while others left in search of family members or new opportunities. Caroline Mason watched her uncle inform their slaves that they could leave the plantation or stay and work under contract. Susan Bradford’s family had a harder time letting their slaves leave. Bradford’s father announced that they were free to go, but her

²⁶Alice Williamson Diary, May 3, 4, 16, August 16, 1864, Perkins Library.

²⁷Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 273; Judith Ann Foster Memoir; Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Greene Diary, July 12, 1863.

mother refused to acknowledge her loss of authority, informing one servant that if she left then she would not hire her as a paid servant.²⁸

Young women varied in their reactions to African Americans in freedom. Like many other southerners, daughters believed that their former slaves could not survive outside the authority of whites. But they eventually had to accept emancipation as they witnessed freed men and women seek educational opportunities, change their names, and reunite with family members. Young women responded to the changing status of blacks with both regret and resentment. And as state and federal Reconstruction policies attempted to ensure the social, political, and economic freedom of the former slaves, young women began to see blacks in the community as a threat to white authority.²⁹

Young women scoffed at the idea that their former slaves should enjoy the same freedoms as southern whites. After two freedmen took her family's last name, Caroline Mason lamented that her name would no longer be "spotless." She had a difficult time accepting the new status of blacks and saw their prospects in freedom as grim. Like all her peers, Mason refused to acknowledge former slaves as equals. "Sometimes the idea is so ludicrous that I can't help laughing," she wrote, "and then again it is so dreadful, when I think of our old cook sitting up in the drawing room entertaining company." When Pauline DeCaradeuc confronted a regiment of black soldiers returning from war,

²⁸Sue Richardson Diary, May 12, 14, 1865; Smith, ed., Mason Smith Family Letters, 225-26; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 284-85.

²⁹Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 128; Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 173; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 255.

she could hardly contain her anger about what she saw as an affront to white society. “I felt every imaginable emotion upon seeing them,” she confessed, “they, who two or three months ago were our respectful slaves, were there as impertinent as possible . . . it was all like a pandemonium of black demons, so intense was the noise and confusion.”³⁰

Parents added to young women’s concerns over the changing status of African Americans and its implications for southern whites. Susan Bradford’s mother warned her that their former slaves might seek retribution against the family. Susan believed she saw this threat materialize one evening when Frances, a house servant who continued to work in the Bradford home after the war, came into her former mistress’s room and poured chloroform on her pillow as she slept. When Bradford’s mother awoke, she demanded that Frances leave the plantation. Bradford’s parents grew increasingly fearful that their former slaves would attempt to harm members of the family and required Susan to have a male escort when away from home.³¹

The end of slavery coupled with southern defeat caused some young women to lash out at their former slaves. Seeing blacks rejoice in the Confederacy’s defeat exacerbated young women’s resentment. Susan Bradford, for example, never used violence against her family’s blacks until after the war. Soon after news of Lee’s surrender swept through her community, field hands on the Bradford plantation gathered

³⁰Smith, ed., Mason Smith Family Letters, 187-88, 225-26; Robertson, Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 79.

³¹Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 255; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 286, 333-34.

to celebrate. Eventually the celebration moved toward the Big House, where the blacks openly sang about hanging Jefferson Davis. As they made their way to Bradford's porch, the young woman became frightened. When she heard what they were singing, her fright turned to anger. Grabbing a whip, she emerged from the house screaming at the blacks and lashed at them until they dispersed.³²

While young women begrudged the slaves their freedom, some also felt regret over losing the nurses, nannies, and playmates they knew from childhood. Bradford was happy to see her former house servant, Frances, leave the plantation but lamented the departure of her nannie and maid, Lulu. Even when Lulu boldly approached Susan's mother to tell her she was taking her daughter to live with family members in the Union camp near the plantation, Bradford continued to see her as a member of the larger family. Bradford's mother eventually told Lulu that she would have to leave the plantation herself if she took her daughter away. When the former nanny eventually left the plantation never to return, Bradford was upset at her mother. Louisa McCord likewise felt some sadness over losing Marianne, her childhood nanny. McCord expressed unhappiness about how the "spirit of freedom" had affected her but, despite her misgivings, visited the woman's home. After Sally Independence Foster's father announced to the slaves that they were free, the family retained a few as hired domestics. Those who remained were among the slaves whom Foster had known during childhood. When her former nanny Louisiana died three years after the war, Foster recorded her grief over losing someone she considered part of the larger plantation family: "A dear, good, faithful servant of ours died . . . she used to

³²Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 279-80.

watch over me when I was a child. and make all my doll's clothes for me . . . alas! She has gone, but she told me to meet her in that bright home above." Myra Inman likewise grieved over losing two household slaves she had known throughout her childhood, noting that "it seems as though two grandparents had left us."³³

Despite young women's ambivalence about the loss of their slaves, they proved more adept than their older female kin in adjusting to a home without maids, cooks, or nannies. Wives and mothers had been accustomed to slaves caring for the home and children. Daughters, however, free from the responsibilities of wife and mother, had never come to rely on slaves to the same degree. After emancipation, older women found themselves facing life without the accustomed help of slaves. They took on new chores, such as cooking and cleaning, that often proved daunting. Gertrude Thomas, for example, complained of the new demands on her in the home and was forced to recognize the extent to which she had come to depend on the assistance of slaves; she had been called to cook and clean up after meals only a few times in her life before emancipation. Kate Stone likewise recognized that taking care of the home was new work for her and regarded such tasks as degrading to a woman of her class. Although adult women eventually adjusted to their new domestic responsibilities, they found the transition fraught

³³Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 284-85; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Sally Independence Foster Diary, August 31, 1868; Snell, Myra Inman, 331.

with difficulty.³⁴

Young women, who had learned new domestic skills during the war, found life without slaves less troublesome. These skills proved useful in the postwar period. As they grew into adulthood and became wives and mothers, young women called on their wartime experiences to aid them in their transition. Their mothers lamented the loss of slaves in managing a large home, but daughters had come of age in a time when slavery was tenuous and had learned during the war to accept the added domestic labor. Olin Davis, for one, grew accustomed to the increased demands. Having taken over cooking, cleaning, and gardening during the war proved useful when Davis set up her own household after her marriage. Susan Bradford likewise had assumed the responsibilities of her house slaves after they escaped the plantation during the war. When she married in 1866, Bradford called on her wartime experiences to help in maintaining her own home and family. Young women who remained with their parents often stepped into new roles when their mothers and older female kin found the loss of slaves unbearable. Living with her elderly aunt and uncle, Kate Foster took on the responsibilities of cleaning and cooking to help ease the burden on her aunt, who found her new domestic responsibilities

³⁴Censer, "Changing World of Work," 30-34; Rable, Civil Wars, 255-56; Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 172-73; Virginia Ingraham Burr, ed., The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 272; John Q. Anderson, ed., Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 372-73.

overwhelming.³⁵

Although young women accepted their new duties, they had difficulty embracing the freedom of African Americans. Southern daughters held fast to the traditions of paternalism in their relationships with African Americans, but the political, economic, and social environment of the Reconstruction South undermined the familial relationships they attempted to reestablish with servants. As African Americans' asserted themselves with the aid of radical state and federal government measures, many young women replaced their paternalistic vision of race relations with a more severe approach.

Race relations in the South had always been a public concern. Political leaders in the antebellum era had created laws to ensure blacks' submission. The war had spurred more such efforts. As the war ended and efforts began to reconstruct the former Confederate states and bring them back into the Union, race took center stage in politics. When African Americans gained new rights through the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments, southern whites grew alarmed and used black codes, intimidation, and violence to force freed men and women into a state of semi-servitude. Young women also attempted to establish control over their former slaves in the realm of their domestic and private lives.³⁶

³⁵Censer, "Changing World of Work," 34-35; Olin Davis to mother, April 16, 1874, Beale-Davis Family Papers; Eppes, Through Some Eventful Years, 309-10; Kate D. Foster Diary, March 12, 1868.

³⁶Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 173-74; Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion, 185-86.

As young women entered adulthood and began to establish their own households, some sought the assistance of maids or cooks. Although used to the increase in their domestic labor, many young women still felt insecure about their abilities as a wife and mother. Some hired one or two domestics, if their economic situation allowed, to assist in the housekeeping. After Annie Jeter's wedding, she employed a few African-American women to help ease the strain of running a plantation household. Maria Smith Peek joked that her abilities as a housekeeper improved after her husband hired a maid to help. Some young women turned to their former nurses and nannies when seeking domestic help. Louisa Sheppard recalled that after the birth of her first child, she decided to hire her former nanny to care for the infant. Louisa McCord Smythe hired a former house slave to work in her home; she felt comfortable asking the freedman to work for her, for she had known him since her childhood.³⁷

Many young women could not hire help because of financial difficulties. Emma Cassandra Riely and her family had little money to pay the one maid they hired after the war. Like many other women in the postwar South, she took on most of the household responsibilities rather than ask her maid to work longer hours. Caroline Mason was happy that some household slaves chose to stay on her plantation under contract, but she soon recognized the financial strain of keeping them. By the end of 1865, her family could no longer afford them and eventually asked them to leave the plantation. Plagued by money

³⁷Annie Jeter Caramouche Memoirs; Maria Smith Peek to Daniel Marrow, September 19, 1865, Marrow Family Papers; Louisa Sheppard Recollections; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections.

problems, Kate Foster refused to hire a maid even after complaining about housekeeping: “we must be honest even if we die in the attempt--no more debts if I can help it.”³⁸

Life without slaves provoked an identity conflict in many young women. As members of the slaveholding class, elite and middle-class women had stood above poor-white and African-American women. Having black servants to cook, clean, and care for the children not only made slaveholding women’s lives easier but also reinforced class and racial divisions among all women. Emancipation destroyed this traditional form of class distinction and sent elite and middle-class women searching for new ways to distinguish themselves from their social inferiors. Many young women shared with their mothers a disdain for housework not because of the labor itself, but because they perceived it as the work of black or poor-white women. Kate Foster, for example, had learned new domestic skills during the war and continued to care for the home after the war ended. Yet she struggled with the class implications of taking over the duties her slaves once performed, admitting that “it is hard to come down to a level with a servant.”³⁹

The home became a setting in which young women attempted to reestablish white authority and reaffirm class differences. In their relationship with their maids they tried to recreate the traditional mistress/slave relationship, asserting their authority over their domestics and expecting complete subservience in return. Some resurrected the old

³⁸Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 57; Smith, ed., Mason Smith Family Papers, 225-26, 252; Kate D. Foster Diary, March 12, 1868.

³⁹Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore, 173; Kate D. Foster Diary, March 12, 1868.

paternalistic ideals in managing hired labor. Louisa McCord Smythe, for example, recalled that after hiring one of her former slaves after she married, she treated him as part of the larger family. She encouraged her children to call him “Pa” and regarded him as “a faithful protector.” Yet paternalism could not disguise the essence of the mistress/servant relationship. While they regarded their workers in familial terms, young women were basically attempting to establish their dominance as the matriarch of the family.⁴⁰

Changes in the postwar period, however, forced young women to alter the model of the mistress/slave relationship they had learned from their mothers. While remnants of paternalism survived the Civil War, emancipation changed how young women interacted with their laborers. Many of those who married after the war found themselves in charge of a free labor force, which required them to take on new roles as employers. Many young women negotiated wages with their employees, a duty theretofore reserved for men, and in some cases they negotiated labor contracts. Eleanore Eulalie Fleming, for one, took charge of recording wages and distributing them to her small labor force. Southern daughters, who as adolescents had had little understanding of slave management, also took on the responsibility of overseeing laborers in the fields. Olin Davis, for example, quickly learned how to give orders to her field workers and thereafter expertly directed them in planting, cultivating, and harvesting the crop. Moreover, economic strains in the postwar period forced some young women to work alongside their hired

⁴⁰Rable, Civil Wars, 252-54; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections.

labor in the fields.⁴¹

The conflict between the old and new in young women's households often led to friction with hired help. When domestics protested or ignored orders, young women saw them as impudent and untrustworthy. Many believed that, as freed people, blacks were dishonest and unwilling to work. Louisa McCord Smythe complained that her maids stole food from the family and refused to follow her instructions. Mary Gibson Chamberlayne confided to her mother that she had trouble asserting authority over her hired help. Chamberlayne's frustrations stemmed from her refusal to see her workers as free; she continued to treat them as though they were still in slavery. Kate Foster distrusted African Americans in freedom and thus advised her peers to refrain from hiring domestics. After a neighbor complained of items missing from her home, Foster blamed the maid, insisting that "the servant has proven what Pa and I felt her to be, a dishonest woman."⁴²

The political and civic arenas became the primary settings in which southern whites attempted to restore the traditional racial ordering of society. Former slaveholders perceived the new legal, political, and economic rights of African Americans as a threat to

⁴¹Rable, Civil Wars, 252-54; Censer, "Changing World of Work," 38; Susan "Livie" Olivia Fleming to Lalie, August 29, 1872, Eleanore Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers; Olin Davis to mother, April 16, 1874, Beale-Davis Family Papers.

⁴²Mother to Sallie Rowan Saufley, May 13, 1867, Sally Rowan Saufley Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Mary Walker Gibson Chamberlayne to mother, August, 1874, Chamberlayne Family Papers; Kate D. Foster Diary, February 5, 1872.

their attempts to reestablish their power after the war. Under Presidential Reconstruction, suffrage was restored to most former Confederates, while black codes and forced labor contracts allowed former slaveholders to retain economic power over blacks. But the rising power of radical Republicans in Congress threatened the South's resurgent elite. In response, elite southern whites began a campaign to limit the newly acquired rights of African Americans. White women especially saw a double meaning in the attempts to suppress blacks: while restoring white supremacy based on the authority of elite men it would also allow fathers and husbands to restore their masculine identity in the wake of defeat.⁴³

The importance of Reconstruction politics in young women's lives was evident foremost in their personal letters and diaries. In these intimate writings, young women expressed concern over the changing status of African Americans, expressed their views on Reconstruction policies, villainized Republican politicians, and lauded southerners who attempted to restore white authority and force former slaves to submit.⁴⁴

As they witnessed increasing racial discord and even violence, young women became more vocal in their opposition to radical policies. Like other white southerners,

⁴³Foner, Reconstruction, 183-84, 199-201, 342-43; Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion, 184-217.

⁴⁴Smith, ed., Mason Smith Family Papers, 252, 254, 263; Harrie Hale Patton to Mollie (Simmons) Patton, October 8, 1865, Harrie Hale Patton Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 126-27.

they denounced blacks and white Republican politicians who sought racial equality. Anna Maria Green, for example, feared that black suffrage would provoke a race war. “Indeed it seems impossible for the white men to submit to negro rule,” she wrote. “It is certainly a distressing state of affairs when negroes hold conventions in our state and indeed have every right of suffrage and civil power.”⁴⁵

Many young women blamed southern white Republicans for what they saw as social chaos and tyranny. Louisa McCord Smythe viewed the dismissal of professors from South Carolina College as part of a Republican conspiracy to subjugate former southern leaders. She also blamed “politicians and schoolmarms who came from ‘down East’” for the violent racial confrontations in Charleston. Smythe believed that blacks were pawns of southern white Republicans who, in her view, promised freedmen economic opportunities in exchange for retaliating against their former masters. Annie Jeter Caramouche, whose husband owned a large plantation after the war, believed that southern white Republicans encouraged African Americans to defy their former masters. The efforts of the Freedmen’s Bureau to aid former slaves in negotiating labor contracts and establishing schools signified a transition in race relations that horrified Caramouche and many of her peers. “Some of the atrocities committed by the colored people--generally some low white man at the head--were terrible,” she wrote, “especially when they had ‘The Freedman’s Bureau’ to back them.”⁴⁶

Most young women believed that African Americans were incapable of exercising

⁴⁵Bonner, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 126-27.

⁴⁶Louisa McCord Smythe Recollections; Annie Jeter Caramouche Reminiscences.

the vote wisely. The idea that their former slaves possessed the same political rights as white men infuriated young women. Annie Harper of Jefferson County, Mississippi, believed that black suffrage was the “worst mistake of the Republicans.” “Every old man who could take to the polls, hastened to perform the act,” she wrote, “of which they comprehended nothing.” When blacks in her community refused to vote as elite whites demanded, Harper’s resentment toward their newfound political power grew. She supported southern whites’ efforts to campaign among African Americans, believing that splitting the black vote would ensure the victory of “respectable” Republican candidates who would help restore the political hegemony of southern elites. Eventually, like many other southerners, Harper came to view the Democratic party as the only hope for restoring racial order:

Were [freedmen] to turn Democrats the white man must be Republican or be subject to negro rule again. Restrict the franchise or distribute the negro gradually in the West until the black majority is overcome in every state or the white man can never vote as he wishes.⁴⁷

Young women were also aware of the consequences of national Reconstruction policies. Some resented what they saw as the subjugation of their white male counterparts to federal authority. Following the end of the war, some young women watched Union soldiers harass their fiancés, fathers, and other male kin who were suspected of supporting the Confederacy. When Maria Smith Peek learned that an African-American soldier had

⁴⁷Foner, Reconstruction, 291-92, 343-44; Annie E. Harper Reminiscences, Annie E. Harper Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

taken a friend of hers into custody she called the incident as “exceedingly exasperating” and deemed her friend “very unfortunate to have been subjected to such indignity.” Sarah Chaffin faulted General Ulysses S. Grant and the Republican party for denying her brother a position in his administration. “Brother Edwin was grossly deceived by General Grant,” she wrote, “when he went finally to get the papers drawn up Grant told him if he would turn Radical he should command the position.” In Chaffin’s view, Grant exemplified what she saw as the corrupt nature of Republican politics. Moreover, Chaffin argued that denying her brother a position that would provide a steady income was an example of how northerners intended to strip southern white men of their economic power.⁴⁸

As elite white southerners grew increasingly angry at the Republican regimes in Washington and the southern states, they attempted to restore their power through extralegal means, including terrorism by the Ku Klux Klan, the Red Shirts, and the White Leagues. These armed bodies used violent tactics to keep blacks from voting and to break up Republican political rallies. Southern men who supported such violence often couched their arguments in gendered terms. Without order, they argued, white women would be vulnerable to the sexual advances of freedmen.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Foner, *Reconstruction*, 171-84; Sutherland, *Very Violent Rebel*, 190; Maria Smith Peek to Daniel Marrow, May 21, 1865, Marrow Family Papers; Sarah Chaffin to Harriot Wight, March 22, 1874, Chaffin Family Papers.

⁴⁹Foner, *Reconstruction*, 342-43; Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xx-xxi, 136; Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*, 216-17.

Many young women supported such terrorism. Louisa McCord Smythe, for example, blamed blacks and white Republicans in South Carolina for the unrest in her state and praised the formation of vigilante organizations to restore racial order. "The disturbances were quieted by the show of determination made by the whites," she recalled, "the negroes and their instigators knew that if once the fight began there would be no mercy." Annie Harper of Mississippi supported similar efforts to eliminate what she viewed as "black rule" in her state. She blamed African Americans for the often violent racial confrontations: "These collisions," she wrote, "were always occasioned by unexpected negro assaults, the whites avoided bloodshed if possible."⁵⁰

As their husbands, fathers, and brothers joined organizations devoted to overthrowing Republican rule, young women manifested a degree of civic involvement by providing emotional and material support. During the 1876 election in South Carolina, for example, white men formed rifle clubs that disrupted Republican speeches and rallies. Louisa McCord Smythe, who lived in Charleston, helped her husband and other members of the local rifle company by giving them food and supplies, which reminded her of women's activities during the war. "Everything was systematized," she wrote, "even to feeding them when on duty but everything was done with the most absolute quiet. I only remember a note would come to me occasionally requesting me to have so many sandwiches and so much coffee ready at such an hour."⁵¹

Racial tensions in the Reconstruction South further complicated the relationship

⁵⁰Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Annie E. Harper Reminiscences.

⁵¹Foner, Reconstruction, 574-75; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

between young women and their hired help. Although Smythe often included freedmen in her condemnation of Republican rule in South Carolina, she saw her own workers as willing allies in the campaign to restore the authority of their former masters. The remains of paternalism lingered in the minds of southerners such as Smythe, who believed her laborers were merely pawns of the Radical Republican rulers in the South: "Poor things they were in a pitiful position between two fires. They knew that their interest and their affections lay with the white people, and yet they were obliged often to pretend to what they didn't feel." Annie Harper's resentment toward African Americans was aimed only at those outside her domestic sphere. During the 1876 election campaign, she believed that the workers on her estate would vote as her father wished.⁵²

The 1870s brought a retreat from Reconstruction. By 1872, most southern white men had regained the vote. Popular support among northerners for Reconstruction waned in the wake of the economic crisis that began in 1873. With the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, furthermore, many advocates of racial equality believed that their work was completed. By the time Grant left office in 1877, Democrats had taken control of eight of the eleven former Confederate states. When Rutherford B. Hayes assumed the presidency following the Compromise of 1877, he brought about the end of Reconstruction by refusing to intervene any further in the South with military force.⁵³

The generation of women who came of age during the war viewed the end of

⁵²Louisa McCord Smythe *Reminiscences*; Annie E. Harper *Reminiscences*.

⁵³William Gillette, Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Foner, Reconstruction, 575-87.

Reconstruction with optimism. These southern daughters, most of them now wives and mothers with young children, had helped their male counterparts to restore the traditional racial ordering of society and now believed they were embarking on a new era in their lives. Annie Harper recorded her thoughts on the close of Reconstruction and its implication for southern families: "The rebound of a body," she wrote, "is in proportion to the force which struck it. There is no doubt of the strength of the blow which has stunned us and if we carry out the principle, we shall soar very high." Yet Harper refrained from discussing the costs of restoring white supremacy. After Democrats regained power in the southern states, they began undermining the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. While Harper viewed the New South hopefully, African Americans saw their political, social, and economic rights diminish.⁵⁴

The end of slavery forced young women to alter their understanding of race relations. As daughters of slaveholding families, they had grown up with the sense that their slaves were part of the larger household. Wartime circumstances sometimes drew young women closer to their slaves, as they depended on them during periods of material deprivation. The paternalism of these young women was, however, called into question as they watched their former nannies, nurses, and playmates escape to freedom. Moreover, as the war dragged on, economic hardships undermined their support for slavery. By the end of the war, young women had learned to depend on their own efforts rather than the assistance of slaves.

⁵⁴Foner, Reconstruction, 587-601; Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 181-82; Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 211-12; Annie E. Harper Reminiscences.

As their former slaves asserted their independence and exercised new political and economic freedoms in the postwar South, young women took a different approach to race relations. Although they found it difficult to relinquish their paternalistic ideals, most young women endeavored to reconstruct the racial hierarchy based on a harsher, less familial view of blacks. Acting out their new approach to race relations within their private and domestic lives, young women became active participants rather than observers in the effort to reshape their world.

EPILOGUE

A GENERATION REMEMBERED

Four long years of war left a deep imprint on a generation of women. As memories began to fade with time, many women wrote reminiscences of their life on the homefront. Employing Lost Cause rhetoric and traditional ideals of womanhood, these former daughters of the Confederacy attempted to relate the story of their experiences to future generations. Louisa McCord Smythe exemplified the war generation's memory of the cause, course, and outcome of the Civil War. For Smythe, protecting a way of life rather than slavery was the foremost reason why the South seceded and went to war. Women, in Smythe's view, held a special responsibility to care for the soldiers who risked their lives in defense of southern liberties. When the war ended, southern men and women attempted to return to their traditional way of life, yet found obstacles at every turn when radical Republicans took control of state governments in the South. According to Smythe, the Confederate cause was a glorious one and its defeat was followed by a tragic period in southern history.¹

This story of the wartime South was a tale woven by white southerners still reeling from the economic hardships and social changes brought about by the war. In many respects the memories of young elite women of the war generation were similar to those of their older female kin. But Smythe's story stood out from the many reminiscences published around the turn of the century because of her sense that the conflict had altered

¹Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

her life forever. She and other women who came of age during the war were also distinguished by a belief that they were a special generation unlike those that came before and after them. Age as much as gender influenced how these daughters of slaveholding families chose to remember the war. Their memories helped them to come to terms with what they had gone through during the war and Reconstruction.

Other historians have examined the significance of age in shaping one's memory of war. William Tuttle argues in his study of children during World War II that the events of one's childhood shape one's views of politics, society, and family in adulthood. Times of crisis, such as economic depression and war, leave an especially lasting impression on a generation. Like Tuttle, James Marten examines how the experiences of children in wartime shape their world view as adults, but he shows also how children became important figures in the public remembrance of the Civil War. In the rhetoric of the Lost Cause, children, especially the orphans of soldiers killed in battle, exemplified the sacrifices southerners made in their fight for independence.²

Yet Marten and Tuttle overlook how notions of masculinity and femininity helped to shape the memorialization of war. Men became the heroes of war while women took on the image of the nurturers of the Confederacy. Young women of the war generation, especially, remembered their experiences in gendered terms. Themes of courtship, youth, and patriotism characterized their recollection of the war. Adolescent daughters, furthermore, attained a unique place in the ideology of the Lost Cause that reflected not

²Tuttle, Daddy's Gone to War, 15, 254; Marten, Children's Civil War, 187-242.

only their age but also their gender.³

The memoirs and reminiscences of young women who lived through the war are numerous. Some of these authors aimed to memorialize the war while others sought to explain their experiences to their children and grandchildren. Annie Harper, for example, wrote her memoirs in an attempt to give her daughter an idea of the trials she endured. Emma Cassandra Riely, on the other hand, wanted to provide an account of her life on the homefront to help others remember the sacrifices southern men and women made for the Confederacy. Letitia Burwell's recollections of her life in Virginia before, during, and after the war exemplify women's efforts to provide a romantic viewpoint of the Old South and justification for the Confederate cause. The number of published accounts increased as those who came of age during the war reached their sixties and seventies. Judith Ann Foster, who was near eighty when she wrote her memoirs, believed she needed to record her experiences before she passed away.⁴

Implicit or explicit in their writings was the idea that wartime southern daughters were a special generation of women. Mary Washington Cabell Early, who wrote about the war in a series of newspaper articles, described how war changed her and her peers:

They [women] have adapted themselves to their great reverses
with the fortitude that belongs to every true woman and the

³Whites, Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 200-209; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252-53.

⁴Annie E. Harper Reminiscences; Burwell, Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War, 1, 181; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 1-2; Judith Ann Foster Memoirs.

versatility that especially characterizes American women amid their changed circumstances The changes in their circumstances and surroundings have necessarily modified the characteristics of Virginia women. Not being so closely sheltered from the storms of life as heretofore, contact with its hard realities has rubbed off somewhat of their former shrinking softness, and lessened the pliability of their disposition.

Louisa McCord Smythe also believed that she was among a special group of women who had grown up amid a landscape of turmoil and heartbreak. “I wonder that our generation of women have any nerves left at all,” she wrote, “the amount of watching and waiting that we have done seems almost incredible as I look back, and it is so provokingly impossible to give an idea of it to others.” Emma Cassandra Riley likewise contended that “the coming generation will never experience the many sad days of trial and suffering we passed through in the South.” As Letitia Burwell described the many nights she sat worrying about danger to her home posed by invading Union troops, she echoed the sentiments of Smythe and Riley: “But why try to describe the horror of such nights? Who that has not experienced them can know how we felt?”⁵

The mythology of the Lost Cause that emerged after the war helped southerners come to terms with defeat while memorializing the Confederacy. Southerners glorified the

⁵Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, “The Women of New Virginia,” Early Family Papers; Louisa McCord Smythe *Reminiscences*; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 135; Letitia Burwell, Girl’s Life in Virginia Before the War, 182.

Confederacy as a cause intended to protect individual liberties, states' rights, and the traditions of the Old South. They emphasized what they believed were the finest attributes of their lost world: elegant plantations, contented slaves, and social harmony. Defeat came because the South was overwhelmed by superior force, not because its cause was unjust or its people unrighteous. This story of the Lost Cause was a cultural construction that soothed the sting of defeat. Organizations such as the Ladies Memorial Associations and United Daughters of the Confederacy emerged throughout the South in the postwar years and public ceremonies honoring veterans became regular events. White southerners also changed school curricula to emphasize the protection of states' rights and southern honor as the purpose of the Confederacy.⁶

The postwar writings of the wartime generation of daughters upheld the notion that southerners sacrificed nobly for the Confederacy. Oranie Virginia Snead, for example, proudly wrote that everyone in her community struggled ardently to "secure [the South's] independence." Ida Barlow recounted the sacrifices southerners of all ages willingly made for the Confederacy: "starving men, women, and children with rags hanging to them--stalked the streets in utter despair . . . they had given all for their

⁶Charles Reagan Wilson, Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 140, 147; Gaines M. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 172-73; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252; Marten, Children's Civil War, 218-20. See also Daniel W. Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001).

country.”⁷

Like most other southerners, the wartime generation of daughters viewed northern politicians as the villains in the Civil War story. Annie Harper pointed to Lincoln’s election as the catalyst of war: “His inauguration meant to [southerners] absolute degradation. We all felt that could not be endured. The government had failed in its original purpose of affording equal rights to all and we were no longer the United States.”⁸

The Reconstruction era informed the memories of many of these women. Still recuperating from the social and economic turmoil of the postwar period, they rarely separated their remembrance of the war from that of the Reconstruction period. In many of their recollections, they blamed African Americans for the tumult on the homefront. Ellen Cooper Johnson, for example, viewed the slaves who escaped to Union lines as traitors who undermined the Confederacy. Judith Ann Foster believed that African Americans had informed Union soldiers about her family’s valuables, which the Yankees stole. Female writers in the South such as Grace King, McEnery Stuart, and Kate Chopin especially blamed the freed blacks for disrupting the racial harmony that had supposedly characterized the Old South.⁹

Other women romanticized race relations during the war, rejecting the image of the traitorous slave in favor of the image of the faithful servant. Many described their

⁷Oranie Virginia (Snead) Hatcher Memoir; Ida (Barlow) Trotter Reminiscences.

⁸Marten, Children’s Civil War, 222-25; Annie E. Harper Reminiscences.

⁹Marten, Children’s Civil War, 222-27; Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Judith Ann Foster Memoirs.

servants as allies in the fight against Union aggressors and pointed to their willingness to stay with their mistresses as proof. By emphasizing the assistance of slaves during the conflict, these women underscored their belief that the South had once been a harmonious place for whites and blacks. Emma Cassandra Riley, for example, recalled how African Americans in her neighborhood assisted their masters and mistresses in hiding family valuables. Letitia Burwell, who published her memoirs in 1895, wrote extensively about the harmonious relationship between her family and their slaves. She proudly recalled that “Although advised to burn our property and incited by the enemy to destroy their former owner, these negro slaves remained faithful, manifesting kindness and in many instances protecting the white families and plantations during their masters’ absence.”¹⁰

Many daughters recalled the efforts of women of all ages to provide for Confederate soldiers, individually or through soldiers’ aid societies. Louisa McCord Smythe described how she and her female kin gave clothing and food to soldiers staying in their home. Mary Washington Cabell Early likewise boasted of women’s willingness to work long hours sewing clothes and cooking food.¹¹

The memoirs of women also emphasized the hardships families on the homefront experienced during the war. Ellen Cooper Johnson remembered the ingenious methods she was forced to devise to feed and clothe herself as shortages and high prices afflicted

¹⁰Marten, Children’s Civil War, 221-22; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 120; Burwell, Girl’s Life in Virginia Before the War, 181-82.

¹¹Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, “Society in War Times,” Early Family Papers.

the homefront. Mary Early wrote a series of articles describing the obstacles southern families faced in purchasing cloth. Despite their complaints, women such as Johnson and Early remembered these material deprivations as a sacrifice they willingly made in support of the Confederate cause.¹²

Another common theme in these women's wartime reminiscences was the anxiety they felt in the absence of their fathers, brothers, and older male kin. Ellen Cooper Johnson described the nervous anticipation of a raid by Yankee deserters: "We slept little for fear of being killed or burned alive. There was nothing for us to do but to wait and watch, for we were expecting the deserters every minute." Ida Barlow wrote of how she and her kin felt when Union soldiers came into her neighborhood. "We were utterly in their power," she wrote, "and in a constant state of uneasiness for fear we would be killed." Others recollected that their greatest concern was for their male relatives in the army. Sallie Walker Boone, for example, reflected on the many women who sat worrying and waiting for information from the front. "Shall I ever forget those sad, sad, days?" she wondered, "the hearts that were broken, the tears that were shed, the homes made desolate."¹³

These themes of sacrifice, blame, justification, and fear were not unique to the recollections of the wartime generation of daughters; southern women of all ages who

¹²Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, "Home Life in War Times," Early Family Papers.

¹³Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs; Ida Barlow Trotter Reminiscences; Sallie Walker Boone Memoirs.

survived the war voiced these concerns in their writings. But that generation made some distinctive contributions to the cult of the Lost Cause, by giving themselves a special role in the war as it was remembered and in the postwar public activities in honor of the Cause. Sally Walker Boone, for example, wrote of the war effort as a “family affair” and described herself as the daughter of her father’s regiment. Margaret Ridley Gooch accompanied her father to his company’s reunion, where she became an honorary member of the company. Like Boone, Gooch saw herself as the daughter of the many soldiers who died in battle and referred to her father’s colleagues in familial terms.¹⁴

The theme of female sacrifice took on a special meaning for southern daughters of war. They shared with their mothers a reverence for women’s wartime work, but put particular emphasis on the patriotic sacrifices of their own generation. Lelia C. Morris of La Grange, Georgia, presented a paper to the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1902 in which she detailed her experiences as a member of the “Nancy Harts,” a troop of young women from La Grange organized to provide protection for the community in the absence of their male kin. Although the Nancy Harts never confronted Union soldiers, the organization found a unique place in a young woman’s memory of the war. Morris compared the members of the company to Spartan women, emphasizing their bravery and loyalty to a noble cause: “But my friends, modern history has awarded to Southern women, not only the honor of sacrificing their brave men, sires, and young boys, but given them the proud distinction of having the courage of defending their homes and firesides by

¹⁴Marten, Children’s Civil War, 211-20; Sally Walker Boone Memoirs; Margaret Ridley Gooch Memoirs.

armed resistance.”¹⁵

In their postwar writings, many of the wartime generation of daughters accentuated the romance of war. A favorite theme was the excitement that marked those years. Mary Washington Cabell, for example, described life in wartime Richmond as a “highly colored romance.” “We lived then in such an atmosphere of highly wrought intense excitement,” she wrote, “and amid such fluctuations of fortune that nothing seemed improbable, nothing too strange or too startling to happen.” In a 1904 article, Constance Cary Harrison described how the stirring times roused the energies of young women: “The excitement of making battle flags and bandages, of singing battle songs, their chorus swelled by a ring of stalwart youngsters in new gray uniforms, clustered around the piano like bees, carried these Confederate lassies cheerily into the fight.”¹⁶

Many suggested the romance of war by giving special attention to the lighter side of the wartime experience. Louise Wigfall, who lived in Richmond during most of the war, remembered how she and her peers found opportunities to socialize when soldiers returned from battle. Louisa McCord Smythe recalled that “we girls aggravated our elders by our giggling and levity,” as Sherman’s army approached. In her memoirs written

¹⁵Lelia C. Morris, “Personal Recollections of the War: Girl Confederate Soldiers,” Eleanor Brockenbrough Library.

¹⁶Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, “Home Life in War Times,” Early Family Papers; Constance Cary Harrison, “The Last Christmas of the Confederacy,” New York Herald, December 18, 1904, Constance Cary Harrison Collection, Virginia Historical Society.

at the turn of the century, Emma Cassandra Riley noted that “the girls of this generation will never know the good times we had then, even if [things were] sad and terrible at times.”¹⁷

The dominant romantic theme in these women’s recollections of the war was their relationship with Confederate soldiers. They frequently recalled flirtations and courtships with soldiers who passed through their communities. Many remembered these relationships within the context of their patriotic activities. Constance Cary Harrison, for example, told of how “The girls . . . talked themselves hoarse adjuring the men to defend their country from the vandal’s tread.” Mary Bell Claytor wrote in her memoirs that “the young soldier boys made a business of going from house to house to say goodbye, and not one opportunity was lost to kiss the girls, for no girl was prudish about kissing a soldier good-bye.” Emma Cassandra Riley described sitting at her window watching soldiers march by: “I used to . . . look with longing eyes at them, and they with equally longing eyes at me.” Louisa McCord Smythe remembered seeing a “crowd of handsome men in gay uniforms coming and going, singing, flirting and generally enjoying themselves with some extremely handsome and conspicuous women.”¹⁸

Some retained a less idyllic image of the Civil War. As young elite women coming

¹⁷Wright, A Southern Girl in ‘61, 135; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 65.

¹⁸Constance Cary Harrison, “Last Christmas of the Confederacy”; Mary C. Bell Claytor, “Personal Recollections of Hunter’s Raid”; Macon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 115; Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences.

of age, they had been sheltered from many of the hardships of life and from violent or morbid images. But when the war made its way to their communities, they could not escape the violence and devastation it brought. Wounded and dying soldiers made a lasting impression on the psyche of a generation of women. Many recalled seeing soldiers without limbs or wracked with disease while others described encountering dead bodies. Judith Ann Foster, who wrote her memoirs at the age of seventy-four, detailed grotesque images of soldiers that she encountered. "On our way home we crossed the battlefield where dead men were lying like cattle," she wrote, "many wounded still living whose lives were fast ebbing away. This was the first time I ever saw human brains. We had to retrace our steps many miles in order not to have to pass the nude bodies of the dead." Sue Chancellor also described incidents of destruction and death that she witnessed during the battle of Chancellorsville: "The horrible impression of those days of agony and conflict is still vivid, and I can close my eyes and see again the blazing woods, the flaming house, the flying shot and shell, and the terror-stricken women and children pushing their way over the dead and wounded."¹⁹

In many ways young women's memory of war shaped their world view as adults. Those especially effected by the material deprivations of war turned their attention to new forms of financial security. The growth of industries in the South was one way of

¹⁹Judith Ann Foster Memoirs; Sue M. Chancellor, "Personal Recollections of the Battle of Chancellorsville," Charles G. Waugh and Martin H. Greenberg, eds., The Women's War in the South: Recollections and Reflections of the American Civil War (Nashville: Cumberland Publishing, 1999), 76.

rebuilding the economy. Mary Washington Cabell, for example, believed that the economic future of the South depended on industrial development. "The changes brought about by the war are chiefly noticeable in the agricultural districts of Virginia," Cabell boasted, "Richmond is built up in much handsomer style than ever before, and has an important element of prosperity in her large milling interests, iron works and tobacco manufactories." The growing number of cotton mills indicated to Annie Harper that a future of prosperity lay ahead for southerners. "Our hundred and eighty-three cotton mills have been erected in the South since the war, and hundreds will be in the next ten years," she wrote, "and the day is not far distant when our vast places shall blossom as never before with a prosperity before which our past wealth shall seem insignificant."²⁰

Equally important in their discussions of the postwar South was the downplaying of regional distinctions. By emphasizing reconciliation and reunion, women of the war generation were part of a larger cultural movement to help bring the South back into the national identity. When Lelia Morris presented her recollection of the war to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, she concluded with her view of the South's future. She began with a story of a man from the North who married a member of the Nancy Harts. Although the citizens of La Grange viewed this man skeptically, they eventually accepted him as one of their own. "Thus the blue and the grey have been so united," she wrote, "that the children of this Southland will recognize no North and no South, but all bitterness will be forgotten and all courage remembered for the glory of our country and

²⁰Mary Washington (Cabell) Early, "A Glimpse of New Virginia," *Early Family Papers*; Annie E. Harper *Reminiscences*.

one flag.”²¹

Women’s description of race relations also illustrates how their experiences shaped their view of southern society. Letitia Burwell, for example, believed freedom degraded blacks: “Many are crowded on the outskirts of the towns and villages North and South, in wretched thriftlessness and squalor, yet content and without ambition to alter their condition.” She credited the establishment of African-American schools and churches to “taxes paid by their former owners.” In Burwell’s view, the ability of blacks and whites to live together was forever changed by the war and emancipation. “The tie which once bound the two races together,” she wrote, “is broken forever, and entire separation in churches and schools prevents mutual interests or intercourse.” Burwell also saw the political activity of African Americans as the cause of racial disharmony in the post-Reconstruction era:

Since alienated from their former owner they are, as a general thing more idle and improvident; and, unfortunately, the tendency of their political teaching has been to make them antagonistic to the better class of white people, which renders it difficult for them to be properly instructed. That such animosity should exist toward those who could best understand and help them is to be deplored. For the true negro character cannot be fully comprehended or described but by those, who, like ourselves, have always lived with them.²²

²¹Lelia C. Morris, “Personal Recollections of the War: Girl Confederate Soldiers.”

²²Burwell, “Girl’s Life in Virginia Before the War,” 185-88.

The women who came of age during the war came away from their experiences with a sense that they were a special generation. As young women, they viewed the war from a unique vantage point. Although they shared many of their mothers' memories of the conflict, their age helped produce a distinctive memory of the war. The mythology of the Lost Cause that helped southerners heal the wounds of four years of war and redefine themselves in the larger national identity also gave women of the war generation a voice with which to memorialize their experiences. As daughters of the Confederacy, women looked back on their participation romantically. They spent countless pages in their memoirs describing their feelings of excitement concerning the war and their romances with young soldiers. The war also left a darker impression on a generation of women, who, for the first time, had witnessed human bloodshed and suffering. Their memories of the war, moreover, helped to shape their adult view of the world around them. In the decades following the war, women became immersed in the optimism that swept across the South.

The social, political, and economic events of the war forced young women to alter their traditional notions of gender roles and shaped young women's identity as they came of age. This identity incorporated the attitudes and skills they had gained during the war. Although this self-image failed to undermine traditional notions of southern womanhood, it expanded young women's idea of what it meant to be female and southern. The environment of the postwar South helped sustain this new identity as young women reached adulthood and perpetuated the notion that they were members of a special generation of women.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Alabama Department of Archives and History:

Sarah Lowe Journals

Mary D. Waring Diary

Atlanta History Center:

Emma Lattimer Papers

Mary Rawson Diary

Duke University:

Bettie Alexander Papers

Huldah Annie (Fain) Briant Papers

Lucas-Ashley Family Papers

Kate D. Foster Diary

Gertrude Jenkins Papers

Munford-Ellis Family Papers

Alice Williamson Diary

Robert W. Woodruff Library, Special Collections, Emory University:

Sue Richardson Diary

Georgia Department of Archives and History:

Iraminta Antoinette Alexander Papers

Mitchell-Fondren Papers

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University

Annie Jeter Carmouche Papers

Mississippi Department of Archives and History:

Anne E. Harper Reminiscences

Harrie Hale Patton Papers

Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers

Worthington and Stone Family Papers

Ida (Barlow) Trotter Reminiscences

Worthington Family Papers

Museum of the Confederacy, Ellen Brockenbrough Library:

Fannie Lewis Gwathmey Adams Reminiscences

Mary C. Bell Claytor Memoirs

Janet Weaver Papers

South Carolina Historical Society, Columbia

Elizabeth Waties (Allston) Pringle Diary

South Caroliniana Library

Alice Boozer Letters

Mrs. Albert Rhett Heyward Papers

Ellen Cooper Johnson Memoirs

Catherine Louisa McLaurin Diary

Neeves Family Collection

Palmer Family Papers

Louisa McCord Smythe Reminiscences

Moultrie Reid Wilson Papers

Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill:

Beale and Davis Family Papers

Elizabeth Collier Diary

Eleanore Eulalie (Cay) Fleming Papers

Gibson Humphreys Family Papers

Emma Hodge Diary

Lucy Blackwell Malone Reminiscences

Martha Josephine Moore Diary, Frank Liddell Richardson Family Papers

Mary E. Fries Patterson Diary

Alice Ready Diary

Sally Rowan Saufley Papers

Simpson and Brumby Family Papers

Jane Silvey Letters

Thompson Family Papers

Sarah Lois Wadley Papers

Swem Library, College of William and Mary

Cloe Tyler (Whittle) Greene Diary

Tennessee State Library and Archives:

Mary Walker Meriwether Bell Letters, Civil War Collection

Sallie Walker Boone Memoirs

Margaret (Ridley) Gooch Memoirs

Anna Cagdell (Howell) Hollowell Family Papers

Sallie McEwen, Civil War Collection

Nannie Haskins Williams Papers

Virginia Historical Society:

Bagby Family Papers

Bailey Family Papers

Chaffin Family Papers

Chamberlayne Family Papers

Frances James La Rue Dorsey Diary

Early Family Papers

Finney Family Papers

Judith Ann Robertson Foster Memoir

Goodwin Family Papers

Jeannette Garnett (Ryland) Gwathmey Diary

Hankins Family Papers

Constance Cary Harrison Papers

Alice Janney Harrison Papers

Oranie Virginia (Snead) Hatcher Memoir

Holladay Family Papers

Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot Reminiscences

Marrow Family Papers

Margaretta Ellen Wise Mayo Family Papers

Mary Susan (Parson) Pancake Diary

Ridley Family Papers

Janet Weaver Papers

Wight Family Papers

Wesleyan Archives and Museum, University of North Alabama

Sallie Independence Foster Diary

Published Primary Sources

Anderson, George M. "The Civil War Courtship of Richard Mortimer Williams and Rose

- Anderson of Rockville." Maryland Historical Magazine 80 (Summer 1985): 119-38.
- Anderson, John Q. Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955.
- Ashkenazi, Elliott, ed. The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing Up in New Orleans, 1861-1862. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.
- Bonner, James C., ed. The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964.
- Burr, Virginia Ingraham, ed. The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Burwell, Letitia M. A Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War. New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1895.
- Chadwick, Mrs. W.D. "Civil War Days in Huntsville: A Diary by Mrs. W.D. Chadwick." Alabama Historical Quarterly 9 (Summer 1947): 199-331.
- Chambers, Jenny. "What a School Girl Saw of John Brown's Raid." Harper's 104 (January 1902): 311-18.
- Davis, Robert Scott. "Selective Memories of Civil War Atlanta: The Memoir of Sally Clayton." Georgia Historical Quarterly 82 (Winter 1998): 735-50.
- _____. ed. Requiem for a Lost City: A Memoir of Civil War Atlanta and the Old South. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999.
- Eppes, Susan Bradford. Through Some Eventful Years. Macon: J.W. Burke Co., 1926.
- Fordney, Chris, ed. "Letters from the Heart." Civil War Times Illustrated 34 (September-

- October 1995): 28, 73-82.
- Macon, Emma Cassandra Riely. Reminiscences of the Civil War. Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1911.
- Miers, Early Schenck, ed. When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Murray, Elizabeth Dunbar. My Mother Used to Say: A Natchez Belle of the Sixties. Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1959.
- Robertson, Mary D., ed. A Confederate Lady Comes of Age: The Journal of Pauline DeCaradeuc, 1863-1888. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992.
- _____. Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl, 1862-1864. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.
- Smith, Daniel Huger, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs, eds. Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950.
- Snell, William R. Myra Inman: A Diary of the Civil War in East Tennessee. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000.
- Sutherland, Daniel E., A Very Violent Rebel: The Diary of Ellen Renshaw House. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1996.
- Wanzer, Sidney Hovey and Anna Bradford Agle. "Dearest Braddie: Love and War in Maryland, 1860-61." Maryland Historical Magazine 88 (Spring 1993): 337-58.
- Waugh, Charles G. and Martin H. Greenberg, eds. The Women's War in the South: Recollections and Reflections of the American Civil War. Nashville: Cumberland Publishing, 1999.

Wright, Mrs. D. Giraud. A Southern Girl in '61: The Wartime Memories of a Confederate Senator's Daughter. New York: Doubleday Press, 1905.

Secondary Sources

Books

Ash, Stephen V. When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Allgor, Catherine. Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000.

Berringer, Richard, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr. Why the South Lost the Civil War. Athens: Georgia University Press, 1986.

Berry, Stephen W. All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Blassingame, John. The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Blight, Daniel W. Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001.

Bynum, Victoria E. Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Censer, Jane Turner. North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984.

Chambers-Schiller, Lee Virginia. Liberty, a Better Husband: Single Women in America:

- The Generations of 1780-1840. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Channing, Steven A. Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.
- Cimprich, John. Slavery's End in Tennessee. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1986.
- Clinton, Catherine. The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Hill and Wang, 1984.
- _____. Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.
- _____. Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend. New York: Abbeville Press, 1995.
- _____, ed. Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Crofts, Daniel W. Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.
- Dean, Eric. Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Edwards, Laura F. Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- _____. Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Escott, Paul D. After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate

- Nationalism. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978.
- Farnham, Christie Anne. The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South. New York: New York University Press, 1994.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.
- _____. Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Finkelman, Paul, ed. His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Raid. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.
- Foner, Eric. Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Foster, Gaines M. Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Fraser, Walter J., Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., John L. Wakelyn, eds. The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family and Education. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985.
- Friedman, Jean E. The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Genovese, Eugene D. Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made. New York:

- Vintage Books, 1974.
- Gillette, William. Retreat From Reconstruction, 1869-1879. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
- Glover, Lorri. All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds Among the Early South Carolina Gentry. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Green, Elna C. Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Jones, Jacqueline. Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present. New York: Vintage Books, 1985.
- Kett, Joseph F. Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present. New York: Basic Books Publishing, 1977.
- Kierner, Cynthia. Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- Klatch, Rebecca E. A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Lebsock, Suzanne. The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860. New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1984.
- Litwack, Leon F. Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery. New York: Knopf, 1979.
- McMillen, Sally G. Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
- McPherson, James M. Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era. New York: Oxford

- University Press, 1988.
- Marten, James. The Children's Civil War. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Massey, Mary Elizabeth. Bonnet Brigades. New York: Knopf Press, 1966.
- _____. Refugee Life in the Confederacy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964.
- Mohr, Clarence L. On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.
- Oakes, James. The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1982.
- _____. Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South. New York: Knopf Press, 1990.
- Rable, George. Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Ripley, Peter C. Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisiana. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976.
- Roark, James L. Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction. New York: Norton, 1977.
- Rothman, Ellen K. Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America. New York: Basic Books, 1984.
- Scott, Ann Firor. The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

- Schwalm, Leslie. Hard Fight For We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Silber, Nina. The Romance of Reunion. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- Simkins, Francis Butler and Patton, James Welch. The Women of the Confederacy. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1936.
- Sterkx, H.E. Partners in Rebellion: Alabama Women in the Civil War. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970.
- Stevenson, Brenda. Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Stowe, Steven M. Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- Trelease, Allen W. White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Tuttle, William M., Jr. Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Walser, Richard. Literary North Carolina: A Brief Historical Survey. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970.
- Weiner, Marli F. Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-80. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.
- Welter, Barbara. Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976.

- Wheeler, Marjorie Spruill. New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Whites, LeeAnn. The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.
- Wiener, Jonathan M. Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978.
- Wiley, Bell Irwin. Confederate Women. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975.
- Wilson, Charles Reagan. Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983.
- Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Articles

- Baker, Paula. "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society." American Historical Review 89 (June 1984): 620-47.
- Censer, Jane Turner. "A Changing World of Work: North Carolina Elite Women, 1865-1895." North Carolina Historical Review 73 (January 1996): 28-55.
- Demos, John and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective." Journal of Marriage and Family 31 (November 1969): 632-38.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army." Journal of Southern History 53 (February 1987): 63-90.

- Jabour, Anya. "Grown Girls, Highly Cultivated": Female Education in an Antebellum Southern Family." Journal of Southern History 64 (February 1998): 23-64.
- Kerber, Linda K. "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History." Journal of American History 75 (June 1988): 9-39.
- McGerr, Michael. "Political Style and Women's Power, 1830-1930." Journal of American History 77 (December 1990): 864-85.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in the Nineteenth-Century America." Signs 1 (Autumn 1975): 1-29.
- Stowe, Steven. "The Rhetoric of Authority: The Making of Social Values in Planter Family Correspondence." Journal of American History 73 (March 1987): 916-933.
- Talbott, John E. "Combat Trauma in the American Civil War." History Today 46 (March 1996): 41-47.
- Wiener, Jonathan M. "Female Planters and Planters' Wives in Civil War and Reconstruction Alabama, 1850-1870." Alabama Review 30 (April 1977): 135-49.

Unpublished Dissertations and Theses

- Krug, Donna Rebecca Donde. "The Folks Back Home: The Confederate Homefront during the Civil War." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 1990.
- Nix, Elizabeth Morrow. "An Exuberant Flow of Spirits: Antebellum Adolescent Girls in the Writings of Southern Women." Ph.D. diss., Boston University, Boston, 1996.
- Pope, Christie Farnham. "Preparation for Pedestals: North Carolina Antebellum Female

Seminaries.” Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1977.

VITA

Victoria Ott was born and raised in Florence, Alabama. From there she attended the University of Central Florida where she received her B.A. and M.A. respectively in History. She is the recipient of a 2001 Mellon Fellowship from the Virginia Historical Society, 1999 and 2001 Lee Verstanding Scholarship, and 2002-03 National Phi Alpha Theta Doctoral Scholarship. She also received the American History Scholarship in 2002 from the Society of Colonial Dames of America in Tennessee.

Victoria is currently completing her doctorate in nineteenth-century American History at the University of Tennessee.

5540 8765 31
08/13/03 V HFB