A PAST STILL LIVING: THE GRIEVING PROCESS OF CONFEDERATE WIDOWS

Ashley Michelle Mays

A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

Chapel Hill
2014

Approved by:

Joseph T. Glatthaar

W. Fitzhugh Brundage

William L. Barney

Donald G. Mathews

Molly Worthen

©2014
Ashley Michelle Mays
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

Ashley Michelle Mays: A Past Still Living: The Grieving Process of Confederate Widows
(Under the direction of Joseph T. Glatthaar)

The American Civil War destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives and tore asunder the fabric of northern and southern society. In order to understand the long-term consequences of this war, this dissertation examines the way in which death transformed the lives of one group of survivors, Confederate widows. These widows faced staggering emotional consequences because they not only lost a partner and a companion but also a sense of stability in their lives. As widows shouldered the responsibility for their families' survival, a rush of conflicting emotions threatened to overwhelm them. This emotional turmoil encouraged widows to cling to their identities as wives while their social position as widows determined the avenues available to them in the postwar period.

No matter how widows felt, Southern communities' cultural prescriptions for grieving shaped the way in which widows expressed their grief. Through letters and ceremonies friends, family, and even strangers comforted widows by demonstrating that their husband had died a good death. In the process, communities encouraged widows to curtail their grief in public. Widows outwardly conformed while relying on a reciprocal relationship with friends and family for companionship and for financial support, a tenuous safety net. Nevertheless, widows often found themselves unable to extinguish their often-conflicting feelings about their loss. As a result, a tension arose between Confederate widows and their communities over the appropriate way to express grief.

Ultimately, this dissertation argues that widows and their communities engaged in a dialectical conversation over the expression of emotion that would shape the postwar South. Because widows could not express their grief publicly, they wrestled with their complex feelings about loss privately in an introspective cycle that isolated widows from their friends, family, and even their religious beliefs. Since widows' memories of the war proved to be inseparable from their grief, widows recorded their memories privately by writing memoirs and by preserving their husbands' possessions, rather than participating heavily in Confederate memorialization. As a result, the collected memory of the Civil War in the postwar South did not include widows' unique interpretations of wartime loss and thereby sterilized the memory of the war.

To my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has benefitted from more helping hands and minds than I can name. I would particularly like to thank my advisor, Dr. Joseph T. Glatthaar, for his untiring support for my education and for this project. His advice and suggestions have helped me to become a better writer than I thought I could be. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. W Fitzhugh Brundage, Dr. William Barney, Dr. Donald G. Mathews, and Dr. Molly Worthen. It has been an honor to work with each of them. Many of the ideas for this project arose out of conversations with my committee members and with my colleagues in the History Department at UNC. I am also grateful to the amazing staff in the History Department, who always seem to know the answer to any question.

Any argument is only as good as the evidence that supports it, so I owe a great debt to the people and the institutions that have made my research possible. Fellowships available through the UNC History Department, including the George B. Tindall Fellowship, the Mowry Dissertation Fellowship, and the Raymond Faherty Research Grant for Military History, together allowed me to expand the scope of my research beyond North Carolina to consider Confederate widowhood across the South. I am also grateful to the staff at those archives who have not only kept these valuable records safe but also helped guide me to useful collections. I would like to especially thank the staff at the Southern Historical Collection, who patiently dealt with my many questions as I first began to research and who introduced me to the collection that really began this entire project. Also, I owe a great deal of gratitude to the Virginia Historical Society. Thanks to the Frances Lewis Fellowship in

Gender and Women's Studies, I was able to research in their rich collections and gain access to numerous collections, without which this dissertation would be much poorer.

Words cannot express how much I have appreciated my family's support. My parents inspired my love of learning at a young age and have made every effort to help me reach my educational goals. Any success that I have began with their guidance and their example. Since my wife and I moved to North Carolina, we have been grateful for my entire extended family who have been incredibly supportive as well and helped us feel truly at home. My wife actually deserves a good deal of the credit for the final product, though none of the blame. Not only was she willing to marry a graduate student studying widowhood, she has also read and improved every page of this dissertation. My ideas always became clearer through our conversations. Finally, I would be remiss without thanking my daily writing partner, my dog Onyx. I have found it much easier to write about grief with her sitting next to me.

Ultimately, the stories that unfold in the following pages are not my stories—they belong to the widows who originally lived them, felt them, and recorded them.
I have tried to narrate their words faithfully in order to understand the historical significance of their experiences. I hope that the reader will learn as much from them as I have.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....x

INTRODUCTION 1

Historiography 3

Organization and Method 19

CHAPTER 1: LOSS 24

Separation 27

Bridging the Distance 36

Bonds of Marriage 50

Conclusion 64

CHAPTER 2: DEATH RITUALS.....66

Notification 70

Mourning 77

The Funeral 81

Conclusion 94

CHAPTER 3: CONDOLENCE LETTERS 96

Traditional Condolence Letters 99

The Rise of Death Letters 114

Conclusion 128

CHAPTER 4: GRIEF.....130

Redemptive Grief.....133

Compounding Grief 137
Bridging Over Grief 146
Mental Health 154
Conclusion 164
CHAPTER 5: LIVING 166
Availability 169
Networking 175
Housing 179
Financial Support 185
Confederate Assistance 197
Conclusion 203
CHAPTER 6: MEMORY 205
The Function of Memory 207
Widows' Memorial Activities 212
Confederate Memory Organizations 234
Conclusion 245
CONCLUSION 247
Identity 248
Emotion 250
Social Connections 253
Application 256
APPENDIX A 260
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 26

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADAH	Alabama Department of Archives and History
AU	Department of Special Collections and Archives, Auburn University
DAS	Documenting the American South
GDAH	Georgia Department of Archives and History
HNOC	Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection
KHS	Kentucky Historical Society
LaRC	Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University
LMA	Ladies Memorial Association
LOV	Library of Virginia
LSU	Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
MDAH	Mississippi Department of Archives and History
MOC	Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy
PJD	Papers of Jefferson Davis
RU	Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives, Fondren Library, Rice University
SAF	State Archives of Florida
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
UDC	United Daughters of the Confederacy
UF	Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida
UOS	Archives and Special Collections, The University of the South
UTA	Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

VHS Virginia Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

By the end of the first week of May 1863, one great drama had come to a close but another was unfolding throughout the Confederate States. General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and General Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac fought a great battle in the woods near Chancellorsville, with the outmanned and under-resources Confederates ultimately winning the field. As the two armies began to disentangle from one another, licking their wounds, news of the battle spread. A new drama emerged in homes across the nation, as mothers, sisters, and wives awaited news of their loved ones, hoping and praying that they might have survived. In many homes, the next scene was one of joyous relief: all was well with the ones they loved. Day to day duties resumed, much as before, and families pondered how the battle might have hastened the end of the war. In many other homes, however, a dark cloud settled when telegrams and letters carried news of pain, amputations, and death. Life in these homes shifted from trepidation to tragedy.

Death brought an entirely new life for women like Leila Habersham. Before the Battle of Chancellorsville, Leila faced the burdens and joys of life with a partner, her husband Lt. Frederic Habersham. After the battle, Leila discovered that she faced the world alone as a widow and therefore shouldered all of life's burdens and the responsibility for her entire family. A single mother of three children with no job and limited opportunities for employment in a world torn apart by war, Leila confronted a frightening new future. Almost immediately, Leila's friends and family began to shape that future by beginning a series of

rituals, from the funeral services to condolence letters, where the entire community gathered to mourn their loss and to instruct Leila on how to grieve. At the same time, Leila also began her own personal emotional journey by responding to both her loss and the new life of work and responsibility that had been thrust upon her.

Leila was not unique. Tens of thousands of women across the South lost their husbands during the Civil War, yet historians have only begun to explore the way in which widows like Leila forged a new future within Southern communities. Confederate widows, defined in this dissertation as the cohort of white women whose husbands' died fighting for the Confederate cause, often dot the pages of scholarship dedicated to understanding women's contribution to the American Civil War. Scholars have debated the degree to which women supported or undermined the war effort and, later, pre-war gender and class hierarchies. Leila's gender composed only one small potion of Leila's overall identity. In fact, her experiences as a widow shaped her self-conceptions and the choices available to her within the wartime and postwar South. Some historians have already begun to explore unique experience of Confederate widows, first as independent women challenging patriarchy and then as visible symbols of wartime sacrifice within Confederate memory. This dissertation will explore these components of widowhood along with an even more significant and unique component to Confederate widowhood: the story of grief.

Grief encompasses an individual’s reactions to loss over an extended period. How did widows like Leila feel about their loss? To answer this question, this dissertation will examine the personal writings of Confederate widows during and after the war. In these writings, widows recorded how they felt about their loss and about their new lives as widows. Yet these feelings did not occur within a vacuum. How did Southern communities

expect widows to grieve? Widows expressed their feelings with an eye to these cultural expectations for grief. As a result, this dissertation will also examine the letters that family and friends wrote to widows, along with some published narratives, in order to delineate the often changing and even conflicting expectations for grieving in a time of war. Invariably, individual need clashed with cultural expectation, so how did widows and their communities interact over widows' grieving process? This dissertation will argue that Confederate widows' feelings and their communities' expectations functioned within a dialectical relationship that altered the relationship between widows and their communities, ultimately shaping the strategies that widows might use for survival. Furthermore, a close examination of this dialectical relationship can uncover tensions between widows and their communities. The way in which widows translated their internal feelings into an expression, especially when that translation proved incomplete or unsatisfactory, might help explain how a society that suffered so much death and destruction could ultimately develop a memory of the war that glamorized loss.

Historiography

Though research on the American Civil War has produced an amazing amount of scholarship, most studies investigate shifts in national or local politics rather than the internal lives of everyday citizens. Many excellent books grapple with questions about whether secession resulted from ideological differences or a decline of the two party system, whether the Confederacy collapsed from military defeat or internal divisions, and whether or not Reconstruction policies produced any lasting change in the South.[1] Even social and cultural

[1] For an argument emphasizing ideological differences, see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); For an example of the collapse of the two-party system, see Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Wiley, 1978). For an argument supporting military defeat, see Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War:*

histories have blurred the lines between public and private lives in order to politicize seemingly mundane actions. While these studies have greatly added to our knowledge of the Civil War, they have prioritized studying collective action as a means of expressing political power instead of individual experiences that underlay that collective action. Research on Confederate widowhood has to date followed in that vein, yet recent research on the way in which Americans reacted to wartime trauma and scholarship on the history of emotions offer a pathway to better understand the emotional dimensions to widows' loss and the resulting tensions between widows and their communities.

Confederate widows represented a diverse sample of the white Southern population. Still, many of them likely fit the profile that Robert Kenzer developed by examining Virginia widows who filed death claims or pensions records. These women were often young mothers with too little money to easily overcome the financial difficulties of a war torn region and too few male suitors left alive to find love or security once again. Kenzer's widely cited research has offered invaluable context for widows' unique experience in the postwar South. Like any strong work in an underdeveloped field, however, Kenzer's results have raised more questions than answers. His research is limited to widows filing claims in a single state, so his conclusions perhaps over generalize this diverse group of women. In addition, Kenzer provided a profile of Confederate widowhood in order to describe this group of women and the conditions that they faced, especially their financial hardships and marital prospects. That

---

How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could not Stave off Defeat (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). For the collapse of will, see Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979) and Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women in the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, University of Chapel Hill Press, 1988). Foner has emphasized legal change, while C. Vann Woodward has demonstrated how Southerners regained political control of the region. See Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) and C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

focus limited Kenzer's ability to explain the effects of widows' conditions upon Southern society or those widows' emotional lives.[2]

Kenzer's advisee, Jennifer Gross, confirmed his research in a wider study that used letters, pension records, and literature to understand how widows challenged gender relationships in the postwar South. Gross briefly describes Confederate widows' grief and admits that in a time of war many widows were "unable to abide by the social codes of mourning," but she does not develop the implications of this interrupted mourning period or the long-term course of widows' grief. Instead, she turns to widows' deteriorating financial situation. Gross echoes Kenzer's profile by arguing that widows became increasingly dependent upon family and friends or upon the state because they faced few job opportunities and even fewer suitable marriage prospects. For Gross, the mere presence of impoverished, single widows proved politically significant because they undermined a Southern patriarchy already weakened by Confederate defeat. Men reasserted their authority in literature and through the state-based pension system. In romantic tales, men depicted widows as "good angels," submissive women who willingly sacrificed their husbands for a cause that they still supported. Building off of this literary imagery, white men sought other ways to make seemingly independent widows more dependent in the late nineteenth-century. "Through pensions," Gross argues, "Southern men could once again imagine themselves as proper patriarchs."[3] The state in essence became widows' husbands and regulated their role back to a woman's gendered role.

---

[2] Robert Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life: A Profile of Virginia's Civil War Widows," in Joan E. Cashin, ed. *The War was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 112-135.

[3] Jennifer Lynn Gross, "'Good Angels': Confederate Widowhood in the Reassurance of Patriarchy in the Postbellum South" (PhD diss, University of Georgia, Athens, 2001), 36. Gross draws on her M.A. thesis to point to marriage statistics that two thirds of the widows in Brunswick County, Virginia could not remarry. See

Research on widowhood in earlier eras has also defined widows' significance in terms of gender relations, namely the paradox of supposedly dependent women suddenly thrust into legal and economic independence. Widowhood violated the idea of separate spheres, where women's tasks remained largely within the home and men, as heads of household, represented the family in public. By researching these seemingly out of place women, scholars have complicated the initially stark boundaries of separate spheres.[4] Both Lisa

---

"You All Must Do the Best You Can': The Civil War Widows of Brunswick County, Virginia, 1860-1920" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1995). Gross has published several book chapters based off of her dissertation. See, "'Good Angels': Confederate Widows in Virginia, *Southern Families at War*, Catherine Clinton, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000);"'And for the Widow and Orphan': Confederate Widows, Poverty, and Public Assistance," *Inside the Confederate Nation: Essays in Honor of Emory M. Thomas*, Leslie J. Gordon and John C. Inscoe eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.

[4] Early research on separate spheres carved a unique and independent space for women in historical study by describing women's tasks within the home. Perhaps the first study to examine women's private work in the South was Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York: Norton, 1938). Barbara Welter explained how performing these roles, along with attitude and behavior, fit into a cultural ideal of womanhood in "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1930," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966). Historians noted that the ideal was different from reality, however, which allowed the possibility for women's identities to change. In the classic work, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930,* Anne Firor Scott argued that wealthy white women in the South broke out of that ideal of womanhood during the Civil War by taking on new roles. Not all women could break out of those expectations because the cultural ideal of womanhood demarcated class and racial boundaries, excluding poorer women and African American women. See Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?" Female Slaves in the Plantation Household* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985). Even the women who seemed to conform to the ideal lady were really not ladies at all, since they often managed plantations and therefore used violence. See Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's world in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Through these useful corrections, the boundaries between separate spheres have become less defined. As Linda Kerber and Joan Scott argue, the spheres both inserted a place for women's history within Southern history but also then segregated women's history. Instead of examining the boundaries of the spheres, scholars have shifted to examining the relationship between men and women. See Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review,* 91, no. 5 (1986), 1053-1075; Linda Kerber , "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (1988), 9-39. The focus on gender relationships has shifted the conversation to consider the ways in which women either upended or supported the gender hierarchy. See Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Laura Edwards, *Gendered Strife & Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997). Even studying gender, however, fails to recognize the diversity in women's experience and perhaps places too much emphasis on only one dimension of the identity of half the population. See George C. Rable, *Civil Wars*, 1989; Marilyn Mayer Culpepper, *All Things Altered: Women in the Wake of Civil War and Reconstruction (*Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2002); Jane Turner Censer, *Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

Wilson, who studied Pennsylvania widows from 1750-1850, and Kirstin Wood, who studied widowed plantation owners in the antebellum South, argued that widows' primary duty was to care for their families. That duty justified their increased legal and economic freedoms as compared to wives, so that widows did not exist independently, outside of male authority. In fact, widows relied on relationships with men and women to survive financially, and they even developed a less aggressive style of economic management that tailored widows' independence to fit gender expectations.[5]

Though widows might not have threatened male authority in the antebellum era, wartime conditions changed women's roles in Southern society. Prices skyrocketed while access to goods declined sharply, and women on the home front struggled to survive without a male partner. Previously privileged women went grudgingly into the fields and already laboring women faced endless work and possibly starvation. When fighting waged near, women fled their homes, leaving behind worldly possessions and community support.[6] For wives whose husbands survived the war, these troubles might have ended in 1865 while widows continued to labor alone. Still, all women faced a changed landscape with little economic opportunity and a population of men forever changed, mentally and physically, by years of war.[7]

---

[5] For Wilson, widows' economic leadership was evidence that family roles and survival took precedence over too narrowly defined gender roles. Wood notes that slaveholding widows also readily assumed the head of household role, but asserted their mastery with more modestly than men , simultaneously fulfilling and challenging women's gender roles. Lisa Wilson, *Life After Death: Widows in Pennsylvania, 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple Free Press, 1992); Kirsten Wood, *Masterful Women: Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[6] For works that discuss the conditions that women faced during the Civil War, see Faust, *Mothers of Invention*; George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism*, 1991, reprint, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Laura Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

[7] Jeffrey W. McClurken, *Take Care of the Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Rubin, "The Aftermath of Sorrow."

Because of these changing wartime conditions, Confederate womanhood changed as well, perhaps shifting widows' place within the gender hierarchy. Forced to be independent, at least for a time, Confederate women began to assert greater agency over their lives, resulting in a gender crisis. Widows therefore might have challenged masculine authority, as Gross argues, together with other Southern women. Yet scholars have found that despite the opportunity for radical change, men remained dominant in the postwar gender structure. Many women worked to support male authority, even when they stepped outside of their traditional gender roles. As LeeAnn Whites argues, "The quid pro quo of the gender relation between Confederate men and women may have been ruptured by the demands of fighting the war, but the question of how white women and their children were to survive was also never more seriously threatening than amid the exigencies of total war and eventually defeat." [8] Traditional gender roles might offer some protection in a dangerous new world. As a result, George Rable argues, white women ultimately "did more to uphold than to undermine" a system where women remained subordinate to men, perhaps in their view even protected, by "absorbing and reinforcing traditional definitions of male and female honor."[9]

---

[8] Lee Ann Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 6.

[9]Rable, *Civil Wars*, xi, 2. Many scholars have described the internal economic collapse of the Confederacy. See Paul D. Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (1988; reprint, Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 2006). These scholars argued that dissent from within the Confederacy undermined the Confederate war effort. Other scholars, however, admit that conditions became increasingly worse but that the governments or even the necessities of war quelled the population. Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could not Stave off Defeat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Richard R. Duncan, *Beleaguered Winchester: A Virginia Community at War, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007). In applying these deteriorating conditions to women's support of a Confederate nation, scholars have noted that economic devastation forced women to take up new tasks and to face harrowing military fighting close to their homes. As Faust argues, elite women found these new roles distasteful, ultimately losing faith in the Confederate war effort if not the conservative social system. George Rable similarly recognized that women at least not unanimously supported the war effort to the end, with negative effects. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*; Rable, *Civil Wars*; Karen Aviva Rubin, "The

Some women certainly did push the boundaries of traditional gender roles. Often forced into the workforce by financial necessity, women labored in an expanding number of careers and even became increasingly politically active in club organizations. Broadening gender roles, however, did not necessarily challenge male patriarchy. In fact, wealthy white women used their expanded political voices to buttress prewar gender and class hierarchies, since wealthy white women held a secure, privileged place within that system of inequality. Even seemingly independent women, including widows, remained daughters, while the law discriminated against single mothers. Ultimately, southern white men had cemented their role at the top of the gender hierarchy almost immediately after the war, long before the Confederate pension system enveloped widows as dependents to the state.[10]

By focusing on the way in which widows may have challenged Southern patriarchy, historians have only recently turned to consider the ways in which loss and grief, in addition to gender, might have altered relationships between people in the postwar South. Because of the violence of war, many ex-Confederate men returned home broken, mentally or physically, and incapable of returning to work. In *Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, & Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina,* David Silkenat argues that the war changed the way

---

Aftermath of Sorrow: White Women's Search for their Lost Cause, 1861-1917," (PhD diss, Florida State University, 2007).

[10] Paternal rights brought these women under the authority of their fathers and even threatened to remove children from the arms of single mothers. See Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*, 1997. Jane Turner Censer argues that the Civil War did open new opportunities for women, especially young single women who could adjust to the changing roles more easily. Where authors like Edwards and Lebsock see continued restrictions upon women's choices and opportunities, which Censer admits, Censer also sees some expanded opportunity for taking on new tasks, like writing, and for having a political voice through club organizations. Some women, therefore, did see the options available to them expand, though not necessarily to the degree that they stepped entirely outside of the social hierarchy or even decided to subvert it. See Censer, *Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood*; Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg*. As LeeAnn Whites argues, even that political voice offered an opportunity for elite white women to cement male dominance in exchange for reestablishing a class and racial structure. See Lee Ann Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1995). For an overview on women's gender roles before the war, wartime challenges to gender roles ,and class and race-based struggles of reassessing those gender roles in the postwar era, see Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore*.

individuals related to their communities by shifting the boundaries of right and wrong on previously taboo subjects. In effect, the consequences of wartime violence reached across race, class, and gender even as the subsequent changes to the moral code developed within those categories of analysis. For instance, suicides skyrocketed among white male veterans, forcing the white community to "sympathize with the plight of suicide victims" so that "suicides became a tolerable, albeit regrettable, choice by the end of the nineteenth century."[11] The African American community, however, shifted from seeing suicide as "a symbol of resistance" within slavery to an unacceptable choice, since "abstinence from the suicide mania demonstrated their social virtue."[12] Death and violence during the Civil War altered individual choice, which in turn shifted the cultural standards by which North Carolinians judged each other. These changes happened within the larger context of racial strife and ultimately contributed to racial tensions in the postwar era. Studying loss and the resulting emotions can therefore discover new changes that war wrought upon the community and uncover previously hidden social tension, all while still contributing to our understanding of race, gender, and class power structures.

Though most studies of the psychological effects of wartime violence have focused on soldiers and veterans, historians have noted that women also suffered mental anguish during the war.[13] Karen Rubin argues that women across the South endured psychological

---

[11] David Silkenat, *Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, and Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 10.

[12] Silkenat, *Moments of Despair*, 21.

[13] For studies examining the psychological trauma of war on male soldiers and veterans during the Civil War, see Silkenat, *Moments of Despair*; McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*. The emphasis on measuring the psychological trauma of male combat veterans, rather than society as a whole, is not confined to the historiography on the Civil War. Scholars of twentieth century American history were perhaps the first to become interested in wartime trauma. Because a sea divided the home front and war front in most of the major twentieth century wars, these scholars focused on soldiers and veterans rather than families as well. See Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: The University

trauma in seeing their loved ones go off to battle, witnessing fighting often close to home, and then seeing many of those loved ones return broken, defeated, or dead.[14] If all Confederate women suffered, then certainly Confederate widows did, which Gross confirms by examining some widows' personal accounts and twentieth century scholarly works about the grieving process in her first chapter.[15] According to Gross, Confederate widows "faced the anguish of bereavement" for varying lengths of time, and they dealt with this heartache by participating in mourning rituals, doting on their children, preserving the memory of their husbands, leaning on friends and family, or by turning to God. Family and friends offered widows a sympathetic ear but also caused pain by constantly reminding widows of their loss. When possible "These personal and societal coping mechanisms worked together to assuage widows' grief," Gross argues, though ultimately "the war or their decreased economic stability after their husbands' death often disrupted or prohibited their ability to avail themselves of many of these societal comforts."[16] Gross's overview of widows' grief once again raises more questions than answers. While acknowledging that social prescriptions for grieving might have both helped and hurt, she does not explore these tensions between widows and their communities. How did these tensions develop over the course of the grieving process? What would be the consequences of an interrupted grieving process, and

---

of North Carolina Press, 1993); Thomas Childers, *Soldiers from the War Returning: The Greatest Generation's Troubled Homecoming from World War II (*Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009). Scholars studying Europe during twentieth century wars, however, have more readily enveloped families into the psychological effects of war. See Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Erika Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

[14] Rubin, "The Aftermath of Sorrow," 28-80.

[15] Gross, "Bereavement: 'She is Left to Walk the World Alone,'" in "Good Angels: Confederate Widowhood," 38-78.

[16] Gross, "Good Angels," 38-9.

what impact would these emotions have on the way in which widows related to other people in the postwar era?

To answer these questions, historians must examine both cultural ideals and individual experiences of grief. Recently historians have explored cultural ideals about death, demonstrating that those beliefs shaped the way in which Americans fought and lived through the Civil War. The "Good Death" represented a series of religious and cultural beliefs about the appropriate way to die. Ideally, antebellum Americans passed away at home, surrounded by loved ones who could hear the resignation in their last words as proof that the dying person's soul would rise to heaven.[17] Americans could believe in the Good Death because they shared a Christian religious worldview through which they interpreted events.[18] Mark Schantz, in *Awaiting this Heavenly Country*, argues that the Good Death was one component in a series of religious beliefs, including a popularized view of heaven as a material place where loved ones reunited. Those beliefs glorified death as a pathway to eternal life, which would ultimately justify killing on an unprecedented scale.[19] In turn, those horrific deaths far from home challenged the ideal Good Death. As Drew Gilpin Faust argues in *This Republic of Suffering*, soldiers and families North and South found new ways of

---

[17] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 6-7.

[18] George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Like the historiography of Confederate widows, the historiography on religion in the Civil War has focused largely on the question of political change. Rable demonstrates that a religious worldview exists in order to explain how religion influenced a variety of different political opinions, rather than simply offering a single influence upon the course of the Civil War. Previous scholars had debated whether or not Southern religious beliefs strengthened or weakened Confederate resolve. The authors of *Why the South Lost the Civil War* argued that religion unified Confederates through political speeches and ceremonies, yet Faust argued that religious belief opened an opportunity for dissent that weakened Confederate nationalism. See Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr. *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Drew Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*. The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988

[19] Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

achieving the traditional ideal way to die and, in the process, placed increasing demands upon the Federal government, expecting the Union to care for the men who sacrificed their lives on its behalf.[20] Though the Federal government had provided limited pensions for past wars, the casualty lists and veterans rolls from the Union war effort required a dramatic expansion in federal bureaucracy in order to provide the requested services and compensation.

This scholarship on the Good Death has proven that cultural ideals about death and dying influenced the course of American Civil War history; yet, historians have examined American beliefs about death in order to uncover political change, rather than a change in the beliefs themselves. As a result, this scholarship has presented a false unity in beliefs about death and dying despite the strain of war. For instance, Rable argues that a common Christian faith acted as a prism to reflect different political beliefs within different historical contexts. Though Americans might have shared a common religious worldview, they also likely adhered to that worldview with different and even changing degrees of personal piety.[21] Similarly, Faust's shift in the relationship between citizens, North and South, and the federal

---

[20] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering.* Nancy Schoonmaker also argues that mourning rituals changed over time. See Nancy Gray Schoonmaker, "As Though it were Unto the Lord: Sarah Morgan Dawson and Nineteenth-Century Southern Mourning," Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Faust and Schantz build on Philip Aries work, *The Hour of Death*, under the assumption that cultural attitudes shape historical approaches to death, and that historical events have changed the cultural practices and beliefs about the appropriate way to die. Phillippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*. trans. Helen Weaver, (New York: Vintage Books, 1982).

[21] When Donald G. Mathews opened a dialogue about the significance of religion in the South, he emphasized how religion shaped the lives of everyday believers. Most other historians have been captivated by the potential for religion to influence public and political life. Ted Ownby has perhaps come closest to examining the inner life of white Southerners in the Reconstruction era. Ownby argues that white Southerners kept the home a sacred space, which women managed, and dedicated that space to quiet prayer, harmony, and self-control as opposed to public and often violent male sporting cultures. Still, Ownby describes piety in opposition to a changing male world of violent sport, so that piety remained static within the household. Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

government required a unity in death practices that did not exist in a war torn country. After the war, white Southerners found that their sacrifices went unrewarded. The Federal government refused to help Confederates bury their dead, while dismantled state governments had to rely on local citizen groups to perform these grisly duties. In fact, Jeffery W. McClurken has shown that disabled veterans and their families turned to their local communities and, later, to their states for mental and financial support, not to the federal government. Widows would not be able to take advantage of those pensions for decades.[22] Therefore, Faust missed important tensions within white Southern society by shifting her focus from changing death practices to political relationships.

Studying grief can reveal these tensions because grieving incorporates both the cultural expectations that Faust and others have examined and emotion, an individual subjective experience. Emotion is important to study in and of itself, simply as a consequence of historical actions; yet emotions also shape the way people relate to one another, thereby influencing everything from social structures to political beliefs. As William James once wrote, each person has a mind that formulates decisions and interacts with the external world and, in the process, creates "as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him."[23] What is the boundary between that mind and society? Peter and Carol Stearns attempted to recognize the divide between internal feeling and cultural expectation by developing the term "emotionology," which refers to the "collective emotional standards of a

[22] McClurken. *Take Care of the Living*. Families, including widows, struggled to survive with many male relatives physically incapable of returning to work to support their families. To support these men, the state began a pension system that might foreshadow future forms of welfare.

[23] William James, *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), 294.

society." [24] Though the Stearnses separated internal feeling from cultural convention, they primarily advocated historicizing emotionology rather than emotions. William Reddy, however, has offered a model by which historians might examine individual feelings that arise from an inherent self along with these cultural expectations without fear of ignoring historical context. In *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Reddy argues that language structures translate individual feelings into what he calls "emotives," or feelings declared through word or gesture. As a result, feelings can arise independently within an individual, but the way that an individual declares, interprets, and maybe even feels those feelings is shaped by cultural conventions that dictate language and beliefs.[25] Therefore, by studying the emotional history of Confederate widows' grieving process we can uncover ambivalence in Confederate reactions to wartime death that created tensions between feelings and expectations.

By distinguishing between emotions and emotives, Reddy recognizes the existence of both biological, emotional impulses and cultural construction that allows for tensions to exist between widows and their communities. That tension could then shape the formation of public dialogue over the memory of the war. Furthermore, memory, like emotion, functions on both the individual, biological level and as a body of collected individual memories that form a cultural force independent of the individual.[26] In ex-Confederate cultural memory, the

---

[24] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985): 813-836.

[25] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xi-xii, 78, 95.

[26]Historians have debated about the structure by which individual memories form a cultural memory that exists outside of an individual. Scientists assumed that memory formed through a biological process within each individual mind, not considering how these individual memories might function in society. Maurice Halbwachs proposed that a collective memory existed within society and actually shaped the way in which individuals formed memories. Scholars remained uncomfortable with the pervasiveness of Halbwachs proposal, however, which left little individuality aside from the historical context, making it difficult to explain change and

Lost Cause portrayed the war as a heroic battle for a noble cause, an idyillic antebellum world where everyone, even enslaved human beings, lived happily together. Therefore, the argument followed, Confederates were justified in defending their homeland, and Confederate soldiers, both the living and the dead, could remain heroes rather than racist villains. In the postwar era, ex-Confederates crafted this narrative in essays and speeches but especially in ceremonies to memorialize the dead. Decoration Days and cemetery visits allowed Confederates to preach the Lost Cause messages and to infuse those beliefs into political philosophy.[27]

---

dissidence. Scholars like F.C. Bartlett and Phillipe Aries suggested that collective and individual memories might influence each other, allowing collective memory to change over time. See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Phillippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*. trans. Helen Weaver, (New York: Vintage Books, 1982); F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1932). Next, historians questioned how collective memory might influence society. By looking for collective memory in specific monuments, historical sites, or historical narratives and traditions, these scholars saw that collective memory and had important political ramifications, especially to nation building. Mundane rituals and commemorations incorporated the average person into a collective memory unconsciously, which also reflected the absence of individual memory from that scholarship. See Pierre Nora, "History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 7-25; Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); James Fentress, *Social Memory* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992); Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994). More recently, scholars have questioned the degree to which collective memory can exist entirely separately from individual memories. Jeffrey Olick proposed using 'collected' instead of 'collective' memories as a means of understanding that cultural memories arise out of a collection of individual memories, linking individual and collected memories. See Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," Sociological Theory, 17 (November 1999), 333-48. In a similar vein, Jay Winter's work on World War I has suggested the importance of individual memories of their unique trauma in shaping the development of a collective understanding of war and grief. See Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning.* Even scientists have begun to define a biological link between individual and collected memory by noting that memories form by strengthening relationships between neurons, so that the historical context physically alteres individual brain chemistry. See Eric Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of the Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

[27]Early work on the Lost Cause first had to define the narrative as fictional and consider how that fiction proved to be so powerful. See Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause 1865-1900 (*Hamden: Archon Books, 1973) and Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980). Once historians had separated the narrative from the historical reality of the plantation south, the conversation moved toward determining the chronology of the movement. Gaines Foster argued that after the war despondent ex-Confederates accepted defeat and abolition by creating a Lost Cause myth. From burying the dead to raising monuments, ex-Confederates built an alternative history that made their present defeat more bearable. See Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Recently, scholars have accepted Foster's timeline, but interpreted those actions as overtly, political. See William Blair, *Cities of the Dead:*

Women played an important role in these Confederate memorialization ceremonies, thereby gaining an unprecedented political voice. The responsibility for mourning the dead traditionally fell to women, and ex-Confederate women gathered their communities to bury and to memorialize the local dead.[28] Recent scholars like Caroline Janney have argued that these activities represented an overt, political act as well as mourning. Female members of Ladies Memorial Associations (LMAs) seized the opportunity to participate in and to shape the political dialogue. Even after Reconstruction, women held onto their new-found power in LMAs and competed with male veteran organizations for leadership in memory activities.[29] Ultimately, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) seized the helm in the late nineteenth-century by building monuments and campaigning for new histories of the Civil War.[30]

Much of the research on LMAs and the UDC has been organizational, in that scholars have examined the formation of these groups, their internal competition, and their ultimate significance as women's political organ. Historians have placed less emphasis on linking these activities to grief, except to mention a relative absence of personal bereavement.[31] If women played an important role in Confederate memorialization, then it would seem that widows did as well. Gross argues that speeches at the ceremonies cast widows as honorable

---

Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914 (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Caroline Janney *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008);

[28] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*; Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past.*

[29] Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*.

[30] Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters.*

[31] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 57.

women requiring protection, thus boosting southern masculinity.[32] Yet Caroline Janney, who studied a large number of the most prominent Ladies Memorial Associations, noted that LMA members "tended not to be widows." [33] This dissertation supports Janney's observation and offers an explanation as to why: the grieving process that Southerners developed during the war. Wartime death rituals marginalized widows in favor of national mourning and prevented emotional expression in public. The postwar rituals followed suit. Other than a few 'professional widows' who served as figureheads for Confederate memory organizations, most widows were either too busy to participate or did not see these ceremonies as venues to express their grief.

Ultimately, much of the story of Confederate widowhood has yet to be told. To date, scholars have examined widowhood as a means to discuss the role of independent women in Southern gender relationships. While these discussions have added much to our understanding of the Civil War South, Confederate widows' grief also needs to be explored. Recent research on death practices and the history of emotion has shown that the psychological effects of warfare can produce significant and long-lasting effects on cultural beliefs and social relationships. This dissertation will build on that scholarship to consider

---

[32] Gross has published this chapter of her dissertation as, "The United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate Widows, and the Lost Cause: 'We Must Not Forget or Neglect the Widows" *Women on Their Own: Interdisciplinary approaches* (Piscataway, NC: Rutgers University Press, 2008). That is not to say that widows were never a symbol of fallen soldiers and nationalism. For a study on how American and German war widows from World War I participated in a discussion on nationalism, see Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort*. Kuhlman argues that war widows from the Great War had a greater political voice because they had greater civil rights than widows from previous wars. Ladies Memorial Associations, however, offered women, if not widows, a political organ to speak to their communities. If a path to political influence existed in the Confederacy, then we must look for another reason why Confederate widows did not take that path. Grief might offer an answer. For one, nineteenth-century beliefs about death and grieving prioritized submission to God, which might have stifled antiwar activism amongst all Confederates. Perhaps, however, the stifling of emotion in public also contributed to silencing those who had suffered the most. More comparative research is needed to understand the comparison between nineteenth and twentieth century war widowhood, but that comparison might further add to our understanding of why anti-war sentiment might have arisen in the Great War and not in the former Confederacy.

[33] Ibid.

how Confederate widows grieved within their local communities. How did Confederate widows feel and how did they express those feelings? What tensions remained between feeling and expression, and how did those tensions influence other aspects of widows' lives? The answers to these questions will tell us a great deal about the far-reaching emotional consequences of war and, in the process, suggest unintended larger consequences for the way in which communities respond to wartime loss.

Organization and Method

This dissertation will trace Confederate widows through their grieving process chronologically by examining their personal writings, including letters, memoirs, diaries, and scrapbooks. Since blank pages provided space for introspection and reflection, these sources offer the most unmediated access available to widows' thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately, letters cannot reflect the full complexity of widows' thoughts and feelings since the process of writing filtered those thoughts and feelings onto the page, especially for writers consciously preserving their documents for posterity. A close reading for tone and for narrative inconsistencies can help identify slips of the tongue, or pen as it were, as well as moments where widows were parroting social expectations. To a certain degree, however, we must also take these women at their word so as not to place modern expectations onto their historical experiences.[34] In ways, the lack of privacy within activities like letter writing even benefits historians by placing widows in a dialogue within their friends and family over the

[34] James McPherson has argued that soldiers' letters and diaries "bring us closer to the real thoughts and emotions of those men than any other kind of surviving evidence." Widows letters often began as a correspondence with those soldiers and reflected a similar degree of honesty. Though McPherson warns historians to not "read too much between the lines," he also reads the thoughts with an eye to cultural expectations, like "conventions of masculinity," that might explain certain beliefs and expressions. I have followed a similar strategy with widows' writings. See James M. McPherson, *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12, 28, and 36.

proper way to react to loss. As a result, correspondence offers a unique opportunity to examine widows' grieving because the conversation reflects both widows' admittedly edited feelings and their communities' expectations.

Widows who left written records were an exceptional group. Only the well educated could record their thoughts and feelings and only a small subgroup of those widows then preserved their writings for posterity. Though problematic, this shortcoming does not represent as significant of a bias as it might initially seem. The Civil War was not a poor man's fight. In fact, wealthy Southerners, who had the greatest stake in the system of racial slavery, were overrepresented in the fighting. Officers who joined the Army of Northern Virginia were, on average, "slightly older," possessed almost three times the wealth of the average enlisted man, and "were more typically married."[35] At the same time, "officers were more than twice as likely to be killed in battle as were enlisted men."[36] Therefore, it is possible that Confederate widows were disproportionately wealthy as well. Still, this dissertation makes every effort to highlight not only the common burdens that Confederate widows faced, but also the ways in which their experiences differed. I have relied on census data and state records, including pension applications and mental asylum casebooks, to tell the stories that manuscript collections do not tell. Furthermore, my sample of widows' personal writings reflect the geographical diversity of Confederate widows' experiences as well.

---

[35] This estimate comes from Joseph T. Glatthaar's statistical study of the Army of Northern Virginia. Glatthaar found that Confederate officers who enlisted in 1861 were on average four years older than enlisted men, though more younger men joined the ranks later in the war. Also, Glatthaar argues that "half of all officers either owned slaves or lived with immediate family members who owned slaves." Joseph T. Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 188.

[36] Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army*, 198.

Some widows' voices will not appear in the following pages. Union widows experienced a similar loss and perhaps even faced similar cultural expectations for grieving, especially based on class. Yet Union widows had more resources at their disposal to fulfill mourning rituals, formed a smaller minority of the overall Northern population, and, in victory, would face a very different postwar world. African American women also lost husbands during the Civil War, and many would live out their lives in former Confederate states. Though Southerners, African American widows were not Confederates. They did not participate in the Confederate cause or in the construction of Confederate memory, though white Southerners sometimes encouraged African Americans to participate as evidence of racial harmony within slavery and within the Southern war effort. The experience of enslavement and the fight for freedom also led African Americans to mourn their dead differently and, likely, grieve differently from white Confederate widows.[37] Because of these differences, further research is needed to better understand African American and white Union widows' plight.

An examination of any grieving process must begin with loss. In Chapter 1, this dissertation will examine married Confederate couples' correspondence to show exactly what widows lost when their husbands died. Unfortunately, Confederate widows lost a great deal. Couples endured wartime separation reluctantly and used letter writing to remain connected across the distance, especially to perform their gendered roles in the partnership and to share their passions for one another. Though the limitations of pen and ink and infrequent in-person visits sparked some discord, these strategies worked so well that wives who became widows lost an important companion for emotional and financial support.

---

[37] See Blair, *Cities of the Dead*; David Blight, *Race and Reunion*.

After that horrific moment when a wife became a widow, communities pulled together to mourn the dead and to offer support to the bereaved. In the process, friends and family expressed and enforced cultural expectations for grieving. Chapter 2 examines the rituals that communities performed in order to bury the dead, from notifying the widow to preaching funeral sermons. In a time of war, however, few widows possessed the body and the social capital required to participate. Increasingly, communities only celebrated Confederate heroes and co-opted these moments while marginalizing widows. In ways, the condolence letters from family and friends offered clearer though conflicted advice on how to grieve. As Chapter 3 argues, sympathetic friends and family wanted to ameliorate widows' loss, an impossible task. Some writers wrote traditional condolence letters, urging widows to find comfort in God and a future reunion with the dead in heaven. Since the war challenged nineteenth-century ideals of the Good Death, other writers developed a new way to grieve that encouraged widows to preserve the memory of the dead on earth as a promise for everlasting life. Together, rituals and letters admitted that widows would grieve but encouraged widows to curtail their emotions quickly.

Reality proved quite different from these expectations. Though widows tried to tidy their initial feelings into a story that matched community expectations for grieving, Chapter 4 will show that their grief continued only to be amplified by the anxiety and even anger that accompanied their struggle for survival during and after the war. A few widows even battled with deteriorating mental health. Because of these compounded emotions, many widows felt isolated from their friends and family right at the moment when widows most needed to reach out. Chapter 5 argues that widows survived in a society with little institutional support by relying on their social networks. Widows weaved together a variety of social bonds to

create a safety net that, if crafted well, provided limited security in exchange for hidden costs. Widows maintained this system by reciprocating whenever possible and by taking advantage of the more centralized, stable pension system once it became available.

Finally, Chapter 6 will consider the implications of the tensions within the grieving process upon Confederate memory of the Civil War, both in private recollections and in public memorialization. In the postwar era, widows engaged in the present, attending social events and rearing their children, but the past could not remain in the past. Since widows' grief had been curtailed in public almost immediately, they could not express their continued grief in memorialization activities, even if they had a rare spare moment to attend. Instead, widows constructed private memorials as repositories for their grief and their memories. As a result, widows lived torn between the past and the present, unable to embrace fully the romanticized vision of the Lost Cause yet unable to express the emotions that might change it.

In the following chapters, this dissertation tells the previously untold story of Confederate widows' grief. These women's experiences illustrate the short and long-term effects of warfare upon individuals, to be sure, but also upon the relationships between people. Nearly everyone in the Confederacy lost a loved one during the war. That common loss did not bring about common cause or a common dedication to prevent further violence. Confederate communities tried to contain a grief that could not be tamed and in the process, both forced Confederate widows to lean on the loved ones they had not lost and forced those widows' feelings outside of public conversations about loss. Emotion, therefore, played a central role in shaping the postwar South.

CHAPTER 1:

LOSS

Leila Elliot and Frederic Habersham met in 1851 as two twenty-year olds attending a party in Savannah. At the time, neither lent much significance to the encounter. Fred called on a whole group of young ladies the next day, rather than just Leila, who in turn believed Fred to be a "young New York beau, thinking very much of his dress & very saucy to the ladies." Shortly after this inauspicious meeting, Fred left his childhood home to return to his business in New York City.

The next year, Leila ran into Fred again while vacationing with her family in New York. Leila's opinion of Fred improved slightly, as she thought him "very pleasant & polite." Even after Fred moved back to Savannah permanently that summer, months passed before the couple began to see each other regularly. Finally, in 1853, Fred and Leila regularly attended church and parties together, and afterwards Fred escorted her home. Through these intimate moments, the couple quickly grew to be "the merriest people in the world." Leila loved that Fred "always had something amusing to talk about," and she "always joined in any fun that was going on, being thought quite a wild girl in my day." They exchanged rings "as a token of friendship," but it was at another party in April 1853 that the pair "solemnly plighted our faith each to the other."

Fred won Mr. Elliot's blessing, and the couple became engaged. Unfortunately, Leila's father died shortly after, so they postponed the wedding until the next year. The married couple then lived with Mrs. Elliot for yet another year, at her request. In 1856, Fred

and Leila finally rented their own home, right next to Mrs. Elliot's house. Even then, Leila spent much of the hot, sickly summer in the country with her mother, apart from Fred, who remained in the city to work for his uncle.

Though still dependent upon their relatives, the couple established a firm marital bond. That union defined them as a husband and wife, not to mention parents, who were woven into a larger network of close family relations. They set up house, established themselves in the social scene, had three children, and lived, Leila bragged, as a "happy family."[1]Their relationship conformed to the gender norms of the day—particularly those of the wealthy, upper social classes; nevertheless, Fred and Leila had developed their own little corner of the world from which they viewed the darkening clouds of war.

At the onset of the conflict, Fred felt torn between his desire to serve in the army and his responsibilities as a father. Leila was ill and with child. Balancing between the two duties, Fred served as a Lieutenant stationed in Savannah and sent Leila safely outside the city limits where they remained in close communication. On Leila's urging, Fred did not follow the company to Virginia. Impatient to fight, he did ultimately leave as a volunteer aid, which gave him the freedom to return home when the couple's child and Fred's namesake died after living only one day.

In February 1863, Fred finally received a Lieutenancy in a company bound for Virginia, forcing the happy couple to say their final goodbyes. Parents as much as spouses, their parting was more hasty than romantic. Their son, Ralph, had accidentally cut off his brother's thumb with a hatchet, necessarily drawing much attention from Fred's departure. The deployment did not end either Fred or Leila's roles as a parent or as a spouse. They

[1] Leila Habersham, "A Sketch of the Life of Frederic Augustus Habersham," in *A Savannah Family 1830-1901*, ed. Anna Habersham Wright Smith (Milledgeville, GA: Boyd Publishing, 1999), 30-31, 37-46, 54-56.

continued to write each other at least once a week, sharing mundane news, conversing about their children, coordinating finances, and bemoaning their time apart from one another.[2]

In May 1863, a shell fragment struck Frederic in the head and killed him during the battle of Chancellorsville.[3] All the planning, all the dreams, all the shared desires suddenly vanished. And yet, Leila's responsibilities remained. Still a mother of three children, Leila would have to shoulder the entire burden of providing for her family without her trusted husband.

Leila's life had changed dramatically, and compensating for and reacting to that loss would shape the rest of her life. In order to understand her grieving process, we must first understand, what did the loss of a husband mean to Leila and to widows like her?

Wartime correspondence shows that ill-fated couples found emotional and practical support in their marriages, and, with hard work, continued to rely on each other despite being separated during the war.[4] In letters to one another, spouses shared the intimacies of daily life and expressed their feelings—love, affection, and even anger—to one another. Letters were so intimate that some couples hoped they would be burned because "there are expressions and intimations between husband and wife which are admissible and even sacred which we would rather not have even our children read."[5]

---

[2] We have records largely of one side of this conversation, but Fred's letters made note of Leila's frequent correspondence as well. Her last letter to him remained unopened at the time of his death. See Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 65-159.

[3] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 161, 163.

[4] Most of the correspondence herein represents husbands and wives that death would separate during the war, like the Harrisons. These pairs were likely no different from those husbands and wives who avoided death's fate, but this narrow focus will provide continuity with widows' experiences as they diverged upon the death of their husbands.

[5] Carter Henry Harrison to Alice Harrison, 29 March 1859, Harrison Family Papers, 1756--1893, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (hereafter cited as VHS).

Yet we can read these letters, and they speak volumes about the relationships that would prove to be casualties of war. War did stretch the bonds of marriage. Wives proved more reluctant to separate than their husbands in part because that division disrupted the traditional gendered division of labor. To make matters worse, war disrupted letter writing and visits that might have connected distant spouses, sparking a good deal of anxiety on both sides. That anxiety quickly turned into frustration, sparking frequent fights. Nevertheless, couples overcame these tensions by writing intimate letters to one another, providing a space where they could share their passions for one another and divide tasks as they had done before the war. In the end, wives who became widows unexpectedly lost a companion with whom to share their feelings and a partner to share everyday tasks.

Separation

When war came, Confederate couples faced a difficult choice: separate and defend their nation or remain together and support their families. Each spouse assessed the situation individually, so that even couples jointly backing the Confederate cause could diverge in their willingness to sacrifice for their principles. Ultimately, husbands, as men, had more power to fulfill their wishes. Their wives remained at home and struggled with an increased burden.

Husbands left home, often voluntarily, in order to protect their loved ones from what they saw as a grave threat, a task made easier by the natural enhancement of masculinity that the war provided. At first, military service seemed satisfying. A general sense of energy, a *rage militaire*, propelled men to the front more than family pulled them home. Besides, many of these men ardently believed in the slavery and patriarchy that white Southerners fought to

defend.[6] George Johnson was one of those men. He owned a plantation with twenty-six slaves that supported his wife, Ann, and five of their seven children. In 1861, Johnson mused, "Sometimes I think we owe every thing to our country, but at others, I think we should as private citizens, attend our own business and let the government take care of itself."[7] Johnson ultimately decided "no man could maintain his own self respect" if he remained home when "his duties for the present take him elsewhere."[8] He would become the Governor of the pro-Confederate government in Kentucky and a part-time soldier.

The energy dissipated quickly. Combat, death, and disease reduced enthusiasm. After surviving battles at Shiloh and Perryville, Captain Pierre Costello felt, "after all the hardships I've under gone I need rest & a little quiet."[9] Even camp life turned from adventurous to mundane. Robert Wilkinson drew a picture for his wife of his tent and included the caption "shit poor. specimen of camp life at night."[10] Tough conditions seemed minor in comparison to the lack of free mobility, which chafed men who believed they fought for liberty.

That voluntary service became involuntary added to the grievances of overworked and underfed citizen soldiers who were unused to the hardships of war.[11] The Confederacy

---

[6] For enlistees in the Army of Northern Virginia in 1861, half lived with or were slaveholders. That does not include other connections to slaveholding, such as renting land or selling crops. See Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army*, 20. For a larger discussion on *rage militaire* and ideological reasons for fighting, see James McPherson, *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14-29.

[7] George W. Johnson to Ann Johnson, 15 October 1861, George M. Johnson Papers, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky (hereafter cited as KHS).

[8] Ibid.

[9] Pierre Costello to Wife, 26 October 1862, Capt. Pierre Costello Civil War Letters 1861-1862, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama (hereafter cited as ADAH). See also Carter to Alice Harrison, 11 July 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[10] Robert Andrews Wilkinson to Mary Farrar Wilkinson, 19 March 1862, Wilkinson Stark Family Papers, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana (hereafter cited as HNOC).

[11]See W. W. Black to [Melinda H Black], 27 May 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin (hereafter cited as UTA); J. K. Callaway to D.

would have to mobilize a larger percentage of its populace in order to fight a more numerous enemy. New recruits could not simply replace the initial volunteers because losing veteran troops would be devastating, so in 1862 the first Conscription Act extended enlistments to three years and enacted a draft that pushed many other soldiers into military service.[12] Subsequent Conscription Acts would extend the ages eligible for draft, gradually pushing more men into military service who had stayed behind out of commitment to their dependents.[13]

Even though many men desired to return to their families, they upheld their commitment to the Confederacy, whether voluntary or forced, at least for the time being. Though Corporal Richard Milner yearned to come home almost immediately after he joined the army, a year later he still assured his wife "I am willing to do all I can and as long as I can for my country."[14] Patriotism conflicted with family commitments and had to be justified. Lt. Joshua Callaway mourned for home in 1862 but still affirmed to his wife that he had "no desire to quit the army till our independence is establish…after which I will return to

---

[Callaway], 15 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; Giles P. Chapman to Wife, 26 September 1862 and 6 October 1862, Chapman Family Papers 1858-1883, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida (hereafter cited as SAF), and Lawrence D Nicholls to Wife, 15 September 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana (hereafter cited as LaRC).. That did not stop some from trying to get out. See Matt Jordan to Wife, 10 November 1862, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3 (hereafter cited as the James M. Jordan Letters), Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia (hereafter cited as GDAH).

[12] Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy*, 1924, Reprint (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 9-17.

[13] Ibid., (140-143).

[14] R. W. Milner to Wife and Babies, 29 October 1861 and 5 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also W. W. Black to Wife, 23 June 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Pierre Costello to Wife, 16 August 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters 1861-1862, ADAH; and Thomas Garnett to Emma L Garnett, 5 April 1863, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia (hereafter cited as LOV).

my loved ones and enjoy the sweets of liberty, home, and family."[15] Over a year later, Joshua was still trying to convince his wife that he stayed out of a sense of duty rather than recreation or ambition. As he stood overlooking Missionary Ridge, Joshua wrote that he "would be perfectly content to be at home with my wife and never be thought of after I die."[16] He would die on that ridge a few days later.

Risks, hardships, and loneliness could have, and increasingly did, pull soldiers from the front. Even so, many soldiers remained committed because victory seemed the best path to homecoming. As Brig. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart explained, thinking of home "rivets me to front, and makes me anxious to end this war" rather than leave on a temporary furlough.[17] In their minds, J.E.B. and his brothers in arms had to finish the fight they had started.

While husbands firmly justified their absence from home, wives were less willing to part with their spouse, even to defend a cause many of them supported. Before the war married couples worked together to help the family succeed, albeit through gendered tasks. Many women worked with their husbands in the fields or managed the household while also assuming the childcare and domestic duties, more than their fair share. If men left, wives would have to take on even more burdens in increasing isolation.[18]

---

[15] J.K.C. to Dulcinea Callaway, 5 June 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA.

[16] J. K. Callaway to Mrs. J. K. Callaway, 19 November 1863, Joshua K Callaway Papers, UTA. See also James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 9 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[17] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 26 February 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. The Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers will become the Stuart Family Papers, ca 1846-1925. See also T. J. Jackson to Anna Jackson, 22 August 1861, copied in Anna M Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D.D., 19 Sept 1863, T. J. Jackson Papers, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, LOV.

[18] Jean Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), xiii, 21-30; Carol K. Bleser and Lesley J. Gordon, *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xi; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 75-83.

As a result, wives cautiously warned their husbands to avoid war. Leila Habersham supported the Confederacy, yet convinced her husband to remain at home for a year while she was ill and with child. For many wives, especially mothers, war threatened the security of their family. When Angus McDonald cheered the Confederate defense of Fort Sumter, his wife, Cornelia, warned him "war means misery, deserted and desolate homes, and the loss of all we hold dear."[19] Before the war, Cornelia claimed to dislike the system of slavery, wondering how "the men I most honored and admired, my husband among the rest, could constantly justify it."[20] The family owned six slaves despite her scruples.[21] Lincoln's call for troops to march through her home state, Virginia, brought Cornelia behind the Confederate cause. By the time her beloved Virginia seceded, she "was surprised at myself when I felt my pulses bound at the sight of the first Confederate flag I saw."[22] Cornelia had come to embrace the cause, yet she remained wary of the price her family and her community would have to pay.

Wives who tried to keep their husbands at home found that they had little power to do so. Cornelia never had the chance to object since Angus volunteered without even consulting her. He returned home to bring two sons to the front, leaving the eldest to protect the women

---

[19] Ibid., 249

[20] Cornelia Peake McDoanld, *A Woman's Civil War: A Diary, with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862*, ed. Minrose C. Gwin (New York: Gramercy Books, 1992), 247. Cornelia's anti-slavery stance is an admittedly extreme example. Many Confederate women supported the system of slavery. For additional examples of women who encouraged their husbands to remain at home at least for a while, see Pierre Costello to Wife, 14 December 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH; Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 66-7; Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 19 July 1864, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[21] *1860 U.S. Federal Census-Slave Schedules*, Magisterial District Number 4, Frederick, Virginia, M653, page 24 (accessed 20 August 2012, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1860slaveschedules&indiv=try&h=1055783).

[22] Ibid., 253.

and the plantation.[23] Short of traveling to the front, there was little that wives like Cornelia could do to keep an able bodied man at home.[24]

In the end, most couples accepted that separation was simply a wartime reality but also hoped that their time apart would be temporary. After all, God was supposedly on their side. As William Black wrote to his wife, Melinda, "We must both trust in God to bring me safely back to you."[25] Bloody battles demonstrated that hope alone would not return soldiers home. To cope, couples added a caveat. If God did not will reunion on earth, then the couple should "live so we will be sure to meet in haven [*sic*]."[26] This alternative provided a sense of security that was divorced from denominational interpretations of resurrection. Occasionally, fear of the unknown slipped into conversations, especially for the men who were less demonstratively religious, but for the most part spouses held firmly to their hope for salvation.[27] Until their reunion, on earth or in heaven, many couples settled on the same creed

---

[23] Ibid., 255-6. For a similar example, see Maria Hubard Diary, 15 July 1861 and 27 July 1861, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS.

[24] See Sallie Milner to Husband, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.R. W. Milner to Wife, Children, 19 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[25] W. W. Black to Melinda H. Black, 28 March 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA. See also C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 1 August 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida (hereafter cited as UF); James M. Jordan to Wife, 1 March [1862], James M Jordan Letters, GDAH; Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Rihard W. Milner Collection, GDAH. McPherson, *For Cause & Comrades*, 62-76.

[26] John F. Davenport to Wife, 1 June 1864, John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH. See also Thomas T. Bigbie to Wife, 31 March 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Armistead Galloway to Wife, 13 August 1862, Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983, Special Collections and Archives, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama (hereafter cited as AU); Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. For more information about how attitudes towards death, including salvation, helped soldiers die, see Mark Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The American Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[27] A. T. Martin to Wife, 3 September 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 21 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; James S. Alexander to F. Jane Alexander and Children, 11 and 12 [December] 1864, James S. Alexander Collection, AU.

as the Denneys. "I wish I could see you do the best you can and I will do the same," Sinai Denney wrote her husband.[28]

Unwillingly left alone, wives found that the difficulties of life on the home front only confirmed their wariness towards wartime separation. Overburdened families struggled with chronic illnesses and communicable diseases on top of traditional household duties while men served at the front. Childcare further sapped wives of their strength to tackle the daily burdens of family and farm management.[29] Without help, childbirth proved to be an even more anxious event.[30] Col. William Dorsey Pender desperately wished to be at home with his wife, Fanny, "even for twenty four hours about the time of your greatest suffering." He instructed her to rely on others to take care of their eldest child, Turner, and to "take particular pains and do not do any thing to injure your womb, ~~and to prevent loosing~~ or injure your figure."[31] Dorsey waited anxiously for weeks, worrying about her condition even after the birth.[32] In 1863, Amanda Holcomb shouldered an even greater burden. While her soldier-husband battled a prolonged illness, her daughter, Josephine, died at home. Amanda withheld

[28] Sinai Denney to Dave Denney, 23 August 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU.

[29] Husband to Roxanna Dearing, 23 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[30] Some women expressed more anxiety than men. See [Lawrence D Nicholls] to [Lisa Nicholls], 20 August 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. Other husbands expressed a bit more concern about similar situations. See Pierre Costello to Wife, 24 March 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH and Husband to Roxanna Dearing, 13 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; and JEB to Flora Stuart, 26 September 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[31] Dorsey crossed out a section of this sentence. See William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender, 14 May 1861, William Dorsey Pender Papers, 1860-1863, #1059, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (hereafter referred to as SHC).

[32] See William Pender to Fanny Pender, 8 May 1861 and 31 May 1861, William Dorsey Pender Papers, 1860-1863 #1059, SHC.

the information from her husband, fearing that the tragic news would worsen his condition. Tragically, she would have to bear his loss as well.[33]

Help unfortunately seemed far away. Before the war, wives would have had many friends, relatives, and neighbors to turn to in addition to their husbands. As the war progressed, women felt increasingly isolated and vulnerable on their farms because conscription took many sons, fathers, and overseers away from home, while enslaved human beings claimed their freedom by running away as the Union army marched closer and closer.[34] The traditional labor supply dwindled. On large plantations, white women felt vulnerable without white men to protect them from the perceived threat of roving slaves.[35] Wives might flee into the arms of their parents or in-laws or even simply the city nearest to their husbands if they could afford to leave home and travel across treacherous roads.[36] Otherwise, most wives could only turn to a shrinking network of local friends and family for help.

---

[33] Chas. Keton to Amanda [Holcomb], n.d., John Holcomb Papers, UTA. For more on the loss of a child during the war, see also Elizabeth Fahs to Anna Smith, 3 July 1863, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS and Mother [Mary Deans] to Anna Smith, 20 July 1863, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[34] Moore, Conscription and Conflict, 146.

[35] Eliza D. Miller to Jefferson Davis, 4 February 1864, Papers of Jefferson Davis, Rice University, Houston, Texas (hereafter cited as PJD); J. W. Patton to President Davis, 25 July 1864, PJD; Margaret Jaconny to President Davis, November 1861, PJD; E. L. Tebbs to Jefferson Davis, 7 November 1862, PJD; M. C. Hutchinson to President Davis, 18 February 1863, PJD.

[36] For staying with parents, see Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924,"ADAH. For staying near the husband, see Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 1 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; See also Husband to Roxanna Dearing, 10 January 1865, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; J.E.B. [Stuart] to Flora Stuart, 16 January 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For a description of how Emilie Helm traveled with her husband during the war, see Rena Niles, "Uncle Abe's Nephew a Republican At Last," Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

On their own, wives struggled to produce or to purchase the daily goods necessary for life.[37] As Maria Hubard's family gradually sunk further into poverty, she tried taking in and finishing clothes for money. Initially, receiving money for work was a "singular event in my life," but the shine wore off to a "poor business."[38] Earning money had less meaning when it could not buy products. In 1863, Evelina Helms told her husband that he would have better luck with shoes at the front because sole leather cost six dollars a pound and "thread is twenty five dollars a bunch." Because no carding could be found, she had to pay for someone else to card her wool, "and they steal it half."[39] Some states began distributing cotton cards to wives and widows of dependent soldiers in addition to currency. Still, the number of struggling families increased each year of the war.[40] Even wealthy wives faced hardships, at least in their minds. Helen Plane complained of the difficulty of making leather without adequate supplies while acknowledging that she did not even construct the shoes, instead teaching "a negro man to make them for her."[41]

---

[37] S. D. Beazely to Jefferson Davis, 2 November 1864, PJD; A.T. Martin to M.E. Martin, 3 October 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Eliza to Mother [Ann Johnson], 11 March 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; [Louisa Jordan] to Husband, September 1863, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; J. M. Jordan to Wife, 21 June 1864, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; Mrs. C. Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," Part One, Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, GDAH.

[38] Maria Hubard Diary, 10 September 1861 and 27 September 1861, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS.

[39] Evelina Helms to [Celathiel Helms], 8 October 1863, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3; R.W.M. to Wife, 30 November 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[40] "The Support of Indigent Families of Alabama Soldiers Serving the CSA 1861-1865," abstract, in Carlotta P. Mitchell, "Indigent Families in Alabama During the War Between the States," W.P.A. Project #1584, Military Volunteer Family Assistance Records, 1861-1865, ADAH; *Laws of Florida* (1863), 38; *Laws of Florida* (1864), 26, 30-31. For a first hand account of the need for goods, see Elizabeth Fix to Jefferson Davis, 21 February 1865, Stanard Family Papers, 1707-1950, VHS.

[41] Mrs. C. Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," Part One, Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, GDAH. See also, W. W. Black to Wife, 23 June 1862, William W. Back Family Papers, UTA; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, n.d., Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

While struggling separately, husbands and wives balanced their duty to their family and their duty to their country based on different priorities. J.E.B. Stuart wrote to his wife, Flora, "when I left you, alone, you thought, sick in body and heart in Wytheville, loving as you said my country better than my wife, you thought you would never forgive me, now look back and tell me which was right."[42] Wives were often unconvinced; separation took their primary partner in tackling life's challenges.

Bridging the Distance

Once apart, couples began to realize how much they relied upon each other and reached out across the miles. Perhaps the loneliness on the war and home fronts even helped push them together. To stay connected, husbands and wives relied on two primary means of communication during the war: letter writing and furloughs. Of the two, letter writing was by far the more common and accessible link between the war and home fronts because it proved to be a more reliable method than furloughs, which became unavailable as the war dragged on. These letters and visits sustained marriages, yet they also sparked tension within relationships as spouses longed for a deeper connection with each other.

In the prewar era, men and women wrote letters to businesses and to distant family members, but most couples rarely spent enough time apart to write to each other consistently, except perhaps during their courtship. As a result, writing during wartime was a new and sometimes difficult form of communication for them. At first, many writers did not know what details to include. Maj. Carter Harrison worried that his letters were "unfruitful" because they described "the dull monotonous Camp Pickins."[43] Others found sentiment more

[42] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 30 March 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[43] Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS. See also Sinai Denney to David Denney, 26 September 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU.

challenging to convey. "I hardly know how to write you so as to make you fully comprehend my feelings at our singular separation by the present troubles," confessed George W. Johnson to his wife, Ann.[44] Without speech cues and body language, written words proved a challenge even for the well educated. Couples complained that they could "tell you So mutch [*sic*] more than I can write."[45] Even the most poignant prose could still feel empty. When Sallie Milner received a letter from her husband, she complained, "I can press it to my lips but no sweet kiss returned from your…lips."[46]

Beyond language, simply constructing a letter was difficult. Paper ran short, as did ink, limiting the number and length of letters.[47] Though couples shared surplus paper, pens, and pencils, these materials were vulnerable to the elements.[48] Time could prove scarcer than materials. At the beginning of the war, Col. Thomas Jackson warned his wife, Anna, "You must not expect to hear from me very often, as I expect to have more work than I have ever had in the same length of time before."[49] When husbands did find the time to write, their

---

[44] George W. Johnson to Ann Johnson, 15 October 1861, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[45] James S. Alexander to F. Jane Alexander, 21 July 1864, James S. Alexander Collection, AU. See also Thomas T. Bigbie to Wife, 11 June 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Asa T. Martin to Mary A. E. Martin, 13 May 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Sallie Milner to Husband [Richard Milner], 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; and Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 22 August [?], Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[46] Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[47] See C.B. Bellamy to Wife, 14 November 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; William Lang to Becca Lang, 24 November 1863, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; A. T. Martin to Wife, August 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[48] Husband to Roxanna Dearing, 9 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 10 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; John Holcomb to Mandy, 1 January 1863, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA.

[49] T. J. Jackson to Anna Jackson, 29 April 1861, copied in Anna M Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D.D., 19 Sept 1863, T. J. Jackson Papers, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, LOV. Many other soldiers found this prediction confirmed. See James S. Alexander to F. Jane Alexander, 18 September 1863, James S. Alexander Collection, AU; W. W. Black to Melinda H. Black, 27 May 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Thomas J. Clark to Martha Clark, 7 September 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF; James Dearing to Roxanna

handwriting was often difficult to read. Soldiers frequently drafted letters on tree stumps or lying on the ground, with nothing to check their spelling. Joshua Callaway teased his wife, "My dear I hope this letter will be more ledgible [*sic*] than the one you complain of so much."[50] Other couples faced steeper challenges. Private Thomas Bigbie sent letters to his wife but did not receive news in return, most likely because she could not write. He urged her, "ant [*sic*] ann will right [*sic*] for you."[51]

Even with the proper resources, letter writing proved inconsistent and slow, sparking much frustration. If delivery occurred without incident, a rarity during war, spouses generally received letters from their partner in one to two weeks. Greater distance correlated with longer transit times.[52] When J.E.B. Stuart returned to Virginia from Gettysburg, Flora's letter reached him in just three days.[53] Calvin B. Bellamy, who had marched to Virginia from his home in Florida, remarked that waiting for a week and a half was "the quickest I ever got one" from his family.[54] Couples initially felt bewildered when some letters disappeared in the

---

Dearing, 12 December 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, 3 May 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[50] J. K. Callaway to D. Callaway, 10 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA. See Also, T. T. Bigbie to Wife, 25 December 1864, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH.

[51] Thomas T. Bigbie to [Mary Bigbie], 12 May 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH. This case has been preserved because Thomas could write. There were undoubtedly many other couples who could both not write and had to rely on others to communicate for them.

[52]See John F. Davenport to Mary Davenport, 2 April 1864, John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Sinai Denney to David Denney, 21 September 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU; R. W.M. to Wife, 30 November 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Lawrence Nicholls to Wife, 20 August 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC; J.E.B. to Flora Stuart, 22 September 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[53] J.E.B. to Flora Stuart, 12 August 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also J. K Callaway to D. Callaway, 19 June 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; D. M. Denney to S. A. Denney, 3 October 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU; A. L. Galloway to Eliza Galloway, 5 July 1862, Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983, AU; Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, 12 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893.

[54] C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 7 April 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF. Sometimes months could pass in between letters. See See W. W. Black to Wife, 13 July 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; James

notoriously unreliable Confederate mail service or bunched up, often collecting in a soldier's pocket until he found an opportunity to send them or amassing them while battle interrupted delivery lines.[55] Pierre Costello marveled to his wife after moving southward from a recent battle that he had "again reached a Country from which we can hear from home to day I received about twenty letters off [*sic*] all dates among them four or five from you which explains your apparent silences."[56] As a result, many couples found that sending letters and goods through family, friends, or soldiers on leave travelling between the front and home "seems to be the only safe way of getting letters through."[57]

The inconsistency of letter communication sparked a common response: anxiety. Many couples worried that the delay signaled trouble. Soldiers cut off from home worried about their families since, as the household head, they felt responsible for the viability and

---

M. Jordan to Wife, Father, Mother, Brothers, and Sisters, 10 May 1863, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; Asa T. Martin to Mary A. E. Martin, 24 May 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[55] For difficulties, see Pierre Costello to Wife, 17 November 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH; John F. Davenport to Mary Davenport, n.d., 22 December 1862, John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 11 August 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Mrs. C. Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," Part One, Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, GDAH; J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 24 March 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For instances where the cause of failed delivery was known, see James S. Alexander to F. J. Alexander, 7 February 1864, James S. Alexander Collection, AU; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 18 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 116; Richard F. Ridgway, *Self-Sufficiency at All Costs: Confederate Post Office Operations in North Carolina, 1861-1865* (Charlotte: North Carolina Postal History Society, 1988).

[56] Pierre Costello to Wife, 26 October 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, ADAH. See also, J. S. Alexander to Wife and Children, 21 June 1863, James S. Alexander Collection, AU; C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 8 January 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF.

[57] J. K. Callaway to D. Callaway, 15 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA. See also W. W. Black to Wife, 13 July 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; C. C. Bellamy to Wife, 11 January 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; Pierre Costello to Wife, 17 July 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH. These carriers included soldiers going home on furlough, men going on recruiting missions, and the sick or wounded returning to their units. T. T. Bigbie to Wife, 7 December 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; J. K. C. to D. Callaway, 10 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; R. W. Milner to Wife, 8 October 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Robert Wilkinson to Mary Wilkinson, 6 June 1862, Wilkinson Stark Family Papers, HNOC.

stability of the family unit.[58] On the home front, wives feared that short, infrequent communication signaled grave danger.

Unresolved anxiety could quickly turn into tension. Dismayed at the slow mail service and uncertain of the cause of delay, husbands and wives did not know whom to blame, so they vacillated between accusing each other and reproving the mail service. In calmer moments, couples gave each other the benefit of the doubt. "I know that you have written often, as I have to you, but I presume my letters to you are intercepted and detained as I presume yours are to me," George Johnson wrote his wife.[59]As anxiety and loneliness peaked, however, frustration became pointed. Pierre Costello teasingly questioned his wife, "have you moved off so as to change your post office, gone off with a Soldier or become too lazy to write, let me know which."[60] Men seemed to snap more quickly. In crowded camps, soldiers chafed when they saw other men receiving letters from home and wondered why their wives did not write.[61] When Joshua Callaway received a letter from his wife after a long delay, he responded, "Surely you can afford to spend two hours twice [a] week to afford me so much pleasure and then have time to do all that spinning you speak of."[62]

---

[58] James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 5 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; John Holcomb to Wife, 21 May 1863, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA; A. T. Martin to Wife, 3 September 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Lawrence D. Nicholls to Wife, 31 May 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC.

[59] George W. Johnson to Ann, 16 December 1861, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. See also J. K. Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, 13 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, [] April 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[60] Pierre Costello to Wife, 25 February 1862, Captain Pierre D. Costello Civil War LEtters, 1861-1862, ADAH. See also T. T. Bigbie to Wife, 24 December 1864, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, ADAH.

[61] For instances where men mention that others can send and receive letters, but they have not received letters, see C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 10 November 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; J. M. Jordan to Wife, 14 February 1863, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; R. W. M. to Sallie and Babies, 12 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[62] J. K. Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, 5 June 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA. Unfortunately, Duclinea's response has not been preserved.

All the complaints showed how desperately couples depended on these inconspicuous sheets of paper and ink. Many men and women felt as Pierre Costello did that "as drowning men catch at straws even so do I reach after home communication."[63] When John Holcomb received his first letter from his wife, Amanda, he "could not suppress my tears to of saved my life. Some of my friends asked me if any of my family dead when I told them they were all well…they laughed at me…"[64] Receiving a letter was cause for celebration, no matter how risky. While on picket, Sgt. David Denney heard that a letter from home waited for him. "It came to the next Post to me & the boys hollarred [*sic*] & told me that had a letter for me. I got out of the Ditch and ran threw [*sic*] the whistles of mimys [*sic*] and the bursting of Shells to get my letter."[65] Similarly, Sallie Milner assured her husband, "You cant imagine how glad I was to get the few lines trased [*sic*] by your precious hand, hearing from you is one of the grates [*sic*] pleasures [*sic*]."[66] Richard likewise felt, "the pen of my wife is precious to me."[67]

Because letters provided a valuable connection through which to share intimate and often emotional details, couples saw privacy, when requested, as a reasonable expectation. Rebukes over violations highlighted that belief. When a family member opened one of J.E.B. Stuart's letters to Flora, he angrily replied, "If they are meant for others perusal they are not

---

[63] Pierre Costello to Wife, 2 October 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH.

[64] John H. Holcomb to Amandy, 16 October [?], John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA.

[65] D. M. Denney to Sinai Denney, 24 August 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU.

[66] Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[67] R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner, Babies, 18 August 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. For a similar couple, see Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 1 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, 30 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

worth having."[68] Scarcity of time and materials encouraged some couples to include family and friends within the privacy bubble. For instance, the Milners valued each other's letters but had no compunction in sharing them with Richard's mother because, as he claimed, "I write no secrets."[69] This rule did not apply to all couples or even to all letters. Authors could designate specific sections for their spouse's eyes only. In a letter William Black wrote to his wife, he marked the section where he professed his love and desire for her as, "This side is for you to read & no one else, & tell some of it to no one."[70]

Nevertheless, even private letters could not replace the daily interactions of married life. Few couples had lived apart frequently before the war, and letters often proved unsatisfying for the very reasons they were fulfilling: connecting on the emotional level spurred a desire for more. News about the farm, children, or battles could relieve worries or cause them. No letter could provide the human contact, intimacy, and reassurance of the face-to-face reunion many couples craved during a long separation.

Furloughs were an oft looked for and rarely granted luxury during the Civil War. In letters, wives constantly mentioned a desire to reunite. Overburdened and needing assistance at home, wives were not shy of asking for the help that they expected from their husbands. Flora Stuart also requested that her husband to come to her many times, including once when

---

[68] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 19 April 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[69] R. W. Milner to Wife and Babies, nd., Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also, C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 19 March 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF.

[70] W. W. Black to Wife, n.d., William W. Black Family Papers, UTA. See also Asa T. Martin to Mary A. E. Martin, 24 May 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; James Turner to Anne Turner, 18 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas (hereafter cited as RU).

she was ill and another when their daughter died.[71] She kept asking even though her husband continued to refuse.

This desire produced both rewards and risks for wives, including pregnancy.[72] "I wish that you could come home now, it would be a comfort to the family and a great happiness to me to see you once more," wrote Ann Marie Turner to her husband, James.[73] He assured her that she should have "no fears about having to play 'young lady' to me this winter for I see no chance of my getting home."[74] He promised that by the time he returned, "there will be no cause to fear, and I will be willing to act as a passionless lover towards his most prudish sweetheart love."[75]

Husbands reassured their wives that the desire was mutual. J.E.B. Stuart wrote to Flora that he was "getting very impatient to see you- the days are growing long and the ides of March look a long way off…I am tired of writing I want to talk to you Dearest."[76] Similarly, Pvt. Armistead Galloway told his wife, "it is imposible for me to tell you half how bad I want to se you and the little children it nerly brakes my heart when I can recall the swete moments that I have past with you."[77]

---

[71] J.E.B. to Flora Stuart, 30 July 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 2 November 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[72] See also, Faust, *Mothers of Invention,* 123-124

[73] Ann Marie Turner to Husband, 23 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. For general instances where women asked for men to come home, see [James Dearing] to Roxanna Dearing, 11 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Asa T. Martin to Mary [Martin], 13 January 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[74] Husband to Anne Marie Turner, 8 February 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[75] Ibid.

[76] J. E. B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 17 February 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[77] A. L. Galloway to Eliza Galloway, 5 July 1862, Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983, AU. See also D. M. Denney to S. A. Denney, 3 October 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU; A. T. Martin to Wife, 3 September

For men, however, leaving camp posed a great risk. Married soldiers made up a significant percentage of the entire Confederate army, including approximately 37.5% of the Army of Northern Virginia.[78] The draft age gradually extended to forty-five and then to fifty, so that married men with dependent families increasingly joined the ranks as earlier enlistees wished to visit their loved ones.[79] With so many married men serving, not every soldier with a family could visit home. The furlough system alleviated some pressure by granting the longest-serving soldiers with families in the greatest need leave to visit home, but in busy times the system only allowed one man per one hundred soldiers to obtain a furlough.[80] To make matters worse, major campaigns could halt even granted furloughs, so soldiers waited until moments of peace and then clamored all at once to go home.[81] With the market glutted, only those in crisis or with a little luck made it home.[82]

Couples could avoid having to rely the furlough system if wives traveled to their husbands instead. Such meetings required women to travel independently close to the front

---

1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 8 September 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, 1825-1894, UF.

[78] Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia: A Statistical Portrait of the Troops Who Served under Robert E. Lee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 6.

[79] Moore, Conscription and Conflict, 140-1, 308-9.

[80] William Blair, *Virginia's Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 90-91.

[81] See Lawrence D. Nicholls to Louisa Nicholls, 1 November 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC; Robert Andrews Wilkinson to Mary Farrar Stark Wilkinson, 8 July 1862, Wilkinson Stark Family Papers, HNOC. For the problem with too many soldiers leaving the regiment at one time, see C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 20 May 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF.

[82] See Mrs. W. B. Bass notation, n.d., in W. G. Bass to Wife, 6 October 1864, in Historical Records Vol. 1, Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy, SAF. See also James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 11 October 1863, James M. Jordan letters, GDAH. For instances where husbands visited home without mention of reason, see James S. Alexander to F. Jane Alexander, 7 February 1864, James S. Alexander Collection, AU; C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 2 July 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], MS 90, Polk Family collection, University of the South Archives and Special Collections, Sewanee, TN (hereafter cited as UOS).

and often within military camps, far from an ideal situation for most women.[83] The Stuarts persevered despite hazards. During the war, Flora followed J.E.B. on the "outskirts" so they could meet "on the fringe of battle."[84] J.E.B. reasoned that good weather risked battle and poor weather made travel dangerous.[85] As such, the difficult arrangements necessitated constant communication. Well-laid plans still carried risk. At one point, J.E.B. reassured Flora a "rockway…could drive you out of the way of immediate danger of attack."[86] Ultimately, he told her "If you want me 'come a 'runnin,' when you can."[87] Living conditions such as these were turbulent and often available only to officers who had the necessary combination of wealth and mobility. As Lawrence Nicholls estimated, board for a family cost $2.50 per day.[88] Few could afford the additional cost.

Poorer couples less frequently found ways to reunite. Rank determined flexibility more than geography or even wealth. [89] On rare occasions, wives took the radical step of enlisting with their husbands. Many years after the war, Lucy Gauss claimed to have joined the army with her husband, Bryant, at the start of the war. Once pregnant, Lucy left for home

---

[83] James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 13 November 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 17 and 18 December 1863, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

[84] "Romance of Civil War is Recalled in Passing Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart," May 1923, clipping in UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume II 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH. For the position on having a woman in camp, see Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic,* 66.

[85] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 19 February 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[86] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 28 May 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For travel difficult and safety concerns, see also Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, n.d., Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Lawrence D. Nicholls to Louisa Nicholls, [?] and 25 December 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC; J.E.B. to Flora Stuart, 11 August 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[87] Ibid. For more letters involved in the conversation about Flora visiting, see letters from J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS for the following dates: 23 December 1861, 8 June 1862, 1 October 1862, 10 December 1862, 3 April 1863, 19 April 1863.

[88] Lawrence D. Nicholls to Wife, 5 December 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC.

[89] See Thomas J. Clark to Wife, 30 June 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF.

in December 1862, just before Bryant died at Fredericksburg.[90] Other women followed the army in supporting roles, such as laundresses. Despite the expense, wives visiting husbands provided a wartime reunion that accommodated the inflexible schedule of a soldier and did not challenge the husbands' sense of duty.[91]

If wives did not relocate, dutifully-serving Confederate soldiers faced few options to reunite with their families. With their wives pressing for a visit, soldiers continued to apply for furloughs, even if they had little hope themselves of receiving one.[92] When these applications were declined, soldiers still faced their wives repeated and increasingly harried calls for help. These men faced a choice between their duty and their family.

Some married soldiers chose to desert their post.[93] For men like Pvt. James M. Jordan, hope had gradually deteriorated into desperation. In 1863, James was still "encouraged in regard to my chance for a furlough" because two others in his company had returned to take care of an ill relative.[94] By the next year, James grew desperate. He wrote for his father and Bud to round up an AWOL soldier so that James could earn a twenty-day

---

[90] Richard H. Hall, *Women on the Civil War Battlefront* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 190-1. Several similar stories abound, sometimes with little evidence to support them. Even the story of the Gause's was transformed over time, which Hall shows and corrects in *Women on the Civil War Battlefront*. The presence of these distorted stories suggests that these types of situations did occur, but the instances were likely not very often.

[91] For additional examples of women visiting or living near their husbands, see James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 26 February 1865, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 30 April 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Frances Polk, "Leonidas Polk: A Memoir written by his wife for their children," MS 90, Polk Family collection, UOS; Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 7 May 1864, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[92] R. W. Milner to Wife, Babies, 13 December 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also James K. Callaway to D.d Callaway, 18 April 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 21 March 1864, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

[93] A study on widowhood self selects for soldiers who either did not desert or would return to their units. For more information on the effect wives' letters had on husbands' decisions to desert, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[94] James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 11 October 1863, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

furlough.[95] Ultimately, James, like many soldiers, worried about their family's solvency, ended up going AWOL himself.[96] Married Confederates, especially fathers like James, were more likely to desert than other soldiers were.[97] Washington Waters spoke for many men when he told his Colonel, "I had started home to provide something for my family to eate [*sic*]" and that he intended to return.[98] For couples teetering on the edge of poverty, desertion provided the only reliable way to visit home during the war.

If a soldier did not desert, then he had to justify his decision to his wife, who expected his help. That conversation took one of two directions. First, soldiers dramatically professed their desire to return home, yet each time qualified that desire with excuses that made a visit impractical, even harmful, for their families. Asa and Mary Martin discussed furloughs for the entirety of his service. In December 1861, Pvt. Martin skipped a 20-day furlough in order to wait for a 30-day one.[99] A few months later, he pointed to the fact that "old coulnel Jones would not let a married man come" because "they would do just like he would stay with his wife."[100] Besides, he pointed out, "I expect it would be wors [*sic*] to part the next time then it was be fore."[101] Likely after Mary continued to insist on a furlough, Asa finally argued that it would cost fifty dollars to travel home. "You need the money that I would spend," he told Mary. Asa allowed Mary to make the final decision, and it appears that he did not return

---

[95] James M. Jordan to Wife, 6 January 1864, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH. For another creative scheme, see James Turner to Anne Marie Turner, 18 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[96] James M. Jordan to Wife, 11 June 1864, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

[97] Glatthaar, *Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia*, 16.

[98] Washington Waters to Wife, 23 December 1863, Washington Waters Papers 1863-1864, SAF. Luckily, Waters was only demoted to private for his actions.

[99] A. T. Martin to Mary Martin, 19 December 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[100] A. T. Martin to Mary, 18 February 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[101] A. T. Martin to Mary A. E. Martin, 23 February 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

home before his death in June 1862.[102] The conditions Asa established for coming home—an approved, extended, and inexpensive leave of absence—led to a pattern of request and parry that satisfied no one.

Second, quite a number of soldiers freely admitted that duty reigned above even the gravest of family struggles. High-ranking officers who believed the Union posed a greater danger to their family's well being than their own absence from home most frequently used this rationale. While shielding the Confederate retreat from Antietam, J.E.B. Stuart received a letter from Flora describing the dangerous condition of their daughter's health. J.E.B. remained at the front. "I am entrusted with the conduct of affairs the issue of which will affect you, her and the mothers and children of our country much more seriously than we can believe," he wrote.[103] The child would die the next day. Though in a less dire situation, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson agreed with Stuart. He told his wife Anna, "I can't be absent, as my attention is necessary in preparing my troops for hard fighting, should it be required, & as my officers & soldiers are not permitted to visit their wives & families, I ought not to see mine."[104] For these soldiers, love required separation not reunion. The challenge lay in

---

[102] A. T. Martin to Wife, 23 February 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. See also C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 2 July 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF. Confederate Service Record of Asa T. Martin, 12th Alabama Infantry, M311, R213. RG109, National Archives. (accessed 6 August 2012, http://www.fold3.com/s.php#query=Asa+Martin&preview=1&t=26).

[103] J.E.B. to Flora Stuart, 2 November 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Carter Harrison to Alice Harrison, 8 July 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; General Joseph R. Anderson to William E. Pearce, 1 July 1910, Biographical sketch of Robert S. Peace in "Biographical Sketches of Confederate Officers and Soldiers", United Daughters of the Confederacy Virginia Division Papers, #21706, LOV.

[104] T. J. Jackson to Anna Jackson, 4 November 1861, copied in Anna M Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D.D., 19 Sept 1863, T. J. Jackson Papers, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, LOV. See also W. W. Black to Wife, 13 July 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 20 November 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 19 July 1864, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

convincing their wives that "I would give any thing in the world to be with you, but I cannot and I know that you would rather have me here," as Francis Smith argued.[105]

That these conversations continued indicates that wives likely disagreed with both rationales, or at least stated their own terms. Whether soldiers sidestepped their wives' requests for furloughs through excuses or patriotic duty, furloughs continued to come up in conversation, sparking some marital conflict. Eventually, only imagination could soothe couples' desire to see one another. After a year and a half apart, James Jordan wrote home, "O dear Louisa, I often meet with you and our sweet little children in sweet dreams while I slumber. O your gentle form and sweet countenance would even visit me at Fort Sumter in a nap of some ten minutes."[106] Wives felt similarly. Evelina Helms wrote to her husband, "It is morning now and I dreamed last night that you came home, but Oh, 'tis all a dream."[107] Imagination could sooth loneliness or become a reminder of absence. According to Pierre Costello, "during the day they give me no time to think of anything but drilling & military exercises but at night my thoughts revert homeward & every lineament of my loved ones is traced over & over again."[108]

Overall, the quest for a face-to-face meeting during the war left couples discontented, often with each other. At best, "Our meetings during this war must necessarily be

---

[105] Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 11 July 1862, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[106] James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 6 January 1864, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH. See also, Joshua Callaway to D. Callaway, 5 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA.

[107] Evelina M.A.E. Helms to Celathiel Helms, 8 October 1863, Celathiel Helms Letters, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, GDAH. See also Sinai Denney to David Denney, 3 August 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU.

[108] Pierre Costello to Wife, 25 February 1862, Captain Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH. See also W. W. Black to Melinda Black, 28 March 1862, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender, 14 May 1861, William Dorsey Pender Papers, 1860-1863 #1059, SHC.

unsatisfactory, and our partings abrupt," as J.E.B. Stuart described.[109] He and his wife were lucky. Many men and women, like Calvin and Clarissa Bellamy, endured longer separations and felt "it is all I can do to Bare it," even struggling to remember the images of home.[110] At worst, discussion of wartime visits produced marital conflict rather than physical closeness. Wives continued to pressure their husbands for help, but, short of desertion, husbands faced few options outside of justifying their continued service. In the end, the hope of reunion helped couples prove their affection, but letters remained the primary link between husband and wife during the war.

Bonds of Marriage

Letter writing and furloughs sustained the bond between husband and wife. In a marriage, men and women gained new responsibilities to their families and to their communities by taking on complementary and gendered roles that helped define their place within a larger network of friends, family, and neighbors. Even though wartime conditions forced men and women to act outside traditional gender roles, letter writing provided a space where couples could reassert their commitment to each other and to their social role—husbands gave instructions on farm management and wives emphasized their child rearing and domestic duties. Through tackling the daily chores of life together, spouses turned to each other for companionship, fostering an emotional connection. Couples passionately professed love and vented anger in their correspondence. Emotional bonds did not guarantee a loving relationship or eliminate contrived emotion; nevertheless, marital relationships

[109] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 29 April 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[110] Calvin served as a Private. C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 20 May 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF.

extended beyond legalities to become the central source for spouses to find physical and emotional support.

In a time of war, both men and women took on tasks outside of their gendered roles. Though soldiering provided an aura of masculinity, men living in camps had to cook and sew, as no woman could do it for them. After a year in the service, Pvt. Marion Hill Fitzpatrick bragged to his wife, Amanda, "I got my clothes clean with but little trouble because I had soap. I do not mind washing atall now." When a shirt wore out, he "patched it good the other day. I can patch fine now."[111] Later, he would turn his skill into an enterprise by mending fellow soldiers' clothes for "high pay."[112]

Wives, in turn, took over the duties on the farm, from grinding corn to butchering hogs. Whenever possible, they turned to white male friends and family or perhaps to enslaved human beings for assistance with hard labor. Phillip Lewis worried that his wife, Pamela, had "so much to do & no kind friend to help you do anything," but she did locate a male friend to help her "send down and bring up my corn."[113] It was impractical to rely on others for every task, however, so wives worked hard to support the family. Marion instructed Amanda to "pitch in like a man" and butcher the hogs for spareribs and chitlings because, "you must be the man and woman both now you know."[114] A month later, Marion rejoiced to hear that Amanda had plenty of meat for the winter.[115]

---

[111] M. H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 5 March 1863, in Jeffery C. Lowe and Sam Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda: The Civil War Letters of Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, Army of Northern Virginia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

[112] M. H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 24 February 1864, in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda*.

[113] Philip P. Lewis to Pamela Lewis, 16 April 1863, Lewis Family Papers, 1856-1863, VHS.

[114] M. Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 16 December 1863, in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda*.

[115] M. Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 13 January 1864, , in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda*.

At the same time, spouses reasserted their gender roles within the marriage by writing letters to one another. In the moment that a letter was read or written, words could convey an identity that actions could not. Writing home, husbands listed instructions for farming, purchasing and selling goods, and managing money. Though unable to perform these tasks themselves, directing their wives allowed men to assume the role of provider as much as possible. For example, James Alexander told his wife, Jane, to keep enough corn to support herself and to sell the rest.[116] When possible, husbands asked other men to take on the heavy labor. The wealthy physician Thomas Garnett encouraged his wife, Emma, to "follow the advice of our friends" and to rely on servants and a Mr. Jennings to take care of the ditching, manure, and wheat pens.[117] Even when men encouraged their wives to take on masculine responsibilities, husbands used verbal gymnastics to emphasize their wives' femininity. Marion Fitzpatrick encouraged Amanda to “brave up” in order to “make a cool calculation on your business,” later praising her efforts to raise money.[118] Still, he urged Amanda to not "brake yourself down."[119] In return, Amanda also emphasized her gendered tasks in letters to her husband. She wrote about her own weaving and their children but spoke vaguely about

---

[116] James S. Alexander to F. Jane Alexander, 18 September 1863, James S. Alexander Collection, AU. See also, C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 8 January 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; D. M. Denney to Sinai and Children, 24 August 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU; R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Babies, 2 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40 GDAH.

[117] Thomas Garnett to Emma L. Garnett, 27 August 1861, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV; Thomas Garnett to Emma L. Garnett, 9 August 1861, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV. See also, James Autry to Jeanie Autry, 17 November 1862, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; C.B. Bellamy to Wife, 7 April 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; J. K. Callaway to Dulcine Callaway, 13 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Ma, 29 September 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Husband to Anne Marie Turner, 14 August 1862, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU

[118] M. H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 16 June 1862, in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda.*

[119] M. H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 2 January 1863, in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda.*

the farm, as Marion noted.[120] Similarly, Evelina Helms noted that high prices both prevented her from selling their corn and from buying the materials needed to make clothing.[121]

Spouses often sent goods along with their letters, an act that further confirmed their gendered responsibility to provide for one another. In one direction of the exchange, wives gave their husbands homemade food and clothing. As winter approached, Mary Bigbie sent her husband, Thomas, clothes from home. Thomas appreciated the supplies, though he complained that the pants were too small around the waist.[122] A few months later, Mary also passed on some "provisions," which Thomas seemed to delight in even more.[123] In the opposite direction, husbands sent home money and purchased goods. As often as possible, Thomas forwarded his paycheck to Mary, telling her "to use it as you see proper," and included necessary manufactured items, such as needles.[124] An infrequent pay scale and the

---

[120] M.H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda Fitzpatrick, 9 June 1862, in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda.* See also Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 June 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[121] Evelina Helms to Celathiel Helm, 8 October 1863, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3, GDAH.

[122] T. T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 25 December 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH. See also Pierre Costello to Wife, 14 December 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 1 November 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Sinai Denney to David Denney, 26 September 1864, Denney Confederate Letter Collection; AU; R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Babies, 5 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[123] T. T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 14 February 1864, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH. See also Thomas J. Clark to Wife, 30 June 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF; Sinai Denney to David Denney, 23 August 1864, Denney Denney Confederate Letter Collection, AU; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 7 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[124] Thomas T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 12 May 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Thomas T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 11 June 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Thomas T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 24 December 1863, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Thomas T. Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 25 January 1864, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH. See also James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 13 November 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Mrs. C. Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," Part One, Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, GDAH; J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 10 December 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

scarcity of goods constricted the flow of supplies on both ends, yet couples kept up a steady trade for as long as possible.[125]

Sharing the burdens and tasks of daily life developed a strong emotional bond between husband and wife. Husbands and wives shared their deepest feelings with one another, relying on each other for sympathy or even just venting. Some couples found that romance blossomed out of an affectionate courtship while others developed a trusting partnership through years of working together. Most developed a degree of both dynamics, and all encountered rough patches of anger and frustration, especially when tested by war.

Men, especially newlyweds, often dramatically professed their love and affection for their wives in their letters home. James Dearing was a particularly demonstrative new husband. Letter after letter, he wrote how "life my darling has no charms for your husband without you."[126] Similarly, Joshua Callaway told his wife, "for it is you for whom I live."[127] Wanting to leave no doubt about his affections, William Black more bluntly stated, "I don't think I should have any desire or love for any other woman ever; I shall love you only & love you dearly."[128] Such love inspired some husbands to praise their wives as "the best, sweetest

---

[125] For struggles with availability of goods see C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 2 July 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 1 August 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, FU; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 5 December 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS. For struggles with pay, see C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 10 November 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; A. T. Martin to Mary Martin, 18 February 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Washington Waters to Wife, 23 December 1863, Washington Waters Papers 1863-1864, SAF.

[126] James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 30 January 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS. See also Francis Smith to Anna Smith, 22 August 1862, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS;

[127] J.K.C. to Dulcinea Callaway, 19 May 1862, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA.

[128] W. W. Black to Melinda Black, n.d., William W. Black Family Papers, UTA.

& most amiable of all women."[129] In turn, the husband hoped that his wife's "affection for me is as true as love affection can be."[130]

Women described similar affections but did so by praising their partner rather than articulating their own feelings. Many did speak of love. "I can find no words to express my tender love & devotion to such a husband as mine," wrote Alice Harrison to Carter.[131] Yet an affectionate, happy partnership seemed as important as love. Etta Kosnegary remembered her husband as "always so good & kind to me I never never [*sic*] can forget Him."[132] Focusing on happiness may have allowed women to praise their relationship without referring to passions not deemed appropriate for their sex. Using different words, wives expressed, with some restraint, a similar feeling of emotional attachment as their husbands.[133]

Piety encouraged both husband and wife to see their affection within marriage as sacred. After all, marriage was a holy union blessed by God. "The holy fires of love still burn freshly and glowingly on the altar of the heart," wrote Thomas Garnett as he tried to comfort his wife over their necessary separation.[134] Communion with God also permitted couples to

---

[129] Husband to Anne Marie Turner, 18 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913,, RU. See also R. W. Milner to Wife, Babies, 22 September 1861, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH.

[130] James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 11 October 1863, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

[131] Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 6 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[132] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (hereafter referred to as LSU). See also Maria Hubard Diary, 30 September 1861, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, VHS; Marie Turner to Husband, n.d., Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[133] Declarations of love from women are fewer in number than from men. This correlates with the fewer number of letters authored by women that survived the war.

[134] Thomas Stuart Garnett to Emma L. Garnett, 15 July 1861, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV.

commune with each other. In J.E.B. Stuart 's "sober hours of reflection when 'none but God is near,'" he felt particularly close to Flora.[135] She was his "second self."[136]

Drawn together in an affectionate and even sacred union, many couples saw themselves as partners, albeit with different social roles. Marriage was not simply a patriarchal household constructed of the male head and dependents. The bond between husband and wife complicated this structure. George W. Johnson described his affections as extending outward to his loved ones by circles, "the first embracing the wife the loved one only, then to family and children and then to ones country."[137] For George, the affection between husband and wife was "dearer…than all other affections of the human soul."[138] Asa Martin put his feelings more simply. "I will be yours if you will be mine an if you find one just as true never exchange the old for the knew," he wrote his wife.[139] Not all marriages were as loving, and none rested on gender equality, yet the affection between spouses bound them together as partners nonetheless.

Occasionally, declarations of love turned into declarations of desire. Again, husbands wrote more forwardly than their wives about their physical relationships. James Dearing, the newlywed, frequently told his wife that he longed to "press you to my bosom."[140] In

---

[135] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 14 February 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[136] Ibid.

[137] George W. Johnson to Ann Johnson, 25 October 1861, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. See also R. W. Milner to Wife, Babies, 5 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[138] Ibid.

[139] A.T. Martin to Mary A.E. Martin, 6 December 1861, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. For other discussions on romantic love in the Civil War, see Stephen W. Berry, *All that Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[140] See James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 12 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS. See also James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 18 October 1864 and 5 December 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

remembering the couple's brief moments together, James confided that it made him "sad every time I look where I laid down on the Buffalo robe-with you sitting by me."[141] Not just newlyweds desired physical intimacy. J.E.B. Stuart wrote Flora on one December evening, "I wish I had mine in bed with me this cold blustering night."[142] Such explicit references were rare. Couples more frequently mentioned modest physical contact. William Black wished from his wife "one sweet hug & kiss from your sweet lips," while Lawrence Nicholls signed his letter, "to my wife 10.000.000.000 kisses."[143] Wives more freely participated in these tamer suggestions. As Marie Turner closed a letter to her husband, she wished she could "kiss you goodnight instead."[144]

Less obvious endearing phrases perhaps more frequently communicated affection or recognized companionship. Couples addressed nearly every letter to "My Dearly beloved wife" and "My dearly loved and darling Husband."[145] Signatures also bespoke fondness. The popular phrases "your affectionate Husband until Death" or "I remain your Wife Til death" or even simply "yours forever" declared and bounded the marital union.[146] Couples wrote with a

---

[141] James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 31 July 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[142] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 23 December 1861, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[143] W. W. Black to Melinda Black, n.d., William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Lawrence D. Nicholls to wife, June 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, LaRC. See also A.L. Galloway to Wife, Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983, AU.

[144] Marie Turner to Husband, n.d., Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. See also Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 10 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[145] John F. Davenport to Mary Davenport, 20 August 1862, John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 27 June 1861 Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS. See also, James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 5 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Leonidas Polk to Frances Polk, 27 September 1863, MS 90, Polk Family collection, UOS.

[146] C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 23 January 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; Sinai Denney to Dave Denney, 21 September 1864, Denney Family Letters, AU; Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; This was more a common phrase than a theological argument. See also, Thomas Bigbie to Mary Bigbie, 28 August 1862, Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; Thomas J. Clark to Wife, 29 July 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF; A. Galloway to Wife, 15 June 1862, Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983, AU; James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 21

playful tone that revealed a casual intimacy by affectionately calling each other "friend" and "lover" or more unique pet names like "Cookie" or "Wifey."[147] Thomas Jackson famously used Spanish pet names to refer to Anna as his "esposita" and he as "your queridissime" when they were alone.[148]

These images of a loving partnership represent the best parts of married life. Even affectionate marriages were not always open and loving, especially in a society with deeply instituted gender inequality. Distance challenged relationships, and some husbands and wives questioned their partner's commitment. Though affectionate, the Martins doubted each other. In a letter, Mary worried that Asa would "fall in love with some of these virginey girles [*sic*]." Asa deflected, "I have never found her yet I cant get a way from camp." He immediately apologized, "you must excuse me for my foolishness I must have some fun." Still, her jealousy made him wonder. Asa latched on to Mary's comment that she was "getting young again." He jokingly responded, "I recon I will loose my wife if I have to stay in the army long so I will be a pore widow."[149]

March 1864, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; Richard Milner to Sallie Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Richard W. Milner to Sallie Milner, 18 August 1861, GDAH.

[147] For references to the partner as a friend, see Sinai Denney to David Denney, Denney Family Letters, AU; James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 17 December 1863, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; Asa T. Martin to Mary A. E. Martin, 27 March 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. For reference to lover, see James M. Jordan to Louisa Jordan, 11 October 1863, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH. For cookie, see Eliza J. Kendrick Walker , "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," 89, ADAH. For Wifey, see J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 29 January 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also M.H. Fitzpatrick to Amanda, 10 September 1863 in Lowe and Hodges, ed., *Letters to Amanda*; William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender, 30 May 1861, William Dorsey Pender Papers, 1860-1863 #1059, SHC.

[148] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson)* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 122; and Notation by Anna Jackson, 1863, on copy of letter T. J. Jackson to Anna Jackson, 22 August 1861, copied in Anna M Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D.D., 19 Sept 1863, T. J. Jackson Papers, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, LOV. In this notation, Anna Jackson says 'your queridissime' is Spanish for "the dearest possible."

[149] A. T. Martin to Mary Martin, 18 February 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. See also, C.B. Bellamy to Clarissa Bellamy, 11 January 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF.

The Martins worried, but kept their jealousy light hearted. A healthy degree of insecurity reinforced the importance—and permanence—of a marriage; too much could tear it asunder. After Col. Dorsey Pender mentioned flirting with admiring women several times, his wife, Fanny, wondered that if she had said the same "would it be more immoral in me than in you?" Though Fanny admitted Dorsey loved her and would be sorry, she bit back that nothing he had ever said or done "ever pained me so acutely or grieved me so deeply."[150] The Stuarts also engaged in a quarrel over fidelity. Flora disliked her husband's flirtatious nature and tendency to socialize and receive gifts from young ladies who found the dashing cavalryman attractive. Once, when she felt it strange that he wrote such a brief letter from Richmond, a social center, J.E.B. called her a doubting Thomas. He offered to let her "thrust your hand into my side and bid you test there the pulsations of a heart that has for nearly eight years, been, and is yours."[151]

Anxiety, jealousy, and tension could bring out the worst in a marriage. At low points, couples responded with condescension and passive aggressive attacks. After Richard Milner chastised his wife for doubting his faithfulness, he turned to correcting her grammar. She had been addressing her letters to "Dearest Husband." He replied, "come now you have not got another [Husband]…but if you have I suppose it should be some satisfaction to know that I am the dearest. Just use the positive there instead of the superlative degree. I don't tell you of

---

[150] Fanny Pender to William Dorsey Pender, 30 June 1861, in William W. Hassler, ed., *One of Lee's Best Men: The Civil War Letters of General William Dorsey Pender,* 1965, reprint (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 44.

[151] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 29 March 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Catherine M. Wright, "Flora Cooke Stuart," *Encyclopedia Virginia,* accessed 19 July 2012, http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Stuart_Flora_Cooke_1836-1923. Each couple faced different challenges, of which fidelity was only one. Jealousy could extend outside of fidelity. For instances of husbands and wives being jealous of children or other relatives, see James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 4 September 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Babies, 18 August 1861 and 5 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

this in a complaining way but know that it is entirely an oversight in you."[152] His attack seemed born out of the frustration at the lack of control he had over the direction of his relationship while so far apart from his wife.

Such anger and frustration did not necessarily negate the evidence of love and affection; couples simply expressed a range of emotions within their unique relationships. The question then becomes, how authentic were these emotional declarations? Letters as a medium offered writers the opportunity to alter their emotions. Within the letters, men encouraged false cheerfulness while women worried that their husbands minimized dangerous situations. Authenticity and manipulation, happiness and sadness, all served as dimensions within each relationship that fluxed depending on the couple and the situation.

In 1861, Alice Harrison lost a child and saw her husband leave for war. She tried to avoid writing a "gloomy letter" but could not ignore her grief. Worried she was failing as a mother and wife, Alice admitted "I feel so unlike being cheerful."[153] Alice spoke the emotional paradox of letter writing. Conversation permitted emotional intimacy, so that if the writer seemed "gloomy" the reader, through that emotional bond, could feel similarly. As a result, couples tried to stay cheerful, usually at the husband's request. Flora Stuart also faced the death of a child during the war, as well as illness and the stress of her husband's newfound popularity with young ladies. J.E.B. tried to cheer her up. After their daughter's death, he wrote, "You must be brave and not give way to gloomy forebodings, remember fortitude is woman's specialty and patience her most shining virtue….above all do not let the

---

[152] R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Babies, 18 August 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 13 November 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[153] Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 10 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 1 July 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS. See also Alice Harrison to Carter Harrison, 1 June 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

thousand and one imaginary ills which your mind may conjure up distress you."[154] Flora must have not found J.E.B.'s dismissive attitude convincing because a month later, he threatened Flora to "be cheerful and contented" for "if you dote on me too much I will be taken from you."[155] When Flora sent him a serious looking carte-de-visite, J.E.B grew exasperated and requested a cheerier portrait.[156] Flora's inability to maintain a positive tone in the face of tragedy deeply bothered him. After overhearing a man complain that his wife only found happiness when she was unhappy, J.E.B. said the story reminded him "of my darling when she will insist on looking on the dark side in preference to the bright!"[157]

While wives tried to keep an up-tempo tone, husbands struggled to quell anxiety. Battle, sickness, and death encompassed military life. Soldiers faced a conundrum: how to write about their lives at the front without worrying loved ones at home. The solution many landed upon was to recount terrifying details with an air of confidence that encouraged their wives to not be "uneasy."[158] After the Battle of Chickamauga, Benjamin Glover quickly assured his wife that he was safe. He had only been hit "by a spent ball which did not hurt me

---

[154] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 26 February 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[155] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 15 March 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[156] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 15 March 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 6 April 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[157] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 5 October 1863, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For similar instances of husbands encouraging their wives to be cheerful, see Pierre Costello to Wife, 9 September 1861, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH; James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 30 January 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Thomas Garnett to Emma Garnett, 9 August 1861, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV; James Turner to Anne Turner, 18 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. Women much less often wrote to tell their husbands to be of good cheer. For one example, see Evelina M.A. E. Helms to Celathiel Helms, 8 October 1863, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3, GDAH.

[158] Sallie Milner to Husband, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. For Richard's response, see R. W. Milner to Wife, Ma and Babies, 19 October 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

very long. It gave me the headache for a day or two [*sic*] but I am as well as ever."[159] Benjamin died a few years after the war from that head wound. Mrs. Glover's reaction to this letter is lost, yet it is likely that many wives saw through soldiers' blustering. In fact, women wanted to know the condition of their loved ones, ill or well. Sallie Milner worried about her husband's health and safety as he headed off to war.[160] Richard's letters home only mentioned his illness and instead described the Virginian countryside, so Sallie worried that his letters did not reveal his "true condition."[161] Instead of censuring himself, Richard later wrote about a Typhoid Fever epidemic, adding, "I don't want you to be uneasy about me now because I write you just as I feel and shall always do so."[162]

Marriage relied on this performance of false casualness and cheer in order to demonstrate commitment to the partnership. Couples did manipulate their feelings when they believed it would help their spouse or their relationship. Nevertheless, the presence of some fabricated or suppressed feelings did not mean that all emotional expressions were inauthentic. In fact, attempts at prescribing emotions stand out because of the difficulty in doing so. Couples wanted to share their thoughts and feelings with one another, so their writing, even when manipulated, frequently betrayed their true emotions. Furthermore, spontaneous declarations of love and affection occurred spontaneously enough to trust that they expressed real feelings rather than an empty performance.

---

[159] B.R. Glover to Betty Glover, 22 September 1863, Benjamin R. Glover Letters, 1862-1865, ADAH.

[160] Sallie Milner to Richard Milner, 17 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[161] R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Babies, 18 August 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Children, 23 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH and R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner and Children, 29 July 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[162] R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner, Ma and Babies, 19 October 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

Though letter writing might have made it easier to falsify feelings, it might have also deepened them. As the old adage "absence makes the heart grow fonder" suggests, husbands and wives found that separation could intensify their affection for one another. According to William Black, "The further I get from you the better I love you."[163] J.E.B. Stuart also noted the benefits of absence. Though Flora wished to see her husband like so many other wives, J.E.B. rebuffed her by arguing, "we do enjoy each other so much when we do meet that it seems somewhat to make amends for the weeks of absence. While away we can look forward to the joy of meeting again."[164] It is unclear if Flora agreed that the rush of reunion was worth the pain of separation.

Many men, living on their own for the first time, developed a new appreciation for their wives as well. Richard Milner imagined that if he made it home, "I shall no [*sic*] how to appreciate you fully" because he had missed Sallie's "cheering smiles and words of comfort."[165] With this new appreciation, men believed they could improve their marriage. William Black wrote his wife that after the war, "I think I can be a better husband than I have been, be easier pleased & better satisfied & take more pleasure in laboring for the comfort of my sweet wife & sweet children."[166] Jonathan St. Clair was more practical. After several years of war, he wrote his wife, "If I ever get home again I will be more help to you than I

---

[163] W. W. Black to Melinda Black, n.d., William W. Black Family Papers, UTA.

[164] J.E.B. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 16 January 1862, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[165] R. W. Milner to Sallie Milner, Ma and Babies, 19 October 1861, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 2 July 1862, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UF; T. J. Jackson to Anna Jackson, 17 May 1862, copied in Anna M Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D.D., 19 Sept 1863, T. J. Jackson Papers, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, LOV

[166] W. W. Black to Melinda Black, n.d., William W. Black Papers, UTA.

ever have bin for you ought to see me cook and wash."[167] Unfortunately, these men would not have an opportunity to enjoy such an improved married life.

Love, jealousy, and anxiety—all were present in Civil War marriages. One emotion did not exclude others. Some married couples enjoyed more happiness, while enmity, or even violence, no doubt invaded other relationships, particularly since the patriarchal South encouraged unions for money and social prominence as much as romantic love.[168] Nevertheless, many married couples developed a deep affection that wives would miss. The emotional lives of Civil War couples were complex, but simply being separated during the war did not break the bonds of marriage.

Conclusion

Despite separation, marriages continued. Couples hoped to reunite, so they kept up their normal married life as much as possible. That life had two dimensions: a sense of identity as a wife or husband and an emotional bond between spouses. Letter writing and, to a lesser degree, wartime visits allowed spouses to embrace their gendered roles and to express affection. Conflicts expectedly arose. Though wives urged their husbands to return home, few did or could. Anger and resentment flared, and spouses questioned one another's fidelity. To keep the peace, couples suppressed or manipulated their feelings but still continued to express their affection and desire for one another. Though marriages were not perfect, husbands and wives looked to each other for emotional support and for help

---

[167] Jonathan D. St. Clair to Molly St. Clair, 16 July 1863, Jonathan D. St. Clair Letters, #33958, LOV.

[168] There is likely a bias towards loving relationships in the historical record. Unhappy women would have been less likely to preserve their husbands' letters. For more information on these relationships, see Laura Edwards, "Law, Domestic Violence, and the Limits of Patriarchal Authority in the Antebellum South," *Journal of Southern History* 65:4 (1999): 733-770.

supporting their family. They believed their relationship to be significant. The marriage bond drew the couple together as partners, if not necessarily equal lovers.

When a husband died, a wife therefore lost a great deal. Death destroyed an essential component of her social identity and a significant emotional attachment, leaving a wife abandoned with no one to share the burdens of daily life. The support offered through a helping hand on the farm or a bent ear to hear concerns was gone. More practically, wives lost financial and legal security and a clearly defined role within society. Being a wife had become a component of a woman's expressed social identity and her own self-identity. Widows would have to address such a significant loss. The question that widows and their communities asked was how.

CHAPTER 2:

DEATH RITUALS

On May 6, 1863, Leila strolled through the garden with her friend, Maggie, and her daughter, Meta. The sixty by ninety-foot walled Victorian garden neighboring her family's house provided an oasis for the women to escape from the troubled world outside. The women might have discussed the recent news of a great battle in Virginia. Though unnerved, Leila "felt convinced all was well with Fred & we would hear in a day or two." Danger and anxiety fell away as the girls walked along concentric paths weaving through extravagant flowerbeds, scented with the bloom of spring.

Suddenly, a window overlooking the garden opened, disturbing the peaceful protected atmosphere. Leila's Aunt Sally stuck her head out and shouted in an excited voice "Leila! come home, Come home!" Fear seized Leila's heart, so she turned and ran through the street up the stairs to the house, where her Aunt Sally waited at the door. Ushering Leila inside, Sally broke the news: Frederic was dead. Leila stood stunned. The door opened again, revealing a flood of Frederic's loved ones—his mother, brother, sister-in law, children—all "weeping & wailing." At that moment, Leila's mind went blank.[1]

The news had come via telegram from Fred's Captain, John Fraser. Leila hoped it had been a mistake and "waited in agonizing suspense from day to day not even knowing if the

[1] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 160.

fatal news was true, doubting, hoping."[2] A few days later, a letter from the same Captain Fraser put an end to her doubt.

Now a widow, Leila likely began donning the characteristic black crepe that identified her station. Fred had earlier expressed his displeasure at the custom, writing that Leila could wear mourning clothes for her relatives, but "I have fully made up my mind to oppose with all my might your doing so for any of mine."[3] Despite his objection, Leila would dress in mourning the rest of her life.[4]

All around Leila, the Elliott-Habersham family bustled. Carrie Elliott moved into her sister's home, "seeing after everything, taking care of children, writing notes, seeing visitors & taking care & trouble out of my sight."[5] Frederic's mother visited Leila every day to cry with her, and a week later Leila's mother arrived "& was to me only what a mother can be in hours of darkest trial & woe."[6] Meanwhile, Robert Habersham retrieved his brother's body from Virginia. Friends and family helped Leila choose the location for her husband's final resting place and reburied one of their children, who had been lost in infancy, near that gravesite.[7]

At times, it seemed like Leila's friends and family moved around her rather than for her. When Robert returned with Fred's body, he refused to let Leila view the badly mangled

---

[2] Ibid, 161.

[3] Ibid., 51-2.

[4] Ibid., 271.

[5] Ibid., 163

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 161-3, 172.

and likely decomposing body.[8] Leila accepted this advice, yet balked at the suggestion that she should not attend the upcoming funeral service. Her family evidently worried about publicly exposing Leila's present emotional state, so much so that Leila could only attend after she promised to "be quite calm if they would only let me go."[9]

On May 17, friends, family, and Leila attended the funeral of Frederic Augustus Habersham at Christ Episcopal Church in Savannah. Leila, her two boys, and Fred's mother, brother, and cousin all rode in the first carriage, proceeding to the top pew in the church as the rows filled in behind them.[10] As Leila walked in, she saw the metallic case covered with flowers in which Fred's body lay. Viewing the coffin made Leila's brain reel, and she feared "I should sink upon the floor."[11] The strong chords of the organ's "solemn dirge" steadied her. As the priest read from the Common Book of Prayer, "I am the resurrection & the life," Leila began to feel comforted and even hopeful for her husband's salvation.[12] The service over, she walked behind the coffin to the grave to watch the casket lowered into the ground, along with the tiny casket of her infant child. Leila "watched the earth cover them as calmly as if my heart had turned into stone," just as her family had wished.[13]

Leila's experience bore only slight resemblance to antebellum death rituals dependent upon the Good Death. According to Drew Gilpin Faust, nineteenth-century Americans

---

[8] Ibid., 173.

[9] Ibid., 174.

[10] Leila's youngest daughter waited outside the church with her nurse.

[11] Ibid.

[12] "The Order for the Burial of the Dead" prescribes the Minister to begin a funeral service by singing this verse, which Leila mentioned in her memoir. See Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 174; *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments; and Other Rite and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David* (Philadelphia: Burns & Sieg, 1860).

[13] Habersham, A Sketch of Frederic, 174

imagined the ideal death at home, surrounded by loved ones who might witness the last moments that proved the dying person's soul rose to heaven.[14] Little doubt surrounded death, so families easily moved into deep mourning and quietly buried the body with a religious ceremony that would confirm to a wider circle of friends and family what those at the deathbed already knew.

Death in war, however, was usually sudden and far from home, forcing Confederate communities to modify these rituals. Without the deathbed scene, a new ritual, notification, eased the confusion and doubt that plagued the home front. Tradition demanded that widows don mourning clothes next, so thousands of suffering families competed for scarce materials, inspiring creativity and diminishing the power of the black imagery. The number of funeral services also declined, as few families could locate and then transport the bodies of their loved ones. Without the body, funerals shrunk in number yet expanded in congregation as, increasingly, Confederates could only provide proper funeral services for heroic Generals.

How did widows like Leila experience these new rituals? No mere custom, death rituals brought together bereaved friends and family members in order to accept the death of a loved one. As widows began to join this community of mourners, they moved from a private space that permitted the free expression of emotion to a public space that demanded control and restraint. And yet, as the war progressed, widows found themselves increasingly marginalized during these rituals. With so many white Southerners in mourning, death rituals began to honor a collective, Confederate loss more than individual sacrifice.

---

[14] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 6-17. The entire first chapter, "Dying", is informative in the ways in which soldiers and their families tried to reconstruct the Good Death. See also Bernadette Loeffel-Atkins, *Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils: Mourning Rituals in 19th Century America* (Personal Publication, 2008, revised).

Notification

Death in the Civil War could hardly be considered a "Good Death." Soldiers died horrifically upon the battlefield or within an overcrowded hospital, a far cry from their beds at home. In such a chaotic atmosphere, soldiers often died anonymously even when their brothers in arms surrounded them. This fog of war extended from the battlefield to the home front, since the Confederate government had no standard method of notifying families when a soldier died.[15]

As a result, Confederate families wondered how they could learn of their loved one's fate, let alone trust the news. To provide that unfortunate but necessary assurance, family, friends, and even strangers worked together to notify families. Social networks provided a proof of death either by bringing the body home or by providing evidence from trusted sources. With sufficient proof, widows accepted the reality of a death that they could not witness.

A few widows could confidently accept their tragedy because they overcame seemingly insurmountable hurdles in order to reach their husbands' bedside before he died. Wives needed just the right combinations of proximity, wealth, and luck to travel long distances across a war-torn country on deteriorating transportation systems in a race against time. Those wives who happened to live close to the recent battlefield or hospital would have been able to move swiftly with relatively little expense but likely faced unpredictable battle lines or even enemy occupation. Otherwise, wealth spirited some women across the country. With money, widows could pay someone to take care of the farm while hiring the fastest

[15] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 3-5, 102-104.

available conveyance. Perhaps even more important, wealth provided access to a nationwide network of social connections that might speed the wife on her travels.

Mary Anna Jackson benefitted from proximity, wealth, and social connections yet still barely reached her husband in time. The Saturday that Lieutenant General Thomas Jackson was wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Anna resided nearby with friends in Richmond. On Sunday morning, Anna first heard that Jackson had been wounded "severely, but it was hoped not dangerously" from the husband of a friend.[16] It took five days for Anna to travel the one hundred miles to her husband because Union raiding parties shut down the railroad. By Thursday, the trains began running once again, so Anna, with her brother, traveled to Guiney's Station. Once there, Anna witnessed the "fearful change since I had last seen him," brought on by his worsening pneumonia.[17] She would remain with her husband until he passed away.[18]

Despite Mary Anna Jackson's advantages, chance could have easily prevented her from reaching Thomas in time. If his wound had been more serious or if the Union had continued raiding, Anna might not have had even the small comfort of tending to her dying husband. Flora Stuart found no such comfort. A similarly wealthy widow living in Virginia, Flora left immediately upon receiving the telegram notifying her of her husband's wound, but she arrived a few hours too late.[19]

---

[16] Mary Anna Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson By His Widow* (Louisville, KY: The Prentice Press, 1895), 448.

[17] Ibid., 450.

[18] Ibid., 447-457.

[19] Jeffery D. Wert, *Cavalrymen of the Lost Cause: A Biography of J.E.B. Stuart* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 361-2. See also Diary of Samuel Andrew Agnew: September 27, 1863-June 30, 1864, Entry 25 October 1863, Documenting the American South, University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as DAS), 1999, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/agnew/agnew.html (hereafter cited as Diary of Samuel Andrew Agnew); McDonald, *A Woman's War*, 214.

Though Flora lost the race against time, she could still view her husband's body, a morbid satisfaction denied to many, if not most, Confederate widows. The day after J.E.B.'s death, Dr. Brewer had placed the body on a billiard table at his home. He covered the legs with a sheet but left J.E.B.'s upper body bare and decorated the scene with yellow roses. Flora likely stood near the body while receiving the "queue of visitors" that came to offer their condolences.[20]

Without wealth or social connections, few widows could abandon their homes and travel long distances to the battlefield or hospital, or pay someone else to do so. Instead, these widows would learn of their husbands' fates in a letter. These death letters contained many important messages that widows would pore over in the weeks to come, but, in the moment, widows scanned the pages only for proof of death.

First, they evaluated the source. Eyewitnesses, including nurses, fellow soldiers, friends, and family often proved more trustworthy than second hand informants, such as newspapers, which often misreported deaths.[21] Widows needed to investigate even these trustworthy sources, however, since letter writing often communicated delayed and incomplete information.

When Mary Martin first received a letter from her husband's nurse in 1862, her husband's condition appeared dire but hopeful. Asa had been severely wounded in the arm; Richmond doctors amputated the limb and Asa survived the surgery. Though distraught, Mary lived in Coosa County, Alabama, a long way away even in a time of peace. The

---

[20] Wert, *Cavalrymen of the Lost Cause,* 363.

[21] For instances of misreported deaths, see James Dearing to Roxanna Dearing, 29 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Robert H. Molton to Mrs. John F. Davenport, 29 September 1863, John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864, ADAH; W. W. Avery to Father, 8 July 1863, Folder 26, in the Avery Family of North Carolina Papers, 1777-1890, 1906 #033 Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as SHC). See also Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 106.

Martins had little wealth to their name, a newborn daughter, and two older children, all of whom tethered Mary to her home.[22] Besides, both the nurse and the doctor encouraged optimism.[23] Less than two weeks later, however, the nurse wrote again that Asa had died from illness.[24] Nurses considered it their duty to inform families and wrote "to all that thare Husbands dies in my ward if I can find out thare post office."[25] The lack of information and Asa's sudden deterioration led Mary to doubt the news. She hastily wrote back for further details that proved once and for all Asa's unhappy fate.[26]

Not all soldiers reached the hospital like Asa. Soldiers who died on the battlefield relied on their husbands' comrades to forward the unfortunate news in "the Spirit of Humanity."[27] Philip Lewis, a school master with just $200 saved and no real estate in 1860, found himself a prisoner of war at Rock Island, Illinois just three short years later. Quickly catching ill, Philip reached out to home by penning a letter to his wife, Pamela, since "I reckon you thought I was dead."[28] The letter never even left his pocket before the disease

---

[22] U.S. Census of 1860, Roll M653_7, Subdivision 2, Coosa, Alabama, 242, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1860usfedcenancestry&indiv=try&h=13488259 (accessed August 15, 2012); U.S. Census of 1870, Roll M593_11, Socapatoy, Coosa, Alabama, 328B, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1870usfedcen&indiv=try&h=13392231 (accessed August 15, 2012).

[23] Mrs. Joseph L. McGruder to Mrs. Martin, 19 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[24] R. F. McGruder to Mrs. Martin, 30 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. See also, Fannie Dugan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Private Collections, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[25] Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Private Collections, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH. See also Ellie Reutch to Mrs Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF.

[26] For more information on nurses writing to family members, see Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 122.

[27]Sgt. S. K. to Mrs. Thomas, 7 October 1864, CSA Personal Narrative, W. G. Thomas Letters, 1863-1864, CSA Personal Narratives, Microfilm Drawer 57, Box 65, GDAH. See also John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU; Matt Jordan to Wife, 17 January 1863, Confederate Records, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH.

[28] Philip P. Lewis to Wife, 2 February 1864, Lewis Family Papers, 1804-1884, VHS.

claimed his life. Taking pity on Pamela, a fellow soldier forwarded the note to the widow along with a description of Philip's death. "I thought it my duty to send this to you as I am a Virginian," the stranger wrote.[29] Soldiers across the nation committed similar acts of kindness throughout the war likely with the hope that their brothers in arms would do the same if misfortune befell them.[30]

That men began taking a primary role in communicating the news of death marked a change from antebellum era customs that gave women the primary responsibility for administering death rituals. Women, guardians of the home and spirit, had taken charge of the deathbed scene.[31] Because war took death outside of the home and onto the battlefield and field hospitals, men began shouldering more of the burden.

Some men accepted their new responsibility more grudgingly than others. One man wrote his wife, asking her to notify a fellow soldier's widow rather than writing to her himself.[32] Breaking such horrific news was such an unpleasant task that all parties, men and women, sometimes shirked their duty. When Cornelia McDonald rushed to her husband's bedside, she did not know that he had already died. Several male friends that she passed clearly did, however. Instead of informing the distraught woman, they averted their eyes and avoided conversation. When Cornelia reached her destination, a woman rushed her inside to

---

[29] William W. Benson to Mrs. Lewis, 19 March 1864, in Philip P. Lewis to Wife, 2 February 1864, Lewis Family Papers, 1804-1884, VHS. See also Shell to Cousin, 25 November 1864, Private Collections, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[30] Family and friends could deliver the news in person or via letter. See; R. C. Bellamy to C. L. Bellamy, 25 April 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, UF; Mollie to Sister Fannie Hill, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH; McDonald, *A Woman's War,* 211.

[31] See Scott Stephens, "Authoring the Good Death: Illness, Deathbed Narratives, and Women's Authority," in *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 183-220.

[32] See C. B. Bellamy to Wife, 11 January 1863, Bellamy Family Papers, UF.

the room with the corpse, neglecting to mention Mr. McDonald's tragic fate. [33] It was likely an unpleasant shock.

Reluctant bearers of bad news were not the only factor that delayed reliable information. Increasingly difficult transportation combined with a collapsing postal service to leave widows waiting anxiously long after their husbands died.[34] Wealthy urban dwellers benefitted from telegram lines that, when not cut off, communicated news quickly. For example, Leila learned of Frederic's death within three days thanks to a telegram. With so little detail, however, widows like Leila did not always trust the news within.[35] Letters provided more information than telegrams but traveled more slowly, sometimes getting delayed for months or even lost entirely. When William Lang died on May 15, 1864 at a hospital, the nurse wrote his wife, Rebecca, of the sad news and included a lock of his hair as proof. Neither the letter nor the precious lock ever reached her. Unaware, Rebecca waited eagerly for news of her supposedly ill husband. When none came, she inquired after her husband's condition. A nurse replied on July 26, 1864, shortly before William's commander finally wrote to Rebecca on August 14. [36] Distraught not only at her husband's death but also over her three month ordeal, Rebecca related her seemingly exceptional story to a friend, who replied that she waited five months to discover that her brother was dead.[37]

---

[33] See McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 215-216. See also, Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 160.

[34] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 106. The Confederates did not have the benefit of the Christian Commission or the Individual Relief Department.

[35] Habersham, A Sketch of Frederic, 161.

[36] G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Papers, GDAH; J. E. Deloatch to Mrs. William Lang, 14 August 1864, Lang Family Papers, GDAH.

[37] Shell to Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Papers, GDAH.

No matter how convoluted the path or how delayed, most widows would ultimately hear of the sad news in private. Telegrams and letters arrived at a particular address, so widows would likely read the documents within their residence. If outside, widows would find themselves quickly ushered inside before friends or family broke the news.[38] In private, widows could freely express their emotions without risk of public censure. That privacy also protected the public from the discomfort of witnessing those same emotional outbursts.

Widows' responses to the news of their husbands' deaths were so intimate and emotional that only vague records remain. Leila, who painstakingly recorded many of her feelings about her married life and Fred's funeral, only noted, "the misery & desolation that in one moment blighted out all the light of life for me forever."[39] Witnesses provided better insight into these painful moments. While Mrs. C.V. Thompson stayed at Mrs. Miller's cheerful home, someone rapped at the door. "Mrs. Miller went out to see the caller, and soon we heard her cry out as if in great distress, and then she came back to her room almost carried by the friend, whose sad duty it had been to bring her the heart breaking tidings that her husband had been ruthlessly shot and left dead on the roadside," Mrs. Thompson remembered.[40] Similar scenes occurred across the South.

These private, emotional moments were a devastating but necessary step for widows. Feeling pain meant that friends and family had located enough reliable evidence to convince a wife that her husband had indeed died. Wealth and social connections eased the process,

---

[38] See Habersham, A Sketch of Frederic, 160; C. V. Thompson, "Reminiscences of "The Sixties," Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy, Historical Records Volume One, SAF; McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 215-216.

[39] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 161.

[40] C. V. Thompson, "Reminiscences of "The Sixties," Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy, Historical Records Volume One, SAF.

but ultimately chance determined which widows could reach their husbands' bedsides and who would have to rely on the lengthy letter writing process that developed in response to wartime carnage.

Mourning

Once wives knew of their loss, the mourning period began. To be 'in mourning' publicly identified wives as widows. The black crepe and reserved attitude ideally offered visible symbols of internal grief. War, as widows found, limited access to mourning attire while dramatically expanding the number of mourners. Through inspired creativity, many widows still declared their status publicly only to find that the attire no longer conveyed exceptional grief because so many Confederates had lost loved ones.

Before the Civil War, mid-century Americans debated whether or not mourning customs best represented authentic emotions. According to Karen Halttunen in *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870,* Americans embraced two contradictory beliefs about the purpose of being 'in mourning.'[41] First, Americans believed mourning expressed pure, though restrained, emotion that would help the bereaved accept God's benevolent will.[42] Second, the strict rules of being 'in mourning' identified class during a period where rapid urban growth that brought strangers into frequent contact.[43] That need for public display and conformity undermined the authenticity of the emotional expression.[44] Therefore, by the Civil War, the bereaved had

---

[41] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 128-130.

[42] Ibid., 134.

[43] Ibid., 136-138

[44] Ibid., 138-144; See also Mary Louise Kete, *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000).

more latitude to deviate from the traditional customs, without abandoning them altogether, in order to prove their grief to be authentic.[45]

The Civil War would further challenge the already embattled mourning rituals in the Confederacy. As Drew Gilpin Faust argues, "acquiring mourning apparel in the Civil War South required effort, even ingenuity, and often considerable expenditure."[46] The Northern blockade effectively eliminated Southern imports. Clothes, crepe, and black-bordered letters increasingly became unavailable for purchase, even if widows could afford the inflated prices.[47] When widows could not purchase elaborate mourning wear, they improvised. "The first mourning dress I had was a shepherds' plaid, spun and woven at home and trimmed with a scrap of black alpacs found in a rag bag; this was considered a very handsome gown!," Helen Plane remembered.[48] Rather than rely on poor quality material, Etta Kosnegary planned to dye several dresses that were originally gifts from her husband. Unable to find dark dye, she wrote her sister, who had recently done the same, for a sample of the material with instructions on how to accomplish the task.[49] Both Helen and Etta had every seeming advantage, being wealthy women widowed in 1862, and yet they could only mimic the mourning wear still advertised in Northern ladies magazines.[50] Women with less means may

---

[45] Ibid., 168-169; In the South, where urban centers grew less rapidly, the pressure for conformity likely remained high but still permitted personal modification. See Nancy Gray Schoonmaker, "As Though it Were Unto the Lord: Sarah Morgan Dawson and Nineteenth-Century Southern Mourning," (Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2001).

[46] Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 150.

[47] For an example of a widow wearing deep mourning clothes, see L.S.D. to Mrs. Johnson, 18 June 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[48] Mrs. C. Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," Part One, Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, GDAH. See also Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 150-1.

[49] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

[50] Janney, Burying the Dead, 31; Loeffel-Atkins, Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils, 16.

have been unable to even improvise. Everyone understood the problem with wartime shortages. Women who found or made mourning cloths wore them; those who could not suffered no stigma.

Only one group of widows nearly always wore mourning clothes: widows of prominent Confederate generals. The entire Confederate nation mourned the deaths of men like General Thomas Jackson and General J.E.B. Stuart. Their funerals would be public events. Draped in black, widows could symbolize the loss that everyone in attendance felt for Jackson and for their own loved ones. After Thomas Jackson's death, Anna Jackson was whisked away by train to the Governor's mansion in Richmond in preparation for an elaborate funeral. "Kind friends had also in readiness for me a mourning outfit," Anna Jackson recollected.[51] By draping Anna in black, her friends permitted Anna to mourn in a way impossible to accomplish for every single lost life.

Whether widows wore traditional mourning attire or a modified version, their participation in the customs simultaneously placed them within a social network and set them apart from that network. At the most basic level, mourning visibly marked the dead man's friends and family, including widows within the community of mourners. Furthermore, the high death toll for Confederates in the war produced a "uniformed sorority of grief."[52] As the death toll rose, what had been a morbidly exclusive status symbol became an inclusive

---

[51] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 473. See also William H. Townsend, "Emilie Todd Helm: An Appreciation," *Lexington Herald*, in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS. Though no record exists of Flora at J.E.B.'s funeral, she did claim to wear mourning the rest of her life. See Wert, *Cavalrymen of the Lost Cause,* 370; Sean Heuvel, ed., *Life After J.E.B. Stuart: The Memoirs of His Granddaughter, Marrow Stuart Smith* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc, 2012), 66 n.4.

[52] Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 149.

identifier of support for the Confederate cause, since nearly every white Southern family had lost someone dear to them.

Nevertheless, widows' particular requirements in dress and comportment during mourning also separated them from their friends and family. According to custom, widows remained in mourning for two and a half years.[53] The first year of heavy mourning required an entire wardrobe of clothing with "a silk and wool mixture with a sooty lustreless look" that was "trimmed with black crape or braid," or at least as close to that ideal as Confederate widows could get.[54] Even if widows could only scrape together a portion of that wardrobe using rags and dye, still no other mourner would have dressed so extravagantly. For instance, soldiers wore only a badge of black crepe on their left arm while officers wore a badge on their hilt.[55] When draped in black, widows stood out in nearly every occasion. One Confederate woman noted the contrast between the beautiful decorations at a baptism and the "sad young widow, Mrs. Cassiday standing near Eliza in such deep mourning."[56] After the first year, widows began the transition to full and then half mourning by gradually reducing the proportion of black accessories, such as removing the black veil and later replacing the trim with white cloth.[57] Simply remaining in mourning, however, distinguished widows from their communities. While parents and children left mourning after the first year, widows

---

[53] Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 148.

[54] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 136-7.

[55] "Funeral Honors," in James A. Seddon and War Department, *Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, 1864* (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1864), 29.

[56] L. S. D. to Mrs. Johnson, 18 June 1862, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[57] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 137; Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 148. See also Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations & the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 30-31; Loeffel-Atkins, *Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils*, 21-25.

would remain in half mourning for another year.[58] The identification extended the sympathy that widows might receive from their condition. Still, the attire and demeanor also linked widows with the past while family and friends moved forward into the future.

As mourning progressed, grief extended from the privacy of the home to the scrutiny of the public eye. Being 'in mourning' was "an outward and visible sign of an inward invisible state" of grief.[59] Initially, visitors came to widows' home and were to keep quiet, mimicking the emotions expected from the mourners themselves.[60] Soon, widows would leave the home to attend the funeral and, much later, to go about their daily business. Mourning, then, provided a freedom to express feelings publicly, something denied widows in every other death ritual. Because the clothing mediated between widows' feelings and the community's interpretation of those feelings, however, mourning wear could only communicate the emotions that Southern society deemed appropriate for widows to feel.

Widows aspired to follow mourning customs more than they were able to fulfill the strict requirements. Even the attempt to follow such rituals, however, publicly identified widows and the entire network of friends and family who likewise mourned the loss of a loved one. As a result, mourning clothes and customs gradually moved grief from the dark shadows of notification to an open pubic space. That trend would continue as family and friends prepared to say their final goodbyes to the dead.

The Funeral

---

[58] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 137.

[59] Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 136; Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 149.

[60] Loeffel-Atkins, Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils, 7.

Death rituals culminated in the funeral. Bereaved friends and families congregated for religious and burial services in a literal gathering of the widows' social network. Widows should have been at the height of visibility at these ceremonies; they might have expressed the emotions only suggested in their dress by offering a quiet prayer or weeping over the freshly dug grave. Similar to notification and mourning rituals, however, the war prevented most widows from achieving that ideal.

As Drew Gilpin Faust argues in *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War,* the Civil War changed the way that Americans dealt with the dead. The frailty of the human body could not withstand the modern technology that brought explosive shells and accurate weapons to the open field of battle. Men died in droves at battles like Antietam and Gettysburg, leaving piles of disfigured bodies to burn in battlefield fires or to rot until the victor could bury them in unmarked trenches. Hundreds of thousands of families across the nation cried out in vain to bury their dead. Unfortunately, neither the North nor the South had prepared to deal with the scale of the carnage. No institution existed to bury let alone bring home the dead. During the war, "many families of moderate means flocked to battlefields to reclaim bodies, encase them in coffins, and escort them home."[61] Nevertheless, families could make arrangements only if they knew the location of the body and could afford the expensive quantities of salt or ice to preserve the body and then transport the body home. Business and technological development produced reliable and cheaper methods and embalming became a profitable wartime enterprise, yet no institution or medical advancement could meet the demand.[62]

---

[61] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 85.

[62] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering,* 61-136.

How did communities and loved ones respond to these challenges? In the worst-case scenario—entirely missing the body—the historical record is unclear. There is no evidence that widows held a funeral service without the body. Because the purpose of the funeral service was to anoint and to bury the body, the ritual changed as the location and condition of the bodies changed.

Increasingly, funeral and burial services became hasty affairs conducted by soldiers or local, sympathetic strangers.[63] In such cases, widows might imagine their husbands' services to be much like "The Burial of Latané," a story about the young Lieutenant Latané who died during the Seven Days Battles. As the story goes, his body remained with Southern civilians who were "surrounded by enemy forces and thus unable to summon either his family or a minister to perform the last rites," so slaves prepared the coffin and grave and women mourned over the body and read the religious services.[64] Though the story glamorized a hasty process in order to demonstrate the citizenry's devotion to the Confederacy and its soldiers, it reflected a more appealing alternative for loved ones to imagine than an anonymous trench burial. Besides, similar scenes did occur across the South.[65] For instance, soldiers and the "Leesburg ladies" buried Sallie Spears's husband "decently" in "a church yard at Leesburg" near the battlefield.

---

[63] James A. Seddon and the War Department, *Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, 1864*, 27-9; Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, 32-4.

[64] Drew Gilpin Faust, *Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 149. See also Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past,* 33-4. Janney argues that a minister was on hand to lead the service.

[65] For a full analysis of the meaning behind the images of the burial, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism: William D. Washington's Burial of Latané," in *Southern Stories* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 148-159.

Sally and her family felt both gratitude and regret that strangers performed the kind attentions that they were unable to perform.[66] After the war, Sallie planned to bury Charles herself. Peace permitted safe and relatively cheaper travel so that more widows were able to collect and to rebury their dead.[67] Communities celebrated the mournful occasion with the bereaved widow. When Jeanie Autry brought home the body of her husband in February 1866, the Bar and the Circuit Court of Marshall County, where James Autry had served as a lawyer, offered resolutions of sympathy, the town Board of Alderman provided a deed to a plot in the city graveyard, and the local Masonic lodge pledged to wear a badge of mourning for the next thirty days.[68]

---

[66] For examples of husbands buried on far away battlefields, see Jean W. Tanner, archival note, 2003, in John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA; " Sequel to the Imprisonment and Death of James M Jordan," archival note, James M. Jordan Letters, GDAH; Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 30 November 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH; Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; Mollie to Sister Fannie Hill, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH

[67] For evidence of processing the body, see G. W. Barless to John Matthew, 16 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; S.S. Jackson to Mrs. George W. Johnson, 14 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; J. F, Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. See also, Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 472. For evidence of soldiers and friends bringing the body off the field, see "Memorial Day at Savannah, GA", *The Confederate Veteran Magazine*, 3, no.5 (1895): 130-131; Mrs. C. V. Thompson, "Reminiscences of "The Sixties," Historical Records, Volume 1, Florida Division UDC, SAF. For further reference on transporting bodies home, see Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 88-101.

[68] Receipts from Adison Craft to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, February 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; George B. Myers to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 14 April 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Circuit Court of Marshall County Mississippi to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, March Term, 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Kinlock Falconer to Mrs. J. V. Autry, 7 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Masonic Lodge No. 35 to Mrs. James L. Autry, 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For an even more elaborate celebration, see Edison H. Thomas, *John Hunt Morgan and His Raiders* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985. orig. 1975), 115. For other widows who reburied their husbands, see . C. Allen to Cousin Sallie Milner, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Clarence Smith, trans. Hebron Cemetery Pike Co., contributed to UsGenWeb Archives, Lynn B. Cunningham, contributor (USGenWeb Archives, 2003, trns. 1972), accessed 9 Oct. 2013, http://files.usgwarchives.net/ga/pike/cemeteries/hebron.txt; "Captain and Mrs. William Plane: The White Roses and the Little Flag," in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey and Mrs. Charlee N. Davis, U.D.C. Atlanta Chapter Scrapbook, 1895-1939, Volume I, AC 71-241, GDAH.

Still, Confederates on the home front did celebrate funeral services during the war. From the start, officers received more attention than enlisted men. After the battle of Bull Run, all of Savannah came out to see the bodies of General Barnard Bee, General Francis Bartow, and Colonel Johnson arrive at the train station. The city celebrated the lives and deaths of these men in a joint ceremony; communities could not put on such elaborate ceremonies for each individual loss.[69] "Increasingly only the corpses of officers received individual funeral services in the presence of their families," according to Caroline Janney.[70] By the end of the war, even fallen Confederate heroes could only receive the honors that a beleaguered people could spare. Though many dignitaries, including Jefferson Davis, carried J.E.B. Stuart's body to Hollywood cemetery, "there was no military escort; the home guard was in the field and Lee could spare no soldiers from the Spotsylvania line."[71]

As the number of funerals decreased, the number of mourners increased. In part, a funeral service permitted all Confederates, even those without a body to bury, to mourn loss. Also, in a time of war, funerals became national affairs. The entire Confederate nation laid claims to mourn their heroes, gradually transforming a private, familial grief into the loss of a nation.[72]

---

[69] "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861, accessed via Accessible Archives 10 October 2013, http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/preLog?LinkType=SERIALSSOLUTIONS&ArticleID=TheCharlestonMercury.CI1861072703.01889.

[70] Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 32. See also Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army*, 330.

[71] Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative; Red River to Appomattox*, (New York: Random House, 1974), 235.

[72] For evidence of Confederates celebrating funerals as a national loss, see "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861Mary Anna Jackson, *Life & Letters of General Jackson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 472-478; "Gen. Jeb Stuart Buried in Richmond: Funeral of Major Gen. Stuart," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 May 1864, accessed on ProQuest Historical Newspapers 09 October, 2013; "Brig. Gen. Chas S Winder," *Charleston Mercury*, 20 August 1862, accessed via Accessible Archives 10 October 2013, http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=1&AADocStyle=

The living half of a pair, widows symbolized the loss that all attendees felt and the ideal state of acceptance that mourners hoped to achieve. As a symbol, widows therefore stood apart more than they participated in these services. The public congregated and expressed themselves freely. At one of the many viewings of Stonewall Jackson's body, thousands of men and women cried openly as they filed past the body, even holding up their children to behold the face of the dead hero.[73] "How different was the scene in my darkened chamber, near by," Anna noted. She wept and prayed quietly with a few close friends.[74] Widows remained on the sidelines as the community mourned over the body not the widow. In ways, widows' separateness enhanced the symbolism of a stricken woman left to live life alone. In fact, many newspaper accounts of these funerals neglected to mention widows altogether or merely indicated their attendance, instead reserving their poetic descriptions for the crowd and military dignitaries.[75]

STYLED&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=2.14.1.0.1; "The Late General Jackson," *Charleston Mercury*, 16 May 1863, accessed via Accessible Archives 10 October 2013, http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=6&AADocStyle=STYLED&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=9.25.6.0.6; "The Death of Morgan," *Charleston Mercury*, 17 September 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives 10 October 2013, http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=1&AADocStyle=&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=10.1.1.3.1.

[73] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of Genl. Jackson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 475-6. See also "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861.

[74] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of Genl. Jackson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 476. See also Habersham, A Sketch of Frederic, 174; "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861.

[75] See "Gen. Jeb Stuart Buried in Richmond: Funeral of Major Gen. Stuart," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 May 1864; "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861; "Brig. Gen. Chas S Winder," *Charleston Mercury*, 20 August 1862, "The Late General Jackson," *Charleston Mercury*, 16 May 1863, accessed via Accessible Archives 10 October 2013; "The Death of Morgan," *Charleston Mercury*, 17 September 1864.

One newspaper termed the funeral a "pageant," an apt name for an elaborate ceremony that paraded the body, and the widow, in front of thousands.[76] The funeral occurred in three stages: the procession, the religious service, and the burial. By working through these stages, mourners could view the dead, exalt their life, and say their final goodbyes.

General Thomas Jackson's funeral, though elaborate, exemplified the structure and messages within other funerals for Confederate war heroes. The funeral procession carried the body from the battlefield to the ceremony site. Immediately after Jackson's death, doctors embalmed and clothed the body so it could be displayed.[77] The next day, a train carried the corpse and Mary Anna to Richmond, where the Governor's wife and other prominent ladies met them and escorted the mourning party to the Governor's mansion. A two-mile long procession followed them. A similar "civic and military procession took place" the next day, this time to lay the body in state in Congress where over 20,000 people visited while Mary Anna remained in her separate room.[78] On Wednesday, the mourning party carried Jackson's body to its final resting place in Lexington. At each stop, people crowded the train car asking for Jackson's child. Anna warily held the little girl out of the car window for the public to kiss. The procession finally arrived at Lexington on Thursday, and Jackson's former colleagues rested the body in his old classroom.[79]

---

[76] "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861.

[77] Jackson, *Life and Letters*, 475-6; Wert, Cavalryman of the Lost Cause, 363.

[78] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 474.

[79] For similar elaborate processions, see Newspaper Notice clipping in George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861; "The Death of Morgan," *Charleston Mercury*, 17 September 1864.

Jackson's funeral would finally take place the next day.[80] Mourners moved from the streets into the Lexington Presbyterian Church to hear Reverend Dr. White give the religious services.[81] Funerals on the Confederate home front were denominational affairs.[82] Each sect varied the tone of the services, ranging from those conducted in the "simplest manner," like Jacksons' to more ritualistic Episcopal services.[83] Still, politics proved more divisive than denomination in a time of war. After George Johnson, the provisional governor of Kentucky, died at Shiloh, his family discovered that a local Church where they planned to conduct services refused to allow a Southern sympathizer onto the pulpit. The family did secure a minister and a church, but from a different denomination.[84]

The Christian Protestant tradition that united the denominations provided a common structure to services: congregants sang popular hymns, read texts from the Bible, and listened to a sermon. For instance, Jackson's service included widely popular selections like the hymn "How Blest the Righteous When he Dies," a reading of the fifteenth chapter of

---

[80]Ibid., 472-478. See also James P. Smith to Mrs. E. H. Brown, 22 May 1863, Thomas J. Jackson Papers, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia (hereafter cited as MOC).

[81] The attendance at the procession correlated with the attendance at the funeral, particularly when they were held on the same day. For evidence of the attendance at funerals, see Etta Kosnegary to Mothers and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU; "The Death of Morgan, Full Particulars from an Eye Witness," *Charleston Mercury,* 17 September 1864; Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause,* 363; Clipping regarding funeral service of General Stuart, Eliza MacKay Elliot, 1851-1901, Scrapbook 1864, Hargett Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia (hereafter cited as UGA).

[82] On the battlefront, a lack of preachers, few churches, and quick burials likely blurred denominational boundaries. See George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 179.

[83] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson,* 478.

[84] George Johnson was either uncommitted or a Baptist, but the minister who performed the service belonged to the Christian Church. See Stoddard Johnston to Rev. Mr. McGinn, 17 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. See also E. Lewis to Stoddard Johnson, 17 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Note on envelope, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; "Funeral Notice," 7 April 1862, George M Johnson Papers, KHS.

Paul to the First Corinthians that described Christ's resurrection as proof that the dead will rise into heaven.[85]

Even sermons proved to be similar across denomination. Ministers placed the hope for salvation at the center of these sermons. Denominations quibbled about the particulars of resurrection, such as whether the body would rise to heaven with the soul, but Christian churches all believed that God's followers would rise to heaven after their earthly death. Through a three-step argument, ministers offered their congregants, including widows, an intellectual, uplifting message that salvation made death an occasion to celebrate rather than to mourn.

First, ministers told their congregations that a Christian life assured resurrection, so the dead surely resided in heaven. Since Jackson was a pious man, Rev. White likely had little trouble supporting his argument for Jackson's salvation. Rev. Robert Dabney likewise believed that he had never known "one of greater purity of life, or more regular and devout habit of prayer."[86]

Most soldiers' lives offered considerably less evidence, however, a troubling fact for widows and communities alike. In the nineteenth-century, men converted to Christianity at a lower rate than women, and, though battle converted many a man, soldiers did not join the

---

[85] This hymn can be found in many different hymn books, including Henry Ward Beecher, *Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes for the Use of Christian Congregations* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1869), 347; *Hymns for the Use of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1849), 650; Dr. A. Brooks Everett and Rev. B. Manly, Jr., D.D., *Baptist Chorals: a tune and hymn book designed to promote general congregational singing; containing one hundred and sixty four tunes adapted to about four hundred choice hymns*, (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860), 87.

[86] Robert Lewis Dabney, *True Courage*, (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication of the Confederate States, 1863), DAS, 2000, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/dabney/dabney.html. Jackson's piety was well known. See Daniel W. Stowell, "Stonewall Jackson and the Providence of God," in Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, ed., *Religion and the American Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 187.

Church in mass.[87] Wartime death silenced any last words that might have proved a change of heart. Nevertheless, few citizens could imagine their Confederate heroes resided anywhere but heaven. Thus, ministers argued that dying for the Confederate cause strengthened weaker proof of Christian faith. Reverend J. R. Weaver, a Baptist minister, faced a difficult task during his funeral sermon for Richard Milner, a pious man in his letters but also a man who had not joined the church before his death. The Reverend was not troubled, however; Richard had been a responsible man of duty who volunteered quickly yet upheld his virtues despite the immorality of war. Because of Richard's strong character, the minister saw no reason to discount Richard's late claim to a conversion experience and his never-fulfilled desire for baptism.[88]

It is likely that Mary Anna Jackson and Sallie Milner appreciated their ministers' assurance that their husbands resided in heaven. Talk of salvation appealed to their hope for the future, so they likely embraced the next logical step within the funeral sermons that the living should follow the dead hero's example of piety and patriotism, however weakly proven, in order to one day meet them in heaven. As Reverend Dabney told Jackson's mourners, "My business is, not to praise any man, however beloved and bewailed, but only to unfold God's message through his life and death."[89] Dabney went one step further to link

---

[87] See Glatthaar, *General Lee's Army*, 236-240; Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People*, 207.

[88] J. R. Weaver, "Extract from Funeral Sermon of Mr. Richard W. Milner," *Baptist Banner,* 19 March 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also Dabney, *True Courage*, DAS; Stephen Elliott, "Funeral Services at the Burial of the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D.," (Columbia: Evans A Cogswell, 1864), in DAS, 2000, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliotts2/elliott.html (accessed 25 August 2012).

[89] Dabney, *True Courage,* DAS, 5.

piety and patriotism as requirements for salvation, hoping Christians would follow Jackson's "true courage" to fear only God and the determination to "be free or die."[90]

Other ministers seemed ambivalent about making such patriotic appeals at a solemn ceremony. At the funeral service for General Bee and Colonel Johnson, Reverend C. P. Gidsend of St. Luke's Church admitted that the funeral service was "no occasion to appeal to your patriotism" yet still reminded those mourning "that all those evil passions from which spring tyranny and oppressions are the mournful results of mans apostacy from God." In the end, Rev. Gidsen concluded, "Thus while affection weeps, and patriotism honors, let Piety learn a lesson of improvement, and Faith, under all adversities hold fast by God."[91]

If joining their husbands in heaven sounded appealing, widows likely found the sermon's next logical leap less reasonable. Death should comfort the living, ministers reasoned, because salvation could only bring the dead peace and the living hope for reunion. Why continue to grieve if death brought so many benefits? Rev. Dabney urged his audience to "not forget the circumstances which alleviate the grief of his death." After all, the living lost their beloved hero but Jackson "has lost nothing" because his soul rose to heaven.[92] To convince their flocks to rejoice when most wanted to despair, ministers painted vivid images of heavenly happiness. According to Reverend Weaver, Richard Milner and the friend he died with were in heaven "together singing the sweet songs of Zion, where war's rude alarms

---

[90] Dabney, *True Courage,* DAS, 25. See also Elliott, "Funeral Services at the Burial of the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D." (Columbia: Evans A Cogswell, 1864), in DAS, 2000, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliotts2/elliott.html (accessed 25 August 2012).

[91] "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861. See also J. R. Weaver, "Extract from Funeral Sermon of Mr. Richard W. Milner," *Baptist Banner,* 19 March 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 478.

[92] Dabney, *True Courage*, DAS, 23.

are never more heard."[93] Ministers then reminded their followers that if they learned from the dead man's example then they too would reside in heaven with their formerly lost loved ones. Therefore, "let death, with its solemn appalling tread, bring us a message of comfort, and a watchword of peace."[94]

Ministers recognized that their reasoning would not appeal to all of the bereaved, including widows. Logic seemed powerless before the emotional depths of loss. Before asking his congregants to thank God for benevolently guiding Richard Milner's soul to heaven, Reverend Weaver first told his "brethren" to give "a word of sympathy to those upon whom this bereavement must heavily falls," highlighting the plight of Richard's widow and children.[95] Similarly, Reverend Gidsend closed his sermon, as many ministers likely did, by acknowledging the limits of man to comfort the most grief-stricken. "My friends," the Reverend wrote, "it is no occasion for words. Our hearts are full, and there are hearts more bitterly wrung than ours. May God have mercy on and comfort them. May the sympathy of Jesus be experienced by all who mourn the ravages of this unnatural war. May Heaven console, where earth is impotent."[96]

Widows readily agreed that the words of men, even in sermons, proved limited. Widows found two components of the religious services particularly compelling. The first was the idea that salvation offered hope to reunite with their husband one day in heaven. Though Maria Hubard made no mention of her husband's funeral service, she found a

---

[93] J. R. Weaver, "Extract from Funeral Sermon of Mr. Richard W. Milner," *Baptist Banner,* 19 March 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[94] Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861.

[95] J. R. Weaver, "Extract from Funeral Sermon of Mr. Richard W. Milner," *Baptist Banner,* 19 March 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH

[96] "Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas," *Charleston Mercury*, 27 July 1861.

Sunday church service that described God's promise of resurrection to be quite comforting, remembering, "Oh how it causes my eyes to overflow, and my bursting heart to heave!"[97] Rather than finding a peaceful affirmation that the benefits of death should assuage grief, widows instead found outlets within the service to express and to steady their overwhelming emotions. The hymns captivated widows by evoking a range of emotion. Where Leila found comfort in the organ music, Maria "could scarcely prevent myself from screaming! so surely does music bring him who is lost ~~to me~~ before me." Worried that her emotional reaction would show, she "could not attend to the service," and instead listened until she could become more composed.[98]

After the minister finished his sermon and the congregation sang their last hymn, the entire group proceeded to the cemetery to bury the body. Mary Anna Jackson accompanied the casket, "followed by a long procession of people, from far and near" to the cemetery, where Jackson, "with military honors, was at last committed to the grave."[99] A minister might have read passages from the bible as the body was lowered to the ground.[100] Though certainly a solemn moment, the burial was not always final. Mattie Morgan buried her late husband, John Hunt Morgan, in an above ground vault, but his body would continue without her on to two other funeral services before finally resting in Hollywood Cemetery for the rest of the war. Mattie returned for the body after the war.[101]

---

[97] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 174; Maria Hubard Diary, 6 April 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS. Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 478.

[98] Maria Hubard Diary, 6 April 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS.

[99] Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 478. See also, Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 175-6.

[100] This did happen at J.E.B. Stuart's funeral. Wert, Cavalrymen of the Lost Cause, 363.

[101] James A. Ramage, *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan* (Lexington: the University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 246.

In the end, funeral services placed widows in a contradictory position. Funerals were the culmination of the series of rituals performed to mourn the dead yet they were the most difficult to reproduce during a devastating war. Frequently, funerals could not occur, thereby leaving the widow alone in her grief. When communities could bury a body, the Confederate public claimed the right to mourn the dead and marginalized the widow's place within the ceremony. Even while silently listening to the sermon, widows might have found comfort in the hope for salvation but could not bring themselves to rejoice in the benefits of death as their religious leaders urged. In the end, funerals brought together the largest contingent of widows' social network but simultaneously minimized widows' presence within that network.

Conclusion

From the moment a husband died, death rituals marked an important series of transitions that helped widows and their communities learn of and accept the death of a loved one. As Leila remarked after her the burial service, "it was all over at last. Forever." She acknowledged that Frederic's life was over. Would her grieving process end with the death rituals?

No, it would not. Death rituals did not end grief because they did not encourage widows to express that grief. Though the privacy of notification permitted unknown torrents of emotion, the subsequent rituals gradually restricted emotion as widows moved into a public space where they could connect with the community of mourners. As the Confederate nation co-opted death rituals from families, widows increasingly found themselves within the shadows of their dead husband, the Confederate hero.

Death rituals were the first step rather than the last step in the grieving process. During Jackson's funeral procession, Mary Anna remembered feeling at peace, believing that Thomas resided in heaven happily so it would be selfish to wish for him on earth. In hindsight Anna realized, "this frame of mind did not last, and many were the subsequent conflicts to attain and keep this spirit."[102] Widows would not face these conflicts alone. Through letters, friends and family could offer widows more sympathy and more personalized advice for grieving than they could in public, ritualized ceremonies.

[102] Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Jackson*, 472.

CHAPTER 3:

CONDOLENCE LETTERS

Nine days after Frederic Habersham's death and five days before his funeral, condolence letters began flooding into the Habersham residence. Leila's mother, mother-in-law, and cousins all wrote to express their sympathy and to offer supportive words. Other writers, like Fred's commander and Leila's brother-in-law, provided the details surrounding Fred's death that Leila demanded. Leila carefully preserved these precious documents and copied excerpts into her memoir.

How did letters like the ones Leila received shape grief? On one hand, the intimate and private conversation permitted greater freedom of expression to both writer and reader. Authors could open their hearts and freely express the depths of their grief without fear of public embarrassment. As a result, the messages within letters varied, based on the author's relationship with the bereaved and the author's own feelings about their loss. On the other hand, the intimacy and privacy inherent in letter writing also lent coercive power to the instructions that the writers offered on how to grieve and how to interpret loss. When the writer was someone to whom the widow might need for support, widows had a vested interest in complying with that recommendation. Thus, the interplay between freedom and coercion made bereavement correspondence an essential moment in shaping the course of widows' grief.

Writing a bereaved loved one was hardly a new phenomenon during the Civil War. In fact, antebellum advice manuals listed explicit instructions on how to write condolence

letters. *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* by Hugh Blair categorized condolence letters as epistolary writing, defined as a carefully constructed letter that nevertheless sounded casual and heartfelt rather than formulaic.[1] With the rise of the middle-class mourning culture in the antebellum era, manuals like "Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing Simplified" popularized and expanded upon Blair's instructions. Authors argued that condolence letters were "one of the most sacred duties entailed" because they "fall upon the heart of man like the gentle dews of evening in the parched earth."[2] Manuals warned writers to be mindful of tone. "If heart speaks not to heart, in the simplest, most soothing language of nature, words will, to the sufferer, prove cold and unimpressive-worse than useless, instructed Chesterfield."[3] Though unassuming, condolence letters still followed a strict formula. "There is only one true source of consolation—that we shall meet those we love in another and better world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest," Chesterfield explained.[4] Therefore, writers should emphasize heavenly reunion in hopes that "the anticipated joy blunts the edge of present grief." As a sample letter exemplified, "We *dare* not, then, mourn for *them*."[5]

Antebellum condolence letters shared an assumption that the dead had died a Good Death. Some antebellum Americans died suddenly in accidents, epidemics, or in conflicts

---

[1] Nan Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910* (Carbondale: Southern University Press, 2002), 86. See also Hugh Blair, "Lecture 34: Philosophical Writing, Dialogue, Epistolary Writing, Fictitious History," in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres; Chiefly from the Lectures of Dr. Blair,* Abraham Mills, A.M., ed., (New York: James Conner, 1832), 273-4, accessed January 14, 2014, http://books,google.com/ebooks.

[2] "Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing Simplified…To Which is Appended the Complete Rules of Etiquette, and The usages of Society…" 1857, reprint, (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, Publishers, 1867), 49.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 50.

like the Mexican War; however, most Americans passed away at home. Loved ones surrounded the peaceful deathbed in order to observe every last word and gesture as proof that the dying would live again in heaven.[6] Because authors assumed that the bereaved had witnessed their loved one pass away, writers could follow a standard letter format that suggested that the hope of salvation offered the greatest comfort in a time of grief.

The Civil War transformed the use of condolence letters by undermining the Good Death. Death arrived swiftly in often horrific ways, forcing tens of thousands of soldiers to die alone and far from home. Nevertheless, as Drew Gilpin Faust argues, "Soldiers and their families struggled…to construct a Good Death even amid chaos."[7] According to Faust, Americans modified condolence letters to provide details about the soldier's last moments and to develop a narrative that cast the dying man as a Christian soldier.[8] Fred Habersham was one soldier whose death had been far from good. An artillery shell had struck Fred in the skull, killing him instantly, far from his beloved wife. As a result, Leila's friends and family used letters to describe Fred's brave actions and to assist in returning his body and possessions home from the battlefield.

Leila received many letters in the weeks after Fred's death, and her family and friends seemed united in their effort to prove that Fred had died a Good Death. These letters helped form a virtual community that mourned the loss of the dead. Still, the format of these letters varied. Some followed the traditional antebellum condolence formula, while others took on a

---

[6] The idea of the Good Death arose several centuries prior to the Civil War. See Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 6-7.

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] Ibid., 14-30.

more informal tone designed specifically to reconstruct the Good Death. These differences in format signified a deeper distinction in the way in which the authors discussed grief.

Wartime condolence letters fell into two categories. One group, traditional condolence letters, followed the recommended formula in manuals like "Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing Simplified" and urged widows to look to a future reunion in heaven for comfort in the present. If death did not permanently separate couples, authors reasoned, then widows had little reason to grieve at all let alone feel sad about a temporary loss. The newer form of letters, which this essay will term death letters, differed in both structure and content from traditional condolence letters because they had more work to do. Death letters offered sympathy but primarily provided details regarding the death of a husband in order to narrate the death scene for perpetuity.[9] Instead of looking to a heavenly reunion, death letters urged widows to develop a lasting memory of the dead on earth, so that their husbands' memories might live on symbolically. By making these suggestions, death letter writers embraced a practical form of grief that traditional condolence letters largely ignored, though neither encouraged excessive emotional expression. [10] Confederates may have remained unified in their understanding of the best way to die, but they did not necessarily agree on the best way to grieve.

Traditional Condolence Letters

---

[9] The changes in death letters also coincided with an overall change in the way in which Americans approached death, moving from sentimental mourning over the body to a more impersonal and less religious death practices. See Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes towards Death, 1799*-1883 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); Robert V. Wells, *Facing the "King of Terrors": Death and Society in an American Community, 1750-1990* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[10] Death letters had appeared in the antebellum era, such as when a distant relative passed away or when a soldier died in the Mexican War. Writing manuals grouped these letters with condolence letters, but they were not the dominant form of letter. It was not until the Civil War that this type of letter became prominent. For examples of antebellum death letters, see "Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing, 51; Mark Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 27-30.

Traditional condolence letters remained popular during the American Civil War, at least among wealthy, white Southerners. Writing a condolence letter required a combination of basic writing skills and training in middle-class customs. Only socially prominent Southerners possessed such training, and, in fact, writing these formulaic letters helped define the author as a member of the social elite.[11] As a result, widows like Leila Habersham and Flora Stuart, who had been married to prominent Confederate officers, were more likely to receive traditional condolence letters than women of less financial means or lower social standing. Poorer women often did not have the education or perhaps even the desire to conform to upper-class customs. For those widows who did receive traditional condolence letters, the correspondence marked a significant moment within the grieving process because each letter carried a close friend or relative's expectations for the course of grief. Following a strikingly uniform format, condolence letters as a group proffered a series of recommendations for how widows should feel about and interpret their loss.

Flora Stuart adequately represents the group of widows who typically received condolence letters. Before the war, J.E.B. and Flora Stuart traveled in prominent social circles. J.E.B. progressed through the army's officer ranks thanks in part to his wealthy father-in-law's patronage. During the Civil War, the couple's social capital continued to rise when the General won many hearts in the South for his exploits in the Confederate cavalry. At the Battle of Yellow Tavern, however, the couple's fortunes changed abruptly. On May 11, 1864, a Union cavalryman shot General J.E.B. Stuart, who was struggling to hold the collapsing Confederate lines. An ambulance carried the wounded General to his brother-in-

[11] Slaveowning played a significant role in defining class in the South, but other customs enhanced this distinction. For a history of the rise and fall of middle class customs, see Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

law's house where, in the company of s few family members and fellow soldiers, J.E.B. bequeathed his earthly belongings to his loved ones, expressed his resignation to God's will, and passed away. Flora arrived mere hours later. Though able to view his body and bury it on May 13, Flora lacked much of the comfort that the Good Death could provide since she had not witnessed J.E.B.'s soul pass from earth to heaven.

In the weeks following the funeral, family and friends wrote numerous condolence letters to Flora. Cousins, brothers, friends, and even Mary Custis Lee reached out across the war-torn Confederacy to offer words of comfort and hope that would provide some meager solace for the stricken widow. Because the entire nation claimed the right to mourn the loss of their beloved General Stuart, even complete strangers broke with custom and wrote to Flora.[12] A collapsing mail and transportation system delayed delivery. Writers like Ella Ginnan delayed a few days or weeks for fear of "intruding" upon Flora's grief. [13] As a result, letters arrived piecemeal over several weeks.[14]

Friends and family took up the duty of letter writing because they believed that the death of a husband sparked deep emotional pain. Though Ella Ginnan initially delayed, she ultimately wrote to Flora because "my heart prompts me to sympathise with you, now that

---

[12] Mrs. Biscus Ball to Mrs. Stuart, 13 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS.

[13] Ella M. Ginnan to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For fear of intruding, see Sarah P. Jones to Cousin, 16 June [1864], Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU.

[14] For condolence letters written to Flora Stuart, see Mrs. Biscus Ball to Mrs. Stuart, 13 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee to Flora Stuart, 15 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Nannie O. Price to Mrs. Stuart, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mary M. Fontaine to Cousin Flora, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Agatha Dabney to Cousin Flora, 17 May [1864], JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Cousin Kate M. Dabney to Flora Stuart, 18 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; John B. Dabney to Cousin Flora, 19 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Ella M. Ginnan to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; John Rogers Cooke to Sister, 30 June 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; M. L. Fontaine to Cousin, n.d., Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

your soul is overwhelmed with anguish."[15] Georgia Smith came to a similar conclusion, perhaps because she knew all too well the pain of losing a beloved husband. For her, that loss was the "deepest woe which can ever befall us." Georgia assumed Flora to be, like her, a "poor desolate child" who was "crushed" under her sadness.[16] Loved ones bemoaned that widowed mothers faced an even greater loss. As one friend wrote, my "heart bleeds for you and for your dear little children," who had not had an opportunity to truly know their father.[17] Family and friends assumed that widows would grieve heavily and therefore any intrusion, though unpleasant, was a necessary duty for anyone who truly understood the emotional anguish of loss.

Although the goal of family and friends was to comfort widows, letters proved to be a challenging medium for such a delicate task. Words, many of them realized, seemed empty and "cold."[18] Kate Dabney lamented that she did "not feel capable of writing to you as I would wish."[19] After all, paper and ink could not convey the sound of her voice or the

---

[15] Ella M. Ginnan to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Nannie O Price to Mrs. Flora Stuart, 15 May [1864], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[16] See Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; See also Eliza to Sallie Milner, 12 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH; Mrs. Sarah Bull to Flora Stuart, 13 May 1864, J.E.B. Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Kate M McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[17] Nannie O. Price to Mrs Stuart, 15 May [1864], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Clara M. Daniels to Mrs. Lamar, 20 April 1867, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH.

[18] Kate M. McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; See also M. L. Fontaine to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; and J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU.

[19] Kate M. Dabney to Flora Stuart, 18 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

See also Caroline S. Couper to Mrs Habersham, 12 May 1863, in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 194; Nannie Bierne Parkman to Mrs. Habersham, 19 May 1863, in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 185; Mary Pinckney to Leila, 15 May 1863, in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 185.

warmth of her arms. Instead, she could only describe her wish to "mingle my tears" with her bereaved friend, hoping Flora's imagination would bring those words to life.[20] Still, Kate admitted, "I wish I could say any thing in this world to comfort you, but I know your loss & feel that it is beyond the power of any human being to do so. God alone can do that, & I feel that He is with you now."[21] No matter how eloquently written, letters could not provide the comfort that writers wished to give.

Words flowed more easily when writers described their own emotions. Friends and family recounted stories of "personal grief" in order to lend sincerity to the letter by proving that they too had endured tragedy and could legitimately empathize with the afflicted widow.[22] Relatives of the deceased soldier particularly shared the widow's pain. Still, even more distant relatives claimed to understand the emotional turmoil of loss.[23] Flora's friend, Kate McClellan, believed that she could understand a widow's pain because she "had an idolized brother stricken down by the ruthless foe."[24] With so many deaths, almost all letter writers could draw on similarly tragic personal stories. This circle of mourners widened dramatically for widows of prominent generals because an entire "nation of mourners"

---

[20] Kate M. Dabney to Flora Stuart, 18 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[21] Ibid. See also J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mrs. Gilliam to Leila Habersham, n.d., quoted in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 201; E. Lewis to J. Stoddard Johnson, 17 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Jeb Pugh to Lisa Nicholls, attached to Mattie to Lisa Nicholls, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.; and M. L. Fonatine to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[22] Mary M. Fontaine to Flora Stuart, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[23] Jeb Pugh to Lisa Nicholls, in letter Mattie to Lisa Nicholls, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC

[24] Kate McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; See also Hassie to Cousin Sallie, 21 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

claimed the right to mourn fallen Confederate heroes, like J.E.B. Stuart.[25] By the last two years of the war, it seemed as though every citizen could claim to share Flora's loss.

Fellow widows had the greatest claim to sympathy. Sarah Bull, a stranger to Flora and a widow before the war, wrote immediately upon hearing of J.E.B.'s death because she believed Flora to be her "sister in sorrow."[26] War widows like Georgia Smith felt similarly. When Georgia's husband died earlier in the war, Flora had written her widowed friend a touching condolence letter. At the time, Georgia thanked Flora for her kind words and rejoiced that Flora was "still spared" while others had "tasted the one bitter cup." Unfortunately, Flora would not "escape" and would instead become part of the ever-growing group of Confederate war widows. When J.E.B. died, Georgia readily identified with Flora. In her condolence letter, Georgia wrote, "My dear friend, from my own heart--bowed down with sorrows, I feel for you as only the widow can feel-for what grief is like unto ours? We are set aside, and there is a mark upon us lonely & desolate we must fulfill our pilgrimage-awaiting with patience his time."[27] In the last year of the war, more and more women would come to identify with Flora. Another friend, who was still a wife when she wrote a condolence letter to Flora, became a widow shortly after. Flora reciprocated her letter of condolence. Her widowed friend replied, "I thought I felt for you but know now I didn't. I do now more than I can tell you."[28] Widowhood, an inherently lonely status, brought together many unwilling friends in war-torn Southern communities.

---

[25] Kate M. McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Mrs. Sarah Bull to Flora Stuart,, 13 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; and H.M. Bruce to Emily Todd Helm, 30 September 1863, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[26] Mrs. Sarah Bull to Mrs. Stuart, 13 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers 1833-1962, VHS.

[27] Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[28] GMD to Flora Stuart, 6 April [1864 or 1865], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

Fellow widows, close family members, and distant friends faced a similar challenge: to convey sympathy sincerely. Antebellum guidebooks recommended writers use plain language from the heart in order to provide the greatest comfort to the afflicted.[29] When writers expressed their own heartfelt experiences and emotions, however, the focus of the letter shifted away from the widow and towards the author. As a result, the sympathetic tone could quickly deteriorate. For instance, Georgia Smith's condolence letter grouped widows into the same lamentable lot. Nevertheless, her own struggles with widowhood also led her to the conclusion that Flora had the "comfort God gives you in his children-that is a blessing He has seen fit to deny me."[30] Personal tragedy helped Georgia to sympathize with her friend but also drew boundaries between their experiences.

Flora received many tactfully written letters, but other widows with less national fame earned less sympathy for their suffering. Some writers innocently pointed out that "a good many of our neighbors have suffered in the same way some lost their husbands some their children and some their Brotheres [*sic*]."[31] This shared suffering provided community, but it could also cheapen the value of individual grief. As Betty Warren complained to her brother's widow, "If I do mention my troubles to anyone they'll say "everyone is losing friends now" and that is the last they think of it; but Oh! 'Tis not the last with you and me. 'Tis very true most persons are losing someone dear to them but that don't help me." Still, later in the letter, Betty was guilty of that very crime. She wrote that Sallie should not grieve because she had "so much comfort in Charlie's death," likely in Charlie's surviving child.

---

[29] "Chesterfield's Art of Letter Writing…," 49.

[30] Georgia Smith to Mrs Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[31] Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

After all, Betty wrote, "Just think if it had been Rice instead of Charlie, I would have no comfort."[32] In another letter, she sent a newspaper clipping that recounted a tragic story, claiming, "although your trouble is great enough, this poor woman's is worse."[33] It is likely that Betty hoped these letters would comfort, not antagonize, Sallie. Perhaps Sallie found Betty's point of view helpful; perhaps she took offense. Either way, the initial stories that helped writers sympathize with widows' suffering also sparked competition over grief.

After sympathizing with the pain of losing a husband, writers then tried to explain the meaning of death, an impossible task. Americans struggled to comprehend the staggering scale of loss during the Civil War. Though only a minority of Americans could be considered devout Christians, Confederates shared a common religious worldview that only strengthened during the war, as Confederates struggled to explain their nation's rise and fall.[34] Similarly, letter writers drew on religion to explain why men had to die and even to wonder if death was really a loss at all.

Southerners largely believed that "every death and every illness was made to conform to God's will."[35] In condolence letters, friends and family affirmed this belief. According to Kate McClellan, J.E.B.'s death was a "stroke of Gods Providence."[36] Kate Dabney not only agreed, but also believed that Flora's "presentiment of the crushing blow" came about

---

[32] Beckie Warren to Sister G. Spears, 6 December [1863 or 1864], transcript, Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622, SHC.

[33] Sister B. Warren, 18 October 1862, Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622, SHC.

[34] George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[35] Ibid., 76.

[36] Kate M McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also, J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Eliza to Sallie Milner, 12 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH.

because God "was then preparing your mind for it."[37] Though God brought death to earth, He was not malevolent, according to letter writers; God simply possessed a wisdom that humans could not understand.[38]

Since a wise God brought about death, friends and families urged widows to submit to His will. Many letters echoed a version of Mary Pickney's question to Leila Habersham, "Are you trusting in God my poor Leila, though He slay you?"[39] Widows' answer to this question was important because, for many Christians, it was only through submission that they could earn God's love and of salvation.[40] As Georgia Smith assured Flora Stuart, "there is peace, peace, in submission to His will." Widows could prove such deferential devotion by not "murmuring at this sad dispensation of [His] providence."[41]

Still, writers like Kate McClellan admitted, "I know how hard it is to say, 'Thy will be done' when our hearts are crushed."[42] By admitting that everyone found it "hard to resign our treasures, and our hearts will rebel," writers offered compassion in the face of challenging circumstances, but also made conformity to God's law and social custom seem possible.[43] If the writer could overcome the pain and submit to God's will, then so could the

---

[37] Kate Dabney to Flora Stuart 18 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[38] Mrs. B. Mickle to Mrs. Jeanie Autry, 18 July 1864, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mattie to Sister Lisa Nicholls, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.

[39] Mary P. to Leila Habersham, 15 May [1863], in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 186. See also, Mary P. Govan to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 25 April 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU

[40] Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Rev. J. T. Pickett to Mrs. M. A. Greer and Mrs. J. V. Autry, 1 April 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[41] Eliza to Sallie Milner, 12 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH. See also

[42] Kate M McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[43] Ella M Gammon to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Mrs. Gilliam to Leila Habersham, n.d., quoted in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 201.

widow, in time.[44] Friends and family prayed that widows would become resigned as soon as possible, and even, as Ellen Coleman added in a letter to Leila, to "feel it is well for me that I have been afflicted."[45]

Submission had likely already been a part of a woman's life in the antebellum American South. Law and social rule subordinated women to their male relatives, especially their husbands. Women, the dominant population among religious devotees, also more freely bent their knee to the Lord than men, in part because submission was a gendered status. Widowhood, however, marked an opportunity to deviate from a position of subordination. By immediately reaffirming the value of submission, condolence letter writers prevented widowhood from providing a moment of independence. Instead, the loss of a husband, at least in theory, only confirmed women's dependent status.[46]

Letter writers promised that widows who submitted to God would reap invaluable rewards. Many writers assured widows that God promised to protect and comfort His downtrodden flock. Kate McClellan felt confident that, during Flora's "dark hour," "the blessed Savior…has upheld your soul and given you the comfort of the Holy Spirit."[47] Not

---

[44] Hassie to Cousin Sallie, 21 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also Kate M McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mary Anne Harrison Fitzhugh to Alice Harrison, 1 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[45] Ellen Coleman to Leila Habersham, n.d., in Habersham,. *A Sketch of Frederic,* 200. See also Hassie to Cousin Sallie, 21 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; Jeb Pugh to Lisa Nicholls, in Mattie to Lisa Nicholls, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.

[46] Attempts to contain widows as dependent women began immediately, though providing pensions to widows can be seen as an extension of that effort. Gross argues that the process of placing widows into an appropriate gendered space began in Ladies Memorial Associations and, to a much greater degree, with the development of the Confederate pension in the 1880s. See Gross, "Good Angels: Confederate Widowhood," 190-266.

[47] Kate M McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Sister in Law to Mrs. Emma L. Garnett, 20 May 1863, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV; H. M. Bruce to Emily Todd Helm, 30 September 1863, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; L. S. D. to Mrs. Johnson, 18 June 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Nannie O Price to Mrs. Stuart, 15 May 1864,

only did God comfort the suffering, but, according to the Christian Bible, God also replaced a widow's husband by assuming the duty to protect and to provide for her. Some letter writers alluded to Isaiah 54, which casts God as a "Husband to the Widow."[48] Others, like Georgia Smith, referenced Psalm 146:9, where God promised to protect the "widow and the fatherless."[49] Pointing to these biblical passages had two purposes. These messages assured widows that Christians did not struggle alone. At the same time, letter writers also transferred the husbands' authority and responsibility directly to God and kept widows within a subordinate gender role.

Perhaps the greatest spiritual reward that condolence letters promised was salvation, echoing funeral sermons. Popularized religious lore envisioned a heavenly reunion after death, where couples and even entire families reunited at the throne of God. Because Christian submission opened the gates of heaven, death became only a temporary separation.[50] For many Confederates, this promise of salvation provided the greatest possible consolation for grieving widows.[51] Friends and family congratulated widows whose husbands had shown some sign of Christian faith; these widows did not have to "sorrow as

---

Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mrs Sarah Bull to Flora Stuart, 13 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers 1833-1962, VHS.

[48] Isaiah 54, King James Version; Fanny Y Craft to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, [1863], James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. See also G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; E. Lewis to J. Stoddard Johnson, 17 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[49] Psalm 146:9, King James Version; Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[50] This idealized vision of heaven endured more culturally than theologically, allowing it to appeal across denominations. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People*, 177-8; Schultz, "The Heavenly Country," in *Awaiting the Heavenly Country* 38-69.

[51] Ella M. Gimmon to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mary M. Fontaine to Flora Stuart, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

others who have no hope" because they would meet their beloved again in heaven.[52] Still, condolence letters rarely labeled any widow as hopeless, instead pointing to any evidence available that would group the deceased, and his widow, into the more fortunate category. Since J.E.B. Stuart had converted to Christianity early in life and had long been confirmed in the Episcopal Church, friends and family assumed that the General's soul had been saved. Kate Dabney believed that J.E.B. "is in the enjoyment of perfect happiness, & that he is where no sorrow sin or suffering, can ever reach him," just waiting to be reunited with his family.[53] With the dead shielded in heaven, only the living would suffer. Letter writers even argued that God was "merciful" when He took soldier-husbands "to a quiet and heavenly habitation," far away from the warfare and loss on earth.[54] By extolling salvation, condolence letters cast death as a temporary, unhappy condition. Since eternal bliss would soon follow, Christian letter writers implied that widows had not really lost their husband. Instead, obedient widows gained a future eternal life in marital bliss.

Not all widows strictly adhered to the Christian faith, and those who did may have found salvation too distant for comfort in the present. Though religious rhetoric dominated condolence letters, family and friends offered some secular comforts as well. For instance, letter writers also assured widows that death could not erase the imprint that love, friendship,

---

[52] Reverent J. T. Pickett to Mrs. M. A. Greer and Mrs. J. V. Autry, 1 April 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. See also M. C. Lee to Hetty Pegram, 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS; Betty Warren to Sister Sallie, 29 October 1862, Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622, SHC.

[53] Kate Dabney to Flora Stuart, 18 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Mary P. Govan to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 25 April 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mary Anne Harrison Fitzhugh to Alice Harrison, 1 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Eliza to Sallie Milner, 12 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH; Hassie to Cousin Sallie, 21 January 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; M. L. Fontaine to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Kate M. McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[54] Nannie O Price to Mrs. Stuart, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

and bravery had left on all those who knew the deceased. Writers like Ella Gimman recounted romantic tales of undying love that they hoped widows could cling to even in the absence of their husbands. In a condolence letter, Ella remembered that J.E.B. had described "many incidents of his married life, and of his winning your love," while speaking of Flora "with so much tenderness."[55] Friends and family found many other qualities that they valued in their beloved General, and they recounted these virtues in their letters. Nannie Price particularly "loved and admired him [J.E.B.] for his many noble and manly qualities but more particularly as the true warm friend and the bright sunshine he always carried with him."[56] Wartime offered a plethora of opportunities for men to confer honor upon themselves, so that a generally admired man like J.E.B. Stuart could become "glorious champion of his Country's rights and Liberty" in the memories of his loved ones.[57] Though these happy memories did not make sense of death like religious rhetoric, these letters shaped a lasting image that allowed the dead to live on in the memory of his loved ones.

Writers particularly encouraged widowed mothers to believe that a part of their husbands remained on earth. Through physical likeness or personality characteristics, either real or imagined, children seemed to carry the very essence of their fathers. When possible, letters of condolence trumpeted childcare as a fountain of consolation and largely ignored the great burden that such work placed on a single woman's shoulders. In fact, Southern communities considered widowed mothers like Flora Stuart to be among the most fortunate

---

[55] Ella M. Gimman to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[56] Nannie O. Price to Mrs. Stuart, 15 May [1864], Unprocessed Flora Stuart PApers, VHS. See also Matty Johnson to Mother, 16 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[57] Kate M. McClellan to Flora Stuart, 6 June 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For soldiers and civilians praising bravery in the name of the Confederacy, see John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS; Ella M. Gimmon to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

of widows. Before J.E.B.'s death, the Stuarts had two children: a son, J.E.B. or "Jimmie," and a daughter, Virginia. When advising Flora on grieving, Ella Gimmon referenced the Stuarts' children, writing "your dear little babe will be particularly dear, for never was an infant more loved by a fond Father than little Virginia, and God grant Jimmie may resemble his Father."[58] Unfortunately, Ella was unaware that Virginia had passed away shortly before her father's death. Even when friends and family knew of Flora's compounded loss, they still believed her to have greater consolation than a childless widow. Georgia Smith agreed with Ella but bemoaned the fact that God "has seen fit to deny me" the comfort of motherhood.[59] Georgia wanted to nurture children who would carry on the best qualities of their father, a task that could have helped define her new life. According to Mary Fontaine, Flora now had a duty to complete before she could join J.E.B. in heaven, the "noble work ~~on earth~~ to train his children for God's work on earth."[60] The energy that a widow had split between her husband and her children could now be fully devoted to motherhood. By this reasoning, widowed mothers had both a comforting connection to their deceased husband and a renewed purpose to live.

Taken together, the religious and secular messages within condolence letters suggested that death may have not been a loss at all. The husband's spirit resided peacefully in heaven while his best deeds and qualities lived on through the memory of his loved ones and through his children. In the meantime, friends and family encouraged widows to follow

---

[58] Ella M. Gimmon to Flora Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[59] Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[60] Mary M. Fontaine to Cousin Flora, 15 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; See also Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Mattie to Sister, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. See also Ellen Coleman to Leila Habersham, quoted in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 200; and Jeb Pugh to Lisa Nicholls, in Mattie to Sister, 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.

God's will in exchange for His protection—much like a wife did in marriage—and to devote more energy to her role as caretaker of her husband's memory and of his children. In theory, a widow's life would change very little; death did not end her literal marriage or her marital role on earth. Since the separation between the living and the dead was neither great nor permanent, widows, it seemed, had no reason to grieve too deeply.

Despite these intricate philosophical arguments, friends and family feared and even expected that emotion would defy reason. Rather than give in to natural emotional expression, writers desperately hoped to persuade widows from "giving way to grief."[61] To reinforce this message, friends and family cited examples of mourners whose "fortitude appears to me sublime."[62] The women who could have offered the best model for emotional suppression avoided drawing these comparisons, however. Of the fellow widows who wrote to Flora after J.E.B.'s death, each recognized a common pain and pointed to the various means for comfort but none suggested that Flora throw off her grief.[63]

To reinforce their condolence letters, writers offered some additional support for grieving widows. When J.E.B. Stuart died, Kate Dabney could not rush to the grieving widow, so instead she invited Flora for a visit. To close the letter, many writers promised "that you will always find in me a sympathizing friend and cousin and you must call upon me if I can aid you in any way."[64] Despite friends and families' best intentions, their offers for

---

[61] Mattie to Lisa Nicholls, 14 September 1862, in letter 28 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRc.

[62] M P. G. to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 25 April 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU.

[63] Mrs. Sarah Bull to Flora Stuart, 13 May 1864, J.E.B. Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS; Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[64] M. C. Lee to Hetty Pegram, 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS. See also J. J. Govan to Mrs. James L. Autry, 30 January 1863, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; and Judge H. M. Bruce to Emily Todd Helm, 22 September 1863, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

support were too often empty. Few writers addressed the specific financial and legal problems that widows would face upon the death of a husband. Warfare, time, and distance prevented loved ones from following through on the promises that they did make. Mary Fontaine admitted, "But for the uncertain state of things I would go to you at once."[65]

By rationalizing death through logical arguments, writers treated grief as an intellectual rather than an emotional problem. Writers sympathized with the emotions that they believed widows felt, but the instructive bent to condolence letters offered a rationale to deny the cause of the emotion—loss—rather than the emotions themselves. The letter format may have forced writers into this choice. Condolence letters provided a voice for the writer but could not offer an ear to listen to the grieving widows' woes. As a result, condolence letters lacked the ability to respond and adapt to widows' present and often varied emotional state. Still, letter writers might have lingered on the array of feelings surrounding loss; their choice not to do so reflected a discomfort with the emotion within the grieving process.

The Rise of Death Letters

Formal condolence letters no doubt carried a powerful message about the appropriate way to grieve, yet they primarily catered to socially prominent or wealthy Southerners who had the means and the desire to conform to antebellum custom. Even for these widows, the antebellum condolence letter formula could not fully address the concerns of wartime widows. As Drew Gilpin Faust demonstrates in *This Republic of Suffering,* war shattered the basic assumption behind condolence letters that the dead had died well, at home surrounded by loved ones. To compensate, condolence letter writers began to include more practical

[65] Cousin M. L. Fontaine to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Shell to My Dear Cousin, 25 November 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; and Father Samuel Chapman to Daughter Mattie Chapman, 4 December 1863, Chapman Family Papers, FLST.

information about the actual deathbed scene in order to prove that the dying man had lived as a Christian soldier, had accepted his fate with fortitude, and therefore proved that his soul would rise to heaven. [66] In the process of providing this information, death letters altered the assumption that the bereaved should curtail grief. Instead, writers encouraged widows to engage immediately in grieving activities, particularly those that preserved the memory of the deceased on earth.

Death letters required a different formula than traditional condolence letters. Writers provided the details of a husband's death and presented concrete information to help widows navigate the economic and legal complexities of claiming the body and possessions. Therefore, only those who had knowledge of the details of the death could write death letters. Nurses, doctors, soldiers, and commanding officers most likely witnessed or had some knowledge of the death, and could best pass on details, including how the husband died, where he was buried, and how to collect his pay and personal possessions.[67] Close family or friends penned these notes whenever possible, but acquaintances or even strangers faced the task as well.

When the authorship changed, so did the type of conversation. Strangers and men still serving at the front kept their notes shorter and more direct than traditional condolence letters. Death letters did not become entirely impersonal, however. Because the writer and the reader did not necessarily have a close relationship, the letter remained focused on the widow's personal tragedy rather than the author. Furthermore, death letters were more apt to form a conversation than the single, polished condolence letter. For instance, nurses might

---

[66] Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 14-24.

[67] Mrs. R. F. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 30 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU; G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

write to inform wives first of their husband's illness and then later of his death, as Mrs. Joseph McGrouder did when Asa Martin lay wounded in her care.[68] When death traveled swiftly, the news typically did not. Widows likely waited anxiously to hear any news, especially when rumors swirled on the home front. [69] Unfortunately, newspapers proved untrustworthy and death letters frequently became lost in the mail, forcing widows to write to those who might know of their husbands' fate.[70] When death letters did arrive, their authors encouraged widows to reply by providing contact information for the bereaved "if you desire eney further particulars," which widows often did.[71] By engaging in a conversation with multiple sources, widows pieced together an image of their husbands' final moments. [72] As a result, death letters permitted widows to linger on their loss and even to actively engage actively in a conversation about that loss, though not necessarily over their feelings.

---

[68] Mrs. Joseph L. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 19 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Mrs. R. F. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 30 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU. See also Lt. Chas H. Keton to Sister, 16 February 1863, 22 February 1863, 5 March 1863, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA; W. S. Fowler to Mrs. A. M. Holcomb, 19 March 1863, 5 April 1863, 19 April 1863, 29 April 1863, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA; John Holcomb to Wife, 7 April 1963, 18 April 1863, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA; James Nickson to Wife, 8 August, transcript, Nixon Letters, UFL.

[69] John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU; Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA. For family correspondence that abruptly turns to death notification, see R. C. Bellamy to Sister, 25 April 1863, Calvin B. Bellamy Correspondence, UFL; and Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH. Check source. Shock widow or confirm rumor at home maybe

[70] G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang,20 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH. See also Son to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, 12 July 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Matty Johnson to Mother, 16 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; and Anna Smith to C.H. Toy, 14 April 1870, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

[71] Sgt. S. K. to Mrs. Thomas, 7 October 1864, W. G. Thomas Letters, 1863-1864, CSA Personal Narratives, Microfilm Drawer 57, Box 65, GDAH. See also R. C. Bellamy to Sister, 25 April 1863, Calvin B. Bellamy Correspondence, UFL; J. E. Deloatch Captain Commanding to Mrs. William Lang, 14 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[72] Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH; John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, VHS.

Death letter writers faced a challenging task: to convey enough practical details to prove the trustworthiness of their story without undermining the comfort within their messages. Readers naturally resisted believing tragic news, particularly when coming from a stranger. With enough details, however, writers hoped that death letters could transport the reader across time and space to witness the last moments of a loved one. Writers did not spare widows, supposedly of the more delicate gender, from gruesome details. Descriptions of battlefield wounds and deaths could be particularly violent. W. F. Aycock notified Dulcinea Calloway that her husband, Joshua, had been "shot through the Bowels with a Minie Ball."[73] Similarly, J. C. Allen informed Sallie Milner that her husband's "left arm was badly shattered near the shoulder and the arm amputated there."[74] Richard never recovered from the wound.[75] Death by disease could prove equally horrible. When a friend wrote to Nancy Gilliam that her "Beloved Husband" had "Departed this life," he acknowledged that Mr. Gilliam had suffered for several days with a "Very horriable With the Brain Fever."[76] Though likely painful to read, such detail not only helped widows reach the inescapable conclusion that their husband was indeed gone but also helped widows to envision their

[73] W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, transcription, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA.

[74] J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also, J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; George Freaner to Mrs. E. W. Fontaine, 6 October 1864, George Freaner Letter, 1864, VHS; J. E. Deloatch Captain Commanding to Mrs. William Lang, 14 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF.

[75] Richard W. Milner Obituary, *The Baptist Banner*, [January 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[76] B. B. Neal to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, 20 June 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH. See also Son to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, 12 July 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU.

husbands' final moments. Widows clung to these stories years later, presumably finding some comfort of meaning despite the horror.[77]

Death letters recounted the details of death faithfully yet sometimes shied from admitting that pain accompanied death.[78] Authors ranged from omitting physical pain to explicitly denying it. One woman, Mollie, did not hold back any facts when writing her sister, Fannie, whose husband died from a wound received at the Battle of Chickamauga. Mollie wrote that Joshua "fell mortally wounded and lay until Monday afternoon when he was taken to Brechenridge's Division Field Hospital." There, a surgeon bound his wound but abandoned him so that "all the skin wore off his back, having lain on a bed of rocks." After a surgery to amputate the left leg "above the knee," Joshua wrote two letters begging his family for the care that the hospital could not provide him. At that point, however, he was beyond care. Even after describing Joshua's extended torture, Mollie relayed the surgeon's interpretation that "He seemed to suffer no pain at all but was gradually away from exhaustion and weakness."[79] The contradiction between the reality of wartime death and the ideal of the Good Death proved too challenging to synthesize.

In some incidences, the manner of death inferred great pain to such a degree that writers conceded that the dying suffered. As J. F. Jaquess wrote to Ann Johnson, George Johnson's widow, the politician-turned-soldier "was wounded in the abdomen, the ball

---

[77] Helen Plane, 1891 Pension Application, C.S.A. Pension Applications, 1870-1960, Georgia Archives Virtual Vault, digital image, accessed January 14, 2014, http://cdm.sos.state.ga.us:2011/cdm/compoundobject/collection/TestApps/id/276948/rec/1.

[78] Faust admits that writers tried to cast death as less painful than the facts implied, but ultimately argues that the letters were largely truthful, as opposed to Jay Winter's suggestion that families in World War I intentionally falsified information in condolence letters to make the news less painful.

[79] Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, White-Hill Papers, GDAH. See also J C Allen to Cousin Sallie [Mrs. Richard Milner], 18 Dec 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS.

passing through the body. He lay on the battlefield some thirty hours before he was found and brought to our hospital."[80] By that time, George was dying. Jaquess wrote, "I need not tell you that he suffered most intensely, but he bore his suffering with manly firmness."[81] Jaquess honestly recounted the pain in order to cast Johnson's suffering as evidence of bravery. Even though George's death did not neatly fit into the image of the calm and quiet good death, his death affirmed his masculinity, a trait equally valued and much more easily proven in war.

Whether or not letter writers included physical suffering in their horrific tales, most omitted mental suffering. It is possible that most Confederate soldiers faced their deaths as bravely as George Johnson supposedly did, yet it is more likely that writers considered mental suffering to be more painful than physical suffering. At the time, friends, family, fellow soldiers, and even widows might have interpreted mental suffering or excessive emotion as unmanly. Instead of describing moments of weakness, writers more often recounted the moments of strength that better fit into the image of the Good Death.

One rare letter belies the heroic narrative. When Asa Martin's nurse, Mrs. McGrouder, wrote his wife, she admitted that Asa seemed emotional. He "could not bear the idea of going home with one arm" and almost cried at the thought.[82] Periodically, he would "get in to histerical [sic] fits of laughing and laugh until his arm would pain him."[83] Though these few lines slipped through, the letter on the whole cast Asa's last moments as that of a

---

[80] J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[81] Ibid. See also John Cowper Granbery to Alice Harrison, 18 July 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[82] Mrs. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 23 August 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[83] Ibid.

responsible and caring husband, focused more on the welfare of his family than on himself. The process of constructing a sanitized memory of wartime death had already begun.

Just as men were not supposed to die in pain, they were also not supposed to die alone. Whenever possible, death letter writers provided all possible evidence to certify that death had not been friendless or anonymous. For instance, George Freaner assured Mrs. E. W. Fontaine that loyal soldiers rescued her dying husband from the field, delivering him into the hands of a caring widow who helped ease his suffering.[84] Similarly, J. F. Jaquess, the chaplain who attended George Johnson in the hospital, wrote to Ann Johnson, "You may be assured that your deceased husband had every possible attention and every thing was done that could be done to alleviate his sufferings, and smooth his decent [*sic*] to the dark valey [*sic*] and shadow of death."[85] Nurses and caregivers often provided specific details of cleaning, clothing, and feeding the sick and wounded men. Ellie Reutch assured Mrs. Clark, "He was well cared for. I attended to him myself some two or three weeks before he died. Took him meals."[86] Another nurse also stressed that her special attentions tried to transform a hospital, which was diverse in "class and colour," into a home-like atmosphere that recognized the patients' social status.[87] From a widow's perspective, such care would have been valuable indeed.

---

[84] George Freaner to Mrs. E. W. Fontaine, 6 October 1864, George Freaner Letter, 1864, VHS. See also H.B. McClellan to Mrs Stuart, 10 October 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[85] J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. See also J. F. Jaquess to Ann E. Johnson, 29 ay 1862, George M. Johnson Papers KHS; S. S. Jackson to Mrs. Geo. W. Johnson, 14 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[86] Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF. See also Mrs. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 23 August 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[87] Mrs. Joseph L. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 19 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

Not all soldiers died in caring arms. Civil War battles left thousands wounded and dying in the course of a few days, overwhelming army personnel, hospitals, and local towns. In these cases, death letter writers admitted the unfortunate conditions, but suggested that these tragic facts evidenced bravery more than increased pain. W. F. Aycock explained to Joshua Callaway's widow that fellow soldiers had "picked him up,[and] started off the field with him when he asked us to lay him down and let him Die."[88] They obliged and were forced to leave him on the field. Rather than be blamed for abandoning their comrade, Aycock cast dying alone as Joshua's choice, and a noble one at that.

It proved more challenging to construct narratives of bravery about sickbeds than about battlefields. Some writers turned to casting blame. When Mrs. McGrouder informed Mary Martin that Asa had died under her care, she cited the doctor's assurances that Asa was mending. If there was to be blame, it should be placed on him.[89] Mollie, Joshua's sister, placed blame more explicitly. In writing to Fannie, the widow, Mollie pondered, "We can not discuss the ways of Providence, Fannie yet I can not help thinking that if he had gotten proper attention from the time he was wounded he would have recovered."[90] Openly assigning blame seemed to question the will of God, as well as lambast loyal Confederates. Few death letters placed blame; however, more death letter writers than condolence letter writers were willing to place the cause of death on man's actions rather than God's will.

---

[88] W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA. Though J.E.B. Stuart did not die alone, he did choose to remain on the battlefield wounded. See H. B. McClellon to Mrs. Stuart, 10 October 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[89] R. F. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 30 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[90] Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH.

Though authors found the pain and loneliness of death challenging to describe, they struggled even more to suggest the path that the soul took after death. Writers carefully recorded any possible evidence of salvation. For some dying men, those moments confirmed lifelong religious beliefs and attitudes. For others, they offered a final opportunity to convert to Christianity and to submit to God's will. No matter the soldier's religiosity in life, authors widened the types of credible evidence and lowered the burden of proof in order to make sure that, at least in letters, most Confederate soldiers rose to heaven after death.

A dying man's last words offered the best evidence of his salvation. Only rarely could conscious dying men write out last messages.[91] Horrifying wounds and debilitating diseases, not to mention the uncertainty of death, often forced dying men to speak their last words. When Washington Nance died in a prisoner of war camp, a fellow prisoner recognized that Nance's widow would likely want to know about his final thoughts. He wrote a letter inside Nance's diary that described the death, acknowledging "it would be Tidings to his family to know he had no fears for Death."[92] After the war, the fellow prisoner sent the diary to Nance's widow.[93]

Writers also scrupulously recounted any additional evidence of a deathbed conversion. Asa T. Martin's letters to his wife, Mary, did not suggest him to be a particularly religious man, since he rarely mentioned God or attended church. On his deathbed, however,

---

[91] George W. Johnston to Ann, in S. S. Jackson to Mrs. George W. Johnson, 14 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[92] David Branson, 18 March 1865, in Washington Nance's Diary, Washington Pickens Nance Civil War Papers, 1859-1865, ADAH. See also Richard W. Milner Obituary, *The Baptist Banner*, [January 1863], Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[93] David Branson, 18 March 1865, in Washington Nance's Diary, Washington Pickens Nance Civil War Papers, 1859-1865, ADAH. For evidence of death letters carrying the last words of a dying husband, see Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, GSA; George Freaner to Mrs. E. W. Fontaine, George Freaner Letter, 1864. VHS; Anna Smith to C. H. Toy, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS; Betty Warren to Sister Sallie, 29 October 1862, Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622, SHC.

Asa reconsidered the state of his soul. His nurse, Mrs. McGrouder, wrote Mary that Asa asked for a preacher, who "came and talked to and prayed for him he wept very much indeed and said he wanted to be a Christian."[94] As a result, Mrs. McGrouder felt confident that Asa's "soul was clean and nice enough to enter Heaven that is the most of all important with him."[95] Presumably, this evidence was sufficient to comfort the grieving widow.

Unfortunately, the horrific wounds suffered during the Civil War left many men who entered the hospital precariously balancing between life and death, unable to speak as Asa did. While George W. Johnson lingered on his deathbed, Reverend Jaquess attended to him and sang several hymns. Jaquess believed that George's "countenance brightened up" and "there was a great change within him," but admitted that George refused to profess his conversion, preferring to "rely too much upon a moral and correct life which he had been careful to mention."[96] With more time, perhaps George would have declared his faith in God, but the Reverend left to counsel other patients. Death would not wait for him to return. As a result, Jaquess's letter provided Ann comfort and hope tinged with doubt.[97]

A willingness to die also provided poignant evidence that the dead would rise to heaven. Writers hoped that resignation to death indicated a resignation to God's will. As a result, death letter writers, like Charles Lamar's cousin Albert, searched their memories for evidence that the doomed man had some presentiment of his own death. Albert remembered that Charles entered the battle outside of Atlanta in 1864 with grim resolve, likely aware that

---

[94] Mrs. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 23 August 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

[95] Ibid. See also Richard W. Milner Obituary, *The Baptist Banner*, [January 1863], Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[96] J. F. Jaquess to Ann E. Johnson, 29 May 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[97] Ibid. See also G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

the Confederate army faced dim hopes. Masculinity demanded such countenance, but Albert's story also suggested that Charles placed his fate in God's hands.[98] Other authors more explicitly connected a willingness to die with submission to God. Though Joshua Hill remained largely in a stupor, Mollie made sure to point out to Fannie Hill that, in a moment of consciousness, he "said if it was God's will to take him he was perfectly resigned."[99] In lieu of conversion, a willingness to die offered some evidence of faith. Though Reverend Jacquess could not assure Ann Johnson that her husband, George, had fully embraced God, he could write, "I have seen many die but never saw any one die more perfectly resigned…I felt that he was, "falling a sleep in Jesus.""[100]

By proving that the dead had been willing to die, letter writers risked suggesting that husbands wished to leave their wives. To prevent evidence of salvation undermining the earthly marital relationship, letter writers carefully pointed out that, though men like Joshua Hill were willing to die, they had hoped to reunite with their families once more.[101] To prove this contradictory notion, letter writers praised the dead as exemplary husbands and fathers. Caroline Lamar's cousin, Kate, assured her that "Cousin Charlie made a desperate effort to

---

[98] Albert to Cousin Caro, in Kate to Cousin Caro, 21 January 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, GDAH. See also Kate to Cousin Caro, 21 January 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, GDAH; Clara M. Daniels to Mrs. Lamar, 20 April 1867, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, GDAH.

[99] Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH. See also Sgt. S. K. to Mrs. Thomas, 7 October 1864, CSA Personal Narrative, W. G. Thomas Letters, 1863-1864, CSA Personal Narratives, Microfilm Drawer 57, Box 65, GDAH; David Branson, 18 March 1865, in Washington Nance's Diary, Washington Pickens Nance Ciivl War Papers, 1859-1865, ADAH; J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH.

[100] J. F. Jaquess to Ann E. Johnson, 29 May 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. For other examples of a death described as peaceful or satisfactory, see J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Papers, GDAH; B. B. Neal to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, 20 June 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS.

[101] Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH.

get into [Savannah] just previous to your exile to see you but failed."[102] Charlie told Kate "nobody can be half as sorry as I am" that he could not see his family before the upcoming battle, musing "wouldn't it be dreadful for me to be killed in the fracas."[103] Just before leaving, Charlie reiterated that "once he could not appreciate a wife's great love & intense anxiety for her husband but he could now [and] that he would give anything in the wide wide world to see his wife & children…& told me how devotedly he loved you, & you were as pure & good& exerted a much greater influence over him than people were aware of…"[104] Unfortunately, Charlie would be killed. Kate hoped that this story would prove to Caroline that Charlie remained deeply committed to his family.[105]

By minimizing the pain and loneliness of death and exaggerating the likelihood that the soul ascended to heaven, death letter writers began the process of constructing a sanitized and glorified memory of wartime death. In turn, these letters encouraged widows to do the same. Sometimes, authors helped widows directly. When George Johnson died at Shiloh, far from his native Kentucky, S. S. Jackson told Ann Johnson, "I have had him packed in a rough box with salt. It was the best I could do."[106] A train carried the body home to Ann.[107] If

---

[102] Kate to Cousin Caro, 21 January 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, GDAH.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid. See also, R. A. Brock, editor, "The Execution of Dr. David Minton Wright: By the Federal Authorities, at Norfolk, Virginia, October 23, 1862," *Southern Historical Society Papers,* Vol. XXI, (1893), 331, accessed January 14, 2014, http://books.google.com/ebooks; G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH; Mrs. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 23 August 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF; B. B. Neal to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, [20] June 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; Sgt. S. K. to Mrs. Thomas, 7 October 1864, CSA Personal Narrative, W. G. Thomas Letters, 1863-1864, CSA Personal Narratives, Microfilm Drawer 57, Box 65, GDAH.

[106] S. S. Jackson to Mrs. Geo W. Johnson, 14 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[107] J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

no one at the front organized or paid for the transportation of the body, then death letters provided priceless information about the burial location. In a letter to Sallie Milner, J. C. Allen described Richard's burial location as "on the farm of Capt John Alsop, five miles from Fredricksburg, in two hundred yards of the Richmond and Fredricksburg rail road, under a small Persimmon Tree, near two others graves, under a larger Persimmon."[108] Allen explained, "I have been this precise, thinking you might probaly some time wish the body sent for." Sallie and her family collected the body a month later for proper funeral services.[109]

Similarly, writers returned as many of the husbands' possessions as possible. Some men at the front helped settle and collect for their fallen comrade, sold items particularly valuable on the front lines, and returned the balance home to the widow.[110] Most writers provided advice on navigating Confederate bureaucracy rather than acting on behalf of the widow. Soldiers' back pay reverted to his widow, along with any belongings in the possession of government officials. To claim these possessions, widows had to travel to Richmond or pay an agent to do so. Letter writers offered advice on how to collect the money, from sending a son with a power of attorney to having a friend or family member in the service do the work.[111] In addition, letter writers recognized that mementoes carried the

---

[108] J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[109] Richard W. Milner Obituary, *The Baptist Banner,* [January 1863], Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also See Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, SAF; John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU; R. F. McGrouder to Mrs. Martin, 30 June 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; Son to [Mrs. Nancy Gilliam], 12 July 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH.

[110] W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; See also John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS.

[111] B. B. Neal to Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, 20 June 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; [Mrs. McGrouder] to Mrs. Martin, 23 August 1862, Asa T. Martin Papers, AU; John C. Goodgame to Mrs. Mary Martin, n.d., Asa T. Martin Papers, AU.

memory of the deceased. Therefore, even seemingly ordinary objects could prove valuable to a grieving widow. In addition to leading Sallie to Richard's burial site, J. C. Allen also wrote that Richard's "overcoat was left in charge of a negro boy on the home farm, with instructions to deliver it to any one who should come after the body." Another friend had Richard's knapsack and another his pocketbook.[112] During the war, the mail service carried many valuable relics to grieving widows, especially locks of hair.[113] Despite everyone's best efforts, too many mementoes became lost or left behind during the war.[114] Whether or not these items ever reached their intended destination, death letters still carried the message that widows could and even should preserve the memory of their husbands.

Death letters recounted the details of death in such a way that even wartime tragedies seemed to fit the ideal Good Death. Though authors did provide accurate information within the letters, they shaped those facts to minimize the horror of death and to assure widows that their husband's soul resided in heaven. No matter how the man had lived, in letters he became a brave, Christian soldier. In the process, death letters implied two ideas about the appropriate way to grieve. First, they suggested that it was appropriate to remember the husband, and his death, in the best possible light. Second, these letters suggested that one of the first acts for widows was to preserve the memory of their husbands. Ultimately, death letters permitted widows to envision the death of a husband as a real loss, a pain that widows would have to work to ameliorate by engaging with the past.

---

[112]J. C. Allen to Cousin Sallie, 18 December 1862, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. See also John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU;

[113] W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; J. F. Jaquess to Mrs. G. W. Johnson, 13 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[114] David Bransan, 18 June 1865, in Washington Nance's Diary, Washington Pickens Nance Ciivl War Papers, 1859-1865, ADAH; W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

Conclusion

The boundaries between traditional condolence letters and death letters were often permeable. Both united behind the intention "to write to the comfort of the distressed," no matter how the confusion of warfare hampered those efforts.[115] Death letters shared many messages central to condolence letters by extending their sympathy to the bereaved and by expressing a hope that the couples would one day reunite in a more peaceful resting place than earth. [116] A relative few even suggested that widows should submit to their fate.[117] Ultimately, death and condolence letters shared the assumption that a husband's Good Death and ultimate salvation would provide great comfort to widows.

Nevertheless, traditional condolence letters and death letters suggested different courses for widows' grief. Condolence letters prioritized moving forward by embracing traditional gender roles, like motherhood, and becoming engaged in the present. Ultimately, these letter writers urged widows not to grieve because one day God would reunite the couple in heaven. Conversely, death letters provided a practical resource for widows to know exactly how their spouse had died. In telling these horrific details, death letters allowed social networks to share some of the pain, loneliness, and grief of wartime death while providing widows a relative certainty of their husbands' salvation. Furthermore, they encouraged widows to participate in the process of memory construction as an appropriate part of grief. That friends, family, and strangers wrote such varied letters in a united attempt to reconstruct

[115] J. F. Jaquess to Ann E. Johnson, 29 May 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[116] For sympathy in death letters, see George Freaner to Mrs. E. W. Fontaine, 6 October 1864, George Freaner Letter, 1864, VHS. See also W. F. Aycock to Mrs. J. K. Calloway, 5 December 1863, Joshua K. Callaway Papers, UTA; Sister Mattie to Lisa, 13 August 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. For the hope of salvation in death letters, see John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS; G. W. Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 26 July 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH.

[117] George Freaner to Mrs. E. W. Fontaine, 6 October 1864, George Freaner Letter, 1864, VHS;

the antebellum ideal of the Good Death indicated that Confederates were divided in their interpretation of the appropriate way to ease the pain of loss. Death letters perhaps allowed widows the greatest agency to engage with their feelings, but neither path that permitted widows to express negative emotions openly.

CHAPTER 4: EMOTION

Leila deeply appreciated the "great kindness showed me by people in Sav'h during this season of affliction." The list of friends and family who offered a kind word or a sympathetic ear had seemed endless. "The Habershams one & all felt that my sorrow was their sorrow & affliction only drew us nearer to one another," she wrote.[1] Though "in sorrow" Leila felt "thankful…to be with my own people again."[2]

And yet, Leila continued to grieve. Her loss was too overwhelming. "Oh! if human aid & sympathy could have availed, I would have been comforted, but the blessed Jesus alone could bind up such wounds as mine," she wrote. Though Leila would continue to turn to family and friends for financial assistance and social connection, she simultaneously believed that the responsibility for her mental health and emotional survival rested with herself and with her God.

It is difficult for historians to know what grief felt like for Confederate widows, including Leila, since widows struggled to voice the depths of their loss. Flora George echoed what other widows likely felt, writing, "Oh! I have no words to tell you how utterly wrecked and broken my heart is."[3] Action and words expressed widows' feelings, but neither could fully convey the complexity of the inner emotional experience. Besides, two widows

---

[1] Habersham, A Sketch of Frederick, 184.

[2] Ibid., 200.

[3] Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

might use the same word to describe their emotions while unwittingly feeling very differently.

Even when widows did speak or act from the heart, their expressions rarely found the permanence of pen and ink. A lack of education, reduced access to writing materials, and widespread poverty limited the number of Confederate widows who might contribute to the written historical record. Well-educated and economically stable widows who might have recorded their feelings were still busy mothers struggling to run a household and a farm with little time for written introspection. Making the subject even more challenging for historians, widows may have actively avoided leaving a permanent record of their feelings, especially when those feelings contradicted cultural prescriptions for grief.

Though only widows could know exactly how they felt, observers might have offered a more candid image of widows' emotional expressions, perhaps even speculating on their internal feelings. Yet friends and family rarely described either widows' feelings or expressions of those feelings. Many faced similar limitations for writing, and perhaps others believed the feelings were not really theirs to share. For the most part, hushed conversations, weepy embraces, and outbursts behind closed doors all remain lost in the past. The private nature of the initial stages of grief, paired with the demand of stoicism once the rituals became public, may have permitted only a small group of close family and friends to be privy to widows' grief. Loyalty likely commanded that same group to remain silent or at least censor socially unacceptable reactions, like anger or bitterness.

For these reasons, historians have generally avoided wading into the quagmire of historical emotions. Those pioneers within the field of emotional history have focused primarily on the extent to which culture, through historical context, shaped the expression of

emotion. Peter and Carol Stearns made the first foray into this field with "emotionology," a term that they used to separate emotion, an individually felt internal state, from the "collective emotional standards of a society."[4] William Reddy refined this theory further, arguing that feelings arise independently within an individual but that cultural structures like language shape the way that individuals articulate and interpret those feelings. In making this argument, Reddy distinguishes between internal feelings and "emotives," or the "performative utterances" that represent those internal feelings.[5]

While it is important to understand cultural expectations that might shape the expression of emotion, such as those ideals expressed in death rituals and condolence letters, historians must also investigate how historical actors felt within a particular historical context. Admittedly, historians can only study feelings by studying emotives, as Reddy calls them, just as any two people of any era can only understand one another's feeling by interpreting their words and gestures. Despite the difficulty, studying both emotives and emotions can help historians see the emotional consequences of historical events and how those emotions then shape historical action.

A small group of widow-writers did record their feelings. Personal correspondence, memoirs, and diaries offer the best available glimpse into Confederate widows' emotional states. Can historians trust these sources? In short, yes. We can trust these statements as much and as little as we trust any other historical statements, like a letter asserting a political opinion. Any written documents may reflect only a portion of a belief, thought, or feeling,

---

[4] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985): 813-836.

[5] William M. Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); William M. Reddy, "Historical Research on the Self and Emotions," *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009), 302-315.

since words and writing have limited space and time for complex ideas, even if the author was fully self-aware of these ideas. As a result, historians must read these sources as they do any other: with both trust and skepticism, carefully considering the author's potential for distortion.

In fact, widows readily shared the story of their own grief, describing a tidy and ultimately triumphant narrative where their faith in God pulled them out of the depths of sorrow toward a peaceful resignation of their fate. Nevertheless, widows' grief continued to spill onto the pages of their writings for decades. In part, grief continued simply because widows could not so easily dismiss their sadness or frustration over the course that their lives had taken. The fact that the death of a husband led to a cascading series of stressors exacerbated this original grief. Widows faced enormous pressure to support their family, a task that produced great anxiety if successful and even more anxiety coupled with shame if a failure. Even simply failing to conform to cultural norms for grieving caused self-criticism, anxiety, and sadness. These emotional reactions gradually compounded to create a much more messy and more long-term narrative of grief than the stories that widows told. At best, widows struggled with these feelings for decades, leaning on their friends and family for companionship to combat the isolating spiral of grief. At worst, their mental health deteriorated, and they entered a mental hospital, a place that offered vulnerable women both shelter and sometimes further tragedy.

Redemptive Grief

Loss was a moment of crisis. Sadness, anger, bitterness, despair—all were likely and even understandable emotions within grief. Family and friends acknowledged these emotions in condolence letters and death letters, yet they still requested that widows quell these

feelings as soon as possible. How could widows simultaneously feel this range of emotions, even potentially questioning the righteousness of God's plan, while still accepting their lot?

At least in letters and memoirs, widows dealt with the disparity by constructing a redemption narrative to tell the story of their grief. First, widows described the depths of pain and despair that they felt upon losing their husbands. "The dark waters of sorrow have overwhelmed me, and I can scarcely realize that I live, for has not the light and joy from life gone from me? In the midst of my happiness, my most tranquil happiness, this terrible affliction came to crush me," Mattie Morgan wrote in a letter to her mother-in-law. Etta Kosnegary expressed the same sentiment more simply when she told her mother, “I feel so low spirited since Lewis died.”[6]

Widows even admitted that sadness led them to resist their fate, grasping desperately to hold onto their husbands. Mattie Morgan found that her house and her heart seemed empty with no "joyous footsteps to listen for, no bright smile to gladden me."[7] She admitted, “it is only in my dreams that I am happy, for he is ever with me, the same caressing, devoted husband. I believe he knows my loneliness and sorrow, and his spirit comes to me at night to comfort me."[8] These dark depths led to a final moment of crisis. Mattie remained in her room

---

[6] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

[7] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC.

[8] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC. For other widows describing a painful sadness at their loss and a desire to be with their husband again, see Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 12 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, VHS; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 15 April 1862, VHS; Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

for days refusing to eat, hoping that God would also come for her so that "my Spirit too would now take its flight."[9]

By refusing to submit to God's plan and by flirting with the boundaries between heaven and earth, Mattie had proven her commitment to her husband, even after death. Still, she did not need to remain in this emotional quagmire because, as she reasoned, "God has seen fit to spare me, my work is not yet accomplished."[10] By both experiencing and surviving the agony of despair, Mattie showed that God wanted her to remain on earth, apart from her husband, perhaps to care for her unborn child. Her initial resistance ultimately strengthened her faith, since she overcame her sadness and embraced her Lord even after her loss. After this moment of crisis, Mattie could happily imagine "my brave Cold warrior humbled on his knees before his Maker" in heaven, her happy marriage on earth left as a memory.[11] Mattie likely took comfort in her strengthened faith, since one day she might be reunited with her husband in heaven.[12] "Oh! What the heart can bear and not break," Mattie concluded.[13]

---

[9] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC. See also Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 15 February 1862, VHS; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 26 December 1867, ADAH.

[10] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC. For other widows who questioned the worth of their life, see McDonald, A Woman's War, 241-2.

[11] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC. For other widows who described similar moments of crisis, see McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 242-4; Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH.

[12] For widows who expressed this belief, see Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU. See also Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Paper,s 1694-1917, VHS; McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 217; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 31 March 1862 and 6 April 1862, VHS.

[13] Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC. For other evidence of sorrow and sadness, see Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU; Sarah Lois Wadley, Diary of Sarah Lois Wadley, August 8, 1859-May 15, 1865, entry 15 October 1862, page 91, transcript of manuscript 1258, DAS, 2000, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/wadley/wadley.html.

At the heart of the redemption narrative was a story of rebirth. Though Cornelia McDonald described a similar moment of crisis and even rebellion as had Mattie, she used nature to symbolize her own shifting feelings. In her memoir, Cornelia described two visits to her husband's grave in Hollywood cemetery. Immediately after his death, Cornelia remembered, "The wind whistled through the leafless trees, and everything looked so bleak and desolate that I felt as if my heart was broken. The falls of the James River were just below and the melancholy sound and cold look of the icy water added to the dreariness. It was bright sunshine, but a grey and cloudy sky would have harmonized better with the scene and my desolation," Cornelia wrote.[14] That she had to hurry away to escape the "bitter biting wind" likely mirrored her desire to turn away from the fresh stab of grief within her heart.[15] To reassure her reader that this pain faded, Cornelia described a very different scene from two years later. "The long grass was growing over them both, the trees thick with foliage, and the happy voices of birds singing their songs to their mates made the place a scene of beauty. The water poured on with its rapid rush at the foot of the hill, but the waves looked glad in the summer sunshine, and when I turned to go, it was with a feeling of thankfulness that he was at rest, and had escaped the misery and humiliation of that melancholy time which followed so soon after his death."[16] Cornelia wanted her readers to believe that she had found peace.

---

[14] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 219.

[15] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 219.

[16] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 219. See also Frances Polk, "Leonidas Polk: A Memoir Written By His Wife for Their Children," pg 3, in UOS. Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH. For another widow who used nature to symbolize inner emotions, see Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH.

When widows described their own grieving process, they used a redemption narrative as a rhetorical tool to mold their unwieldy emotions to fit cultural expectations for grieving. Initially overwhelmed with sadness and despair, widows faced their feelings and doubts with Christian fortitude and, through God's will, emerged reborn with renewed purpose, stronger faith, and a quiet thankfulness that their beloved lived peacefully in heaven. In this way, widows compartmentalized their grief, setting their feelings aside in order to continue with their lives.[17]

Compounding Grief

Yet, in the pages that followed, a less orderly emotional reality emerged. After the death of a husband, grief stubbornly persisted. Widows persevered, fighting to survive despite Confederate defeat and the uncertainty of the postwar era. Anxiety, fear, and anger spilled onto the page as widows struggled to maintain even a facade of peace and resignation. As time progressed, each new trouble begot more grief, to the point that failing to live up to cultural standards of grieving sparked self-criticism. As each new feeling blurred into the last, these overwhelming emotions formed a barrier between widows and society, leaving many widows feeling increasingly lonely in the postwar era.

The Civil War brought many stressors beyond even the loss of a husband. Widows whose husbands died near the beginning of the war still had to suffer through several more perilous years watching their loved ones face grave danger. Cornelia McDonald and Ann Johnson both lost their husbands in 1862. As plantation mistresses and as mothers, they also had a great stake in the outcome of the war yet lived with their families under constant threat

[17] Widows of Jewish soldiers may have conceived of the afterlife differently, though they might have embraced the popularized vision of heaven that Shantz depicts. Relatively few Confederates were Jewish, and since none of the widows within this study were Jewish, more research is needed to fully understand Jewish widows' perspective.

of invasion.[18] Struggling to hold the family together, Cornelia worried about "what we were to eat, when my heart was too heavy with grief to think of it."[19] To make these "dark days" even worse, both Cornelia and Ann also had sons or stepsons fighting for the Confederacy, and both would see one of their young boys become men by donning the gray cloth in the last year of the war. Cornelia equipped her young son, Harry, and decided "to trust him to Providence," while Junius Johnson ran away from his mother to join his brother in Virginia.[20] Ann's son-in-law tried to give her peace by writing, "Don't be uneasy about him. I will not let him join the Cavalry but will get him his cadetship and think I will make him go to the Virginia Military Institute to prepare him for staff duty. I am sorry he could not have staid but can not blame him as I set the example. I know he came from an impulse which does him honor and proud of him."[21] Ann professed relief though no doubt continued to worry, all too aware that war brought death and destruction.[22]

Confederate defeat ended the fighting that threatened Ann and Cornelia's sons, but a new host of concerns emerged. For one, widows awaited the potential "utter ruin" of their adopted country.[23] Shame mingled with fear, as widows wondered how their country's gamble for independence could have failed. As Cornelia remembered, "grief and despair took possession of my heart, with a sense of humiliation that til then I did not know I could

---

[18] Ann Johnson lived in Kentucky and Cornelia McDonald lived in Virginia.

[19] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 221.

[20] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 228; D. Howard Smith to Cousin Ann Johnson, 4 August 1864, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[21] Stoddard Johnston to Mother [Ann Johnson], 11 August 1864, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[22] Stoddard Johnston to Mother, 11 October 1864, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS. Junius survived the war.

[23] McDoanld, *A Woman's Civil War*, 223. See also Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH.

feel."[24] To make matters worse, Confederate defeat meant that the dead had died in vain. As a result, widows' hearts "ached with a ceaseless pang for the country as well as for my own griefs."[25] When Eliza Kendrick heard of surrender, her thoughts immediately turned to the "heroic dead," and she mourned, "All for naught: All for naught."[26]

Grieving Confederate defeat did not necessarily mean that widows abandoned the Confederate cause. Eliza Kendrick did conclude, "The slaves might go…if only the graves could have given up their dead."[27] Still, not all widows revoked their support for the cause. Sally Perry mourned the loss of her husband, but still believed that a government run by "a motly crew (negroes & whites) elected by negroes and renegades" was a "mockery." One day, she believed, the South would "once more redden with blood."[28]

Aside from the potential for violence in the postwar South, widows faced many other "tormenting anticipations and fears," the greatest being the survival of their families.[29] Work brought home food and money but at an emotional cost. Cornelia resented "not having the privilege of retirement in my present state of distress," even though she admitted, "there was no time for grief."[30] No matter how hard widows worked, however, they would continue to face family tragedy in peacetime. Soon after Ann Johnson lost her husband, she lost both her

---

[24] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 232.

[25] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 224. For other widows grieving at defeat, see Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1864-1917, VHS.

[26] Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," transcript by Anne Kendrick Walker, ADAH. See also McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 223;

[27] Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," transcript by Anne Kendrick Walker, ADAH.

[28] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH.

[29] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 239. See also Frances Polk to [Frances Skipwith], 6 June 1866, Polk Family Papers, SHC. Frances Polk to [Frances Skipwith], 16 June 1866, Polk Family Papers, 1866; Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 25 December 1867, ADAH.

[30] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 222.

mother and her father. According to her son, these losses began to "pray upon your [Ann's] mind."[31] Furthermore, Confederate veterans did not always settle easily back into civilian life. Matt Johnson perhaps worried his mother the most when he was jailed for killing a black man near Vicksburg. Though Matt hoped his release would "put her mind at rest," Ann likely still worried about him as he tried to rebuild his life.[32] Ann even worried over her more successful son-in-law's political career, feeling "provoked & disappointed" when one county did not vote for him.[33]

Additional tragedies added emotional burdens on top of grief. Still, the quiet moments of reflection sometimes proved to be the most painful, as widows could not quell the sadness in their hearts. In 1867, Sally Perry described her feelings five years after her husband died at Sharpsburg. She bemoaned the loss of her youthful hope and happiness, since she believed "each accending year destroys illusion after illusion, untill thou sumest war & sorrowful and bathed in Tears!"[34] After enduring repeated loss, she looked upon her younger self as a stranger, and considered her widowhood "agony."[35] Her diary included a range of feelings,

---

[31] J. W. Johnson to Mother Ann Johnson, 8 September 1869, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS. For other instances where widows lost parents or children, see H. J. Lloyd to Mrs. J. V. Brown, 5 May 1909, James L. Autry Papers, RU; Mother Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison to Child Alice Harrison, 29 April 1867, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. James M. Greer, [1866], James L. Autry Papers, RU; Clara M. Daniels to Mrs. Lamar, 20 April 1867, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH.

[32] M.C. Johnson to Mother Ann Johnson, 8 January 1868, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS. For other widows' whose loved ones' legal troubles resulting from the tumultous postwar era that likely left them anxious, see Husband M. H. Dosson to Melinda Black Dosson, 8 February 1866, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; "Editorial in Pioneer," 7 May 1898, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. For other evidence of anxiety, see Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. Jas. M. Greer, 20 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, RU.

[33] Mother Ann Johnson to Eliza, 4 April 1875, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[34] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH.

[35] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH.

from "desolate" to "bitterness" to disappointment to misery.[36] Some days were good, but other days she was "as irritable as if every nerve was on edge as it were."[37] Frances Polk, the wife of an Episcopal minister and the very standard bearer of Christian fortitude, could not escape mentioning in her memoir that, after Leonidas Polk's death, "every thing seems dark and cheerless."[38]

Sadness, anxiety, fear—all marked resistance to God's will and therefore undermined widows' neat stories of redemptive grief. Six weeks after Lewis Kosnegary's death, his wife Etta wrote, "it seams [*sic*] like I never can become reconciled to my fate."[39] Even Frances Polk wrote three years after her loss, "oh God why was he taken, & so many worthless left. 'even so Father for so it seemed good in thy sight' but it is hard to say."[40] Though Sally Perry believed "God doeth all things well," she acknowledged in 1867, five years after her husband's death, that "at times even His face seems hidden, and I grope my way in the darkness."[41] Still, she continued to recite the phrase that she one day hoped to fully embrace: "Thy holy will be done."[42]

---

[36] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH; Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 11 December 1867, ADAH.

[37] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 11 December 1867, ADAH.

[38] Frances Polk, "Leonidas Polk: A Memoir Written By his Wife for their Children," 3 at UOS. For other examples of widows' sadness or depression continuing, see Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 243.

[39] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

[40] Frances Polk, "Leonidas Polk: A Memoir written by his wife for their children," UOS. See also Flora Stuart to Mary Lee, 8 May 1867, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, VHS.

[41] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH.

[42] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 11 December 1867, ADAH. See also Ann Johnson to Eliza, 4 April 1875, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

Unable to submit fully to their fate, widows still refused to abandon their God. After all, their greatest comfort, the hope for salvation and reunion in heaven, rested on their continued faith and piety. Besides, many widows also saw the hand of God in earthly actions, like their family and friends helping hands.[43] As a result, widows vacillated between declaring their trust in God and questioning His plan. "God is so very good to me, I ought to be ashamed to murmer but O my life is so desolate Mattie, so desolate," Flora George wrote to her sister-in-law.[44] For Frances Polk, the loss of her engagement letters proved to be too much to bear without some minor protest. She wrote, "it seems as if all those things I so valued were to be taken. Gods will be done."[45] When Bettie Jones wrote a note of sympathy to her newly widowed sister in 1871, she acknowledged that they had both "passed through the deep waters of affliction" and that Nannie would "bear this affliction with more resignation than most of us," simultaneously parroting the expectation while indicating that she herself had not yet met it.[46]

Maria Hubard spoke the internal turmoil that many widows might have felt about their relationship with God. Immediately after her husband's death, she remembered God's

---

[43] For evidence of widows' trusting in God as a provider on earth, see McDonald, *A Woman's War*, 239-40. See also Francis Polk to [Frances Skipwith], 19 January 1866, Polk Family Papers, SHC; "Mrs Lamar Writes Tribute," Constitution, Atlanta, 31 May 1925, in UDC Scrapbook, May 1918-1925, Volume I, GDAH. For evidence of widows continued religious faith, see Stuart Family Bible Records, 14 November 1855, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; E.J.S., "Obituaries: Speer (formerly Mrs. Milner), 1 August 1907, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; "Minutes of the Saquatchee Association of Baptists" for 1850, 1853, 1854, 1861, 1856, 1865, 1870, in Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; B. M. Blevins, 1 August 1866, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

[44] Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU. See also Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 6 April 1862, VHS.

[45] Frances Devereux Polk to Fanny, May 1866, Polk Family Papers, SHC.

[46] Elizabeth Hill Goodloe Jones to Nannie R. Hill, 18 November 1871, Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930, VHS.

promise, "'whatsoever thou aspeak in prayer believing I will grant.'" Angrily, she lashed out at herself for being "foolish enough to believe God would hear such prayers from a poor sinner like me" just because of his promise.[47] Two days later, she held on to her anger, writing, "My God. we are told thou orderest all things for our good! but surely this is not!"[48] For these reasons, widows across the South likely echoed Maria Hubard's plea to her Lord, "teach me to say 'thy will not mine.'"[49]

Though widows struggled to quell sadness and submit to God's will, few openly rebelled against expectations. The emotions most discordant with the ideal grieving process remained absent from widows' writings but not likely from all widows' hearts. Certainly some widows felt betrayed by their husbands for choosing country over family. Perhaps some widows felt angry that their husbands had died for a cause that they did not fully support. It is also likely that abused widows found relief and even comfort at the death of their husbands. In most instances, historians can only glimpse at shadows of these feelings otherwise omitted from the historical record.

For instance, Ellen Long Daniel's postwar scrapbook hinted at her feelings of anger and betrayal. A scrapbook might have offered Ellen more shelter than a memoir or diary for several reasons. First, articles that had been published in a newspaper had garnered enough popular appeal to certify the message as socially acceptable. Second, co-opting another writer's words distanced Ellen from the message in the article. Third, Ellen could discretely

---

[47] Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 13 February 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860, 1862, VHS.

[48] Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 15 February 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860, 1862, VHS.

[49] Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 22 May 1862, VHS. See also Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

alter the message within the clipping by pasting it within a new context, on a page with other articles within a young widowed mother's scrapbook.

Flattering biographies of famous Generals dominated the pages of Ellen's scrapbook, as did some hopeful depictions of a destroyed South. "There's grandeur in graves—there's glory in gloom, For out of the gloom future brightness is born," one page read.[50] Two poems sit lonely on one page, shadowed and covered in glue. Cut from an 1867 issue of *The Daily Index,* "In Pace" depicts a mother, a widow, and a maiden each crying over the grave of a Confederate soldier, loved, lost, and buried far away.[51] The author instructs the crying widow, "whose heart is breaking," to "henceforth calm your heartache" in order to rebury the dead. This poem echoed the messages in the condolence letters that Ellen likely received, and her selection of this poem suggests that she at least accepted the task, whether or not she could fulfill it.[52]

The other poem, however, tells a very different story. "Gone!" was about a man who abruptly left his sweetheart. The "broken-hearted" girl cries "sad, bitter tears" as she bemoaned men's ability "to love or to lose, or to break" women's hearts. Though the poem depicted a failed courtship, once placed in Ellen's scrapbook the story parallels a husband leaving for war, never to return. Ellen may have been transforming the meaning in her mind. As the girl in the poem grieved, she looked around her, baffled that "merry voices are ringing" and the "brook where they wandered together flows on." "The same but how

---

[50] Father Ryan, "The South," clipping in Ellen Long Daniel, Scrapbook, 45, in the Ellen Long Daniel Papers, #202-z, SHC.

[51] "In Pace" was reprinted in the 1867 newspaper. The poem was first published in Southern Home Journal. It also appeared in the Staunton Spectator in 1867, suggesting that the poem had widespread popularity in the South. See "In Pace," Staunton Spectator, 26 November 1867, Vol. 45, No. 12, accessed 18 December 2013, http://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=SS18671126.1.1#

[52] "In Pace," in Ellen Long Daniel, Scrapbook, 18, Ellen Long Daniel Papers, #202-z, SHC.

changed is the bright sunny weather To one left down-stricken and weeping alone," she wondered. As the rest of the world moved on, the girl continued to "nourish her sorrow" with "the same mocking dreams ever haunting her rest." In the final, audacious critique, the author hinted at the bitterness underlying grief, either a sweetheart's loss or a widow's grief. "Man in his anguish, may publish his sadness, And brazen it out by the force of his will, To woman 'tis given to laugh in her gladness; To suffer in silence—to weep and be still!"[53]

Many widows did feel that they suffered in silence, noting a barrier between themselves and everyone around them. As a refugee family living near strangers, Cornelia felt "forsaken" by God and her friends since she "had no one now to whom I could confide any part of my misery."[54] Even when friends and family did try to help, widows like Etta Kosnegary acknowledged, "all the Ladies of the neighborhood have called on me but company does me no good I had rather be alone."[55] Loss and grief created a "void" in widows' hearts that no human could fill.[56] As Marie Turner Cochran observed after her second husband's death in 1886, "There are times in life when no one can help us."[57]

Feeling distant from the living and from their dead husbands, widows not surprisingly recorded feeling incredibly lonely. After J.E.B. Stuart died, Flora Stuart felt, "now life is sad-

---

[53] "Gone!", clipping in Ellen Long Daniel, Scrapbook, 18, Ellen Long Daniel Papers, #202-z, SHC. The poem also appears in J.A.S., "Gone!," in *London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation, Volume 12* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1867), 429, Digital Image, accessed March 8, 2014, www.google.com/books. It was likely reprinted from that edition in a local magazine, perhaps in 1867 since that was when "In Pace" was reprinted.

[54] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 241.

[55] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU. See also Habersham *A Sketch of Frederic*, 184.

[56] M.S.C. to Sister, 10 January 1886, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. For evidence of widows appreciating their friends and family's attentions, see Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC; Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. Jas. M. Greer, 20 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, RU; Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 184.

[57] Marie Stewart Cochran to Sister, 10 January 1886, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

lonely."[58] Sally Perry mourned losses, writing "I am lonely to night," later adding "I sit all alone mourning my broken idols."[59] For Sally, loneliness seemed a double edged sword. At times, her separation afforded an opportunity to commune with nature's "magic power" to "sooth the sick at heart." The solitude permitted her to break free "from the shackles of conventionality, soars free above all the petty vanities of earth" and to pour out her soul on God's ground.[60] At the same time, her isolation also sparked self-criticism as she questioned her piety and her strength of character.[61]

The loss of a husband left widows a terrible emotional burden. By describing their grief as a process of redemption and rebirth, widows could cast temporary deviations from the ideal grieving process as proof of their piety and God's desire for them to continue living their lives. In private, however, widows found that their emotions would not end so easily. Sadness continued, as did widows' doubts about the righteousness of their husbands' deaths. To make matters worse, other losses, Confederate defeat, and even the struggle to survive resurrected their grief and added additional anxieties over the future, anger at the past, and loneliness in the present that would plague widows for years in the postwar era.

Bridging Over Grief

Grief isolated widows, but friends and family offered companionship that boosted many widows' spirits. Through letters and visits, widows found a connection that they found emotionally fulfilling. Sometimes widows shared their feelings about grief, but mostly they

---

[58] Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1864-1917, VHS. See Mattie R. Morgan to Mrs. Henrietta Morgan, 31 October 1864, Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection, MOC; Elizabeth Hill Goodloe Jones to Nannie R. Hill, 18 November 1871, Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930, VHS.

[59] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 12 January 1868, ADAH. For a similar story of increasingly negative and critical internal thoughts, see McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 243-4.

kept their conversation to daily trials and triumphs. Either way, friendship offered a renewed connection to the community that could not replace their marriage but could still fill widows' hearts. When widows wrote to a loved one or discussed a recent social engagement, their words practically radiated energy not often present in more private, introspective writings. Of course, anytime widows opened their hearts to others they risked inviting hurt as well, and many widows complained about the seemingly incessant intrusions upon their lives. Still, simple acts of kindness went a long way to healing widows' wounds of war.

Just as wives loved corresponding with their husbands, widows loved corresponding with their friends and family. First pulled apart by war, many families further dispersed in peace in a quest for work, a home, or simply a new start. Reading a letter allowed widows to share in the joys and tragedies of these loved ones, no matter the distance. "It is always a bright, joyous moment when I read your letters that tell me, you are well, and happy," wrote Mary Gordon to her schoolboy son Armistead.[62] Armistead's letters were "one of the chief pleasures of my life."[63] Jeanie Brown wrote to her son as well, "there is no news to write and yet the act of writing is a pleasure because it seems to bring me in closer touch with you my precious and always loving and kind son."[64] Both parties recognized the importance of correspondence in sharing news and feelings that built the foundation of any relationship. When writers had "but little time" to write, they apologized profusely, recognizing the potential pain of even a few days absence of a kind word from a friend. [65] Even these

---

[62] Mary L. Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 19 April [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

[63] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 22 March [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

[64] Mother [Jeanie V. Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 8 August 1910, James L. Autry Papers, RU. See also A. E. J. to Brother, 24 February 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[65] Charles Henry Lynch to Roxanna Dearing, 24 April 1869, Dearing Family Papers, VHS. For other friends and family excusing a dely in writing to widows, see Daughter Martha to Mother [Ann Johnson], 11 March

apologies likely warmed widows' hearts, an indication that both parties valued their relationship.

Through these letters, widows poured out their thoughts and feelings, and soap operas quickly unfolded on the pages. Occasional rants about the "Black Republican Congress" found their way in between the more dominant news of marriage and gossip on who might have built a new house. [66] Though many conversations appeared superficial, each word strengthened the bonds between individuals trying to rebuild lives destroyed by war. By sharing thoughts and feelings, widows built a bridge over the emotional chasm between their grief and others' experiences. Friends and family did not shy away from tragedy, boldly discussing recent deaths without mention to widows' past losses.[67] In one rare instance, a recently widowed woman from St. Louis noted that Ann Johnson's loss helped her overcome her own suffering, because "it made me remember that others had gone through the same terrible sufferings and that there was but little for us to cling to in this world."[68] Even though

---

1866, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Mariella to Mrs. Stuart, 21 February [no year], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Eugene to Grandmother, 28 May 1890, Chunn/Land Family Papers, AC 44-101, GDAH. For widows apologizing for a delay, see The length of an acceptable gap varied. For Jeanie Autry, it lasted only seventeen days. See Mrs. Jeanie V. Brown to James L. Autry, 11 February [1881 or 1887], James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU. See also J. W. Johnson to Mother [Ann Johnson, 8 September 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Lizzy M. Fontaine to Mrs. Stuart, 12 March 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Sister Flora to Mattie [George], 3 May 1866, transcript and original in collection, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

[66] These particular references are included in a single letter to Flora Stuart. See C. Brewer to Sister Flora, 14 April 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For another example of women discussing politics in letters, see Lizzie M. Fontaine to Flora Stuart, 8 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For examples of letters discussing family news and gossip, see E. P. Litchfield to Aunt Flora, 18 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Stoddard Johnston to Mother, 3 February 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Mrs. Peter Birchett to Roxanna Dearing, 10 April 1868, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Willie to Sister Octavia, 3 June 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL.

[67] See Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. Jas M. Greer, [1866], James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU; M. R. Valliant to Sister Jennie, 16 April [1906], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; R. L. S. Beak to Madam [Jeanie Autry Brown], 18 June [no year], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Daughter Martha to Mother [Ann Johnson], 11 March 1866, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS. For an instance of emotional expression outside of death, see Mrs. Emma H. Townsend to J. V. Brown, 24 July 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[68] L. A. Buford to Friend [Ann Johnson], February 1866, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS.

the letter might have recalled Ann's grief, the conversation also likely helped Ann feel less alone.

If correspondence connected widows to friends and family, then visiting offered an even greater opportunity for companionship. No letter could replicate the back and forth flow of a conversation, a sympathizing gesture, or the warmth of touch. Immediately after James Autry's death, Jeanie Autry wrote to her sister, "your visits do us all good, and the effort that each makes for the sake of the other, strengthens us."[69] Those hopes for communion with friends and family did not fade. After the war, Jeanie still wrote, "I feel so much the need of a kind sympathizing female friend. I am constantly counting the time that separates me from dear Sister Mary."[70] Jeanie found that visits broke "the profound silence of our home" and "cheered" its occupants, perhaps providing a distraction from other troubles that weighed heavily on widows' hearts and minds.[71] Conversely, when friends left, widows felt their absence. "When the Tullys go home," Flora George wrote, "I shall not have one dear friend here, not one to whom I can go for love or sympathy."[72]

After the war, short visits to neighbors dominated widows' social calendars. Everything from births to illness to business pulled widows out of their homes to see their

---

[69] Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mrs. Mary A. Greer, 1 and 4 May 1864, James L. Autry Papers, Box 1, RU. See also Marie S. Turner to Mother, 12 December 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. See also Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 22 May 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS

[70] Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. Fas. M. Greer, 20 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, Box 1, RU.

[71] Mother [Jeanie V. Autry Brown to Allie [Autry], 15 August 1910, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[72] Sister Flora to Mattie [George], 3 May 1866, transcript and original in the collection, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU. See also Sally Randle Perry Diary, 26 December 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH. Widows' family and friends felt similarly. See Mrs. Peter Birchett to Roxanna Dearing, 10 April 1868, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

relatives and neighbors.[73] Family and friends reciprocated.[74] In 1865, Flora George lived near Aunt Mary's family and wrote proudly, "I see some of them everyday."[75] A busy visiting card reflected widows' deep roots within the community and helped widows to shift the center of their identity from their marriage to a wider circle of friends and family. As time wore on, these visits became a necessity for older widows reliant on others for some care. In 1909, the seventy-two year old Jeanie Autry Brown appreciated that her regular visitor, a man named Carter, did not become "tired of his charge-an old lady." [76]

Not all widows found the busy social calendar emotionally satisfying. A combination of sheer exhaustion and quarrelsome companions left Octavia Stephens reluctant to reach out to her local family, as she told her brother, Davis. When Octavia wanted to visit Aunt Julia, Lizzie refused to come. "It makes it very unpleasant for all," Octavia wrote, since Julie was "so jealous of our love for Aunt Julia, I have to be so particular and give her just as much of my time as Aunt Julia, when she never seems to put herself to the least trouble to come to see me."[77] In fact, the issue of who visited whom proved another barrier for visiting. While

---

[73] For a birth, see Mother [Ann Johnson] to Eliza, 4 April 1875, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 10, KHS. For an illness, see Anna Chapman to [Flora Stuart], 5 October 1871, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For business, see Sally Randle Perry Diary, 26 December 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

[74] A. E. J. to Brother, 24 February 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 27 December 1868, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH; R. W. Cooke to Flora Stuart, 12 January 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[75] Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU. For other instances of day long visits, see A. E. J. to Brother, 24 February 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 8, KHS; Sally Randle Perry Diary, Entries 3 January 1868 and 27 December 1868, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

[76] Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 11 July 1909, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. See also Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 7 July [1909], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 8 August 1910, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 24 August 1910, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[77] Tivie to Brother Davis, 8 February 1865, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL. See also Sister Jeanie V. Brown to Sister Mariam, 29 July 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

Octavia chided herself for not visiting Aunt Caroline, she also pointed out that her aunt "has not children to be sick and to work for, and she has been here only twice in seven or eight months."[78] As the head of household, a widow could not simply abandon her children and home as easily a married woman could. In the end, Octavia observed, "none of us [act] very sociable," a state that she seemed to regret.[79] In fact, neither widows nor their loved ones seemed to want to leave the comfort of their homes, leading to a delicate dance to arrange companionship.[80]Ann Johnson's daughter, Eliza, had hoped that her mother would stay "a good deal" with her sister in her new home, but "there is no room as cosy [*sic*] and comfortable as hers."[81] Many of these conversations followed a similar pattern. In March of 1868, Lizzie Fontaine wrote that she hoped to see Flora Stuart that summer. Flora proposed coming in June. In May of that year, however, Lizzie had to excuse herself in order to care for her mother. Besides, Lizzie argued, Flora was traveling to Maryland soon. Couldn't Flora simply stop by en route?[82] No doubt Lizzie's life had become too complicated to entertain,

---

[78] Tivie to Brother Davis, 8 February 1865, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL

[79] Ibid.

[80] For friends and family intending to visit widows, see Willie To Tivie, 22 April 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL; Sister Flora to Mattie , 3 May 1866, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, transcript and original available, AU; Harry to Aunt Jeannie, [June 1908], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; M. C. Johnson to Mother [Ann Johnson], 15 November 1865, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS. For widows intending to visit friends and family, see Maria to Sister [Flora Stuart], 18 March 1868, Unprocessed Flora Start Papers, VHS; Mother to Daughter [Ann Marie S. Turner], 15 October 1865, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; R. W. Cooke to Flora Stuart, 29 May [1868], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Davis to Sister [Octavia], 19 February 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL.

[81] Eliza to Sister [Martha Johnson], 7 February 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 12, KHS.

[82] Lizzie M. Fontaine to Mrs. Stuart, 12 March 1868, Unprocessed Flora Start Papers, VHS; Lizzie M. Fontane to Flora Stuart, 8 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. Since most correspondence collections are one sided, it is difficult to piece together whole conversations. Since letters stopped when family and friends visited, many collections do not mark when visits occurred. For friends and family asking for widows to see them, see M. D. Hawenk to Friend [Ann Johnson], 30 November 1866, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS; Mrs. Peter Birchett to Roxanna Dearing, 7 October 1866, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Theo Worthington Valliant to Sister [Jeanie Autry Brown], 27 June 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Hassie to Cousin Sallie, 29 January 1871, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; R. W. Cooke to Flora Stuart, 2 July [1868], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For widows asking for friends

and many of the same issues that called widows to visit their neighbors kept their distant loved ones away. Often, men cited business as a prime excuse, while women seemed more likely to blame illness.[83] Flora Stuart's mother simply was afraid to leave Detroit for Richmond, Virginia in the summer, preferring to wait until fall.[84] At the end of this dance, widows ended up visiting their loved ones more than they welcomed visitors, with grandchildren being a possible exception to the rule.[85]

While friends and family might decline visiting, religious activities offered consistent fellowship, both socially and religiously, for many widows. Jeanie Autry Brown regularly recorded attending church services on Sundays, persevering despite her disdain for a preacher who had a penchant for playing cards and, in Jeanie's mind, made his church a "laughing stock."[86] Jeanie participated in activities during the week as well. Despite her

---

or family to visit them, see Sister Flora to Mattie [George], 3 May 1866, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU; Ann Johnson to Son [Junius Johnson], 9 June [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 14, KHS.

[83] For men blaming business, see Son Matt to Mother [Ann Johnson, 27 November 1865, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS; Channing Moore Williams to Alice Burwell Williams Harrison, 27 July 1889, Episcopal Church Diocese of Virginia Papers, 1709-1972, Channing Moore Williams Letters, VHS. For women citing health, see Daughter Martha to Mother [Ann Johnson], 20 May 1864, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 8, KHS; Mrs. Emma H. Townsend to J. V. Brown, 24 July 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Sister Theo W. Valliant to Sister [JEanie Brown], 10 January 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[84] R. W. Cooke to Flora, 6 March [ca 1870s], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papres, VHS. For other types of excuses, see Mattie B. Sledge to Aunt Jeanie, 7 March 1912, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Willie to Tivie, April 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL; Geo P. B. to Sister [Octavia], 6 March 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL.

[85] For widows visiting others, see Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, 22 February [no date], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, 26 November 1863, Volume 3, Sarah Lois Wadley Papers #1258, SHC; Lizzzie Litchfield to Aunt [Flora Stuart], 23 March 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. Julia Turner Miller to Daughter [Florence Batchelor Harwood], 29 October 1898, Amasa Turner Papers, Transcript, UTA. For otheres visiting widows, see L. B. Valliant to Jeanie Autry Brown, 28 March 1909, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 1 June [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. For grandchildren visiting widows, see Julia Turner Miller to Daughter [Florence Batchelor Harwood], 29 October 1898, Amasa Turner Papers, Transcript, UTA; Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 9 March 1904, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[86] Mother [Jeanie V. Brown] to Child Eloise [Brown] Landon, 12 February 1903, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. For evidence of church attendance, see Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], April 1904, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU; Mother [Jeanie V. Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 8 August 1910, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. See also Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 22 May 1862, Maria Mason Tabb

pastor's reprimand, Jeanie and her son attended an Easter egg hunt on Good Friday, and the mother-son pair even collaborated on a history of their church.[87] As a result, Jeanie bonded with her son while also communing with like-minded people within her community. Church participation could catapult widows into leadership positions that offered widows a prominent role within their communities. For instance, Leila Habersham was on the board of managers of the Episcopal Orphans Home in 1875, a member of the Bishop Elliott Society, president of the Sacristan Society in 1878, and founded the Savannah chapter of the King's Daughters, all tasks that likely kept her quite busy as a pillar in her community.[88] Even though church offered perhaps the best opportunity outside of family for widows to find companionship, many widows did not mention even casual church attendance, let alone leadership roles. Perhaps church attendance was so deeply ingrained into their lives that it was barely worth mentioning, but perhaps this absence reflects a missed opportunity for churches to offer widows fellowship. After all, many widows would have struggled to leave their homes and to travel to church without some assistance. Both Jeanie and Leila lived in cities, where the path to church was likely easier. For widows on plantations or farms in the country, travel over the rivers and through woods might have taken more time and energy than they had to spare, leaving them to ponder their piety alone.[89]

Hubard Diary 1860-1862, VHS; George to Sister [Octavia], 16 March 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, Box 5, UFL.

[87] Chas. H. Allyn to Mrs. J. V. Brown, 6 March 1908, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. See also Carrie M. Vannill to Mrs. Brown, 14 March 1907, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. Jeanie attended St. John's Church in Corsicana, Texas, and with this letter it appears as though she kept in touch after the family moved away.

[88] Habersham, *A Savannah Family*, 270.

[89] See Sally Randle Perry Diary, entries 5 December 1867 and 12 January 1868, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

Relationships could be complicated, time-consuming, and frustrating. Still, widows found that their neighbors, friends, family, and congregations kept them busy and even needed, in many ways the best cure for loneliness and heartache. Perhaps widows could not express the depths of their grief, even to their loved ones. With each conversation, however, widows bridged the emotional gap between their isolating feelings and their communities. These fledgling connections would become essential in the future as widows struggled to survive.

Mental Health

Though many widows found relief in companionship, some widows needed more help than their friends and family could offer. We cannot diagnose mental illness one hundred and fifty years later from scant lines on a page, but some widows did show signs of what today might be considered depression. Insane asylums also took in a disproportionate number of widows, many of whom were financially and socially vulnerable. Ultimately, grief combined with the hardships placed widows in a vulnerable position that may have undermined mental health for a select group of particularly vulnerable women.

Sally Randle Perry documented her internal spiral in her diary five years after her husband's death. Though Sally admitted her introspective, brooding nature, she also noticed her own increasing despondency. "My heart is filled with bitterness, and then I become almost reckless—at such hours were it not for the little ones entrusted to my care, Heaven [only] knows what would become of me," Sally wrote in December 1867.[90] Her mood kept her from participating in pleasurable activities, one night refusing to "play & sing" because "I

[90] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 2 December 1867, ADAH. For other evidence of potentially suicidal thoughts, see Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

have no heart for music tonight."[91] Even Christmas could not bring her cheer. On Christmas Day, Sally wrote, "Life has so little of brightness for me that it seems a hollow mockery to wear a happy face while my heart if full of tears."[92] The day after, she noted, "When I think of all the sorrow and suffering here, I too long for that beautiful home, when the 'wicked cese from troubling & the weary are at rest."[93] On New Years Day, she felt alone even when surrounded by people.[94]

Sally's mood did not improve in 1868. By February, Sally had lost "interest in life."[95] "This year I have communed less with the external world than I ever remember to have done before and I suffer from the neglect. My thoughts lately seem to have narrowed their circle of light to the dark chambers of my own desolate heart, and half the beauty of spring has been lost on me," she noted in April.[96] Worried, Sally pleaded with herself, "Mild, restless, impatient unhappy spirit, will you never cease your [plaintive] cries of pain, and rain longing for what is not? My eyes in rain seek to pierce the gloom which envelops my life. There is no hope to cling to in the future, nothing for the weary foot-hold in the present and heart-sick my soul still continues to search for peace."[97] By the end of 1868, Sally left her plantation for a "bustling little city." The change of scenery unfortunately did not help; she still recorded a

---

[91] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 17 December 1867, ADAH;

[92] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 25 December 1867, ADAH.

[93] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 26 December 1867, ADAH.

[94] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 1 January 1868, ADAH.

[95] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 19 February 1868, ADAH

[96] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 6 April 1868, ADAH.

[97] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 6 April 1868, ADAH.

"dreary day, typical of my life the sun has hidden his face, and a mist, as it [weeps] of tears, is softly falling."[98]

Sally's diary shows an increasingly negative emotional cycle. First mourning her loss, Sally quickly found a great deal of anxiety as she struggled to maintain her financial solvency and her social station. These situational stressors combined with her already morose disposition to encourage critical introspection and to discourage pleasurable social activities. Given her increasingly depressed and even suicidal thoughts, doctors at the time might have diagnosed her with a mental illness. As one doctor described, grief could "induce a departure from healthy action," which would then "produce their morbific results upon the brain."[99] Grief transformed from an understandable reaction to a cause of illness when behavior deviated from the "normative model."[100] Sally certainly had begun to depart from healthy

---

[98] Sally Randle Perry, Sally Randle Perry Diary 1867-1868, 27 December 1868, ADAH; For other widows who showed signs of mental deterioration, see Mary Louisa Read Comfort to Lotty Comfort, 22 December 1873, Comfort Family Papers, 1848-1900, VHS; Daughter Martha to Mother Ann Johnson, 15 May 1864, George W. Johnson Papers, KHS. For references to a decline in physical health, see Aunt F. Samuel to Elizabeth Hill Goodloe Jones, 3 April 1866, Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930, VHS; John O. Turpin to Elizabeth Hill Goodloe Jones, 11 June 1872, Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930, VHS; Elizabeth Hill Goodloe Jones t o Nannie R. Hill, 18 November 1871, Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930, VHS.

[99] Peter Bryce, "Annual Report, 1867," 29 in Annual/Biennial Reports: State Publications 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa), ADAH. Nancy Theriot, "Diagnosing Unnatural Motherhood: Nineteenth-Century Physicians and "Puerperal Insanity," in Judith Walzer Leavitt ed., *Women in Health in America: Historical Readings* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 411.

[100] Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Institutions in America: Social Policy to 1875* (1973; reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, Rutgers, 2009), 156. By the DSM-III, psychologists believed that depression accompanied bereavement, so they excluded those who had been grieving for under two months from the depression diagnosis. The recent and controversial 2013 revision, the DSM-V, removed that exclusion, arguing that grief and major depression could coexist. The advantage to the current diagnostic model is that those grieving and suffering from depression can seek treatment immediately; however, there is an increased possibility of over-diagnosing and therefore over-medicating patients for depression. The conflict highlights that even today, psychologists debate about how to separate symptoms from their cultural context. Nineteenth century physicians faced a similar problem, and similarly decided to medicate based on the symptoms rather than the context that might cause those symptoms. See Hannah Decker, *The Making of DSM-III: A Diagnostic Manual's Conquest of American Psychiatry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 119. Mario Maj, "Bereavement-related depression in the DSM-5 and ICD-11, *World Psychiatry* 11, no. 1 (2012), 1-2, accessed U.S. National Library of Medicine, March 8, 2014, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3266754/. See also Kenneth J. Doka, "Grief and the DSM: A Brief Q&A," *Huffington Post*, March 29, 2013, accessed March 8, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-j-doka/grief-and-the-dsm_b_3340216.html.

action and from cultural prescriptions, but she never entered an insane asylum. Coming from a wealthy family who likely continued to offer emotional comfort and financial aid, Sally had enough support at home to uphold her responsibilities as a mother and a daughter, never giving her family reason to take such radical steps.

Yet an increasing number of widows did enter insane asylums in the postwar era. After the Alabama Insane Hospital opened in 1861, widows jumped from 10.5 percent of the inmate population in the first year of operation to more than 20 percent between 1861 and 1867. After nearly doubling, the percentage of widows entering the hospital would not decline again until the 1870s.[101] At Western State Hospital in Virginia, the number of widows also increased during the war, rising from 1 percent of all inmates in 1861 to 7 percent in 1866.[102] Compared to the overall population of Virginia, Western State Hospital held more than its share of war widows, more than doubling war widows' representation in Virginia society.[103]

---

[101] From 20 Oct. 1861 to 20 Oct. 1862, there were 19 female patients and three widows, so 15.8% of the population were widows. From July 6 1861 to October 1, 1867, there were 101 female patients and 21 female widows, so that widows were 20.8% of the population. From July 6 1861 to October 1 1870, there were 229 women in the hospital and 49 widows, or 21.4%. Between its opening and 1880, the hospital had 705 women enter the doors, 115 of whom were widows, or 16.3%. "Annual Report of the Officers of the Alabama Insane Hospital at Tuscaloosea," (Montgomery, AL: Montgomery Advertiser Book And Job Office, 1862), 9-10 in Annual/Biennial Reports: State Publicans 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa), ADAH; "Annual Report of the Officers of the Alabama Insane Hospital at Tuskaloosa" [*sic*] (Tuskaloosa, AL: John F. Warren, 1867), 21. in Annual/Biennial Reports: State Publicans 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa), ADAH; Appendix Table VI, "Annual Report of the Officers of the Alabama Insane Hospital at Tuskaloosa" (Montgomery, AL: W. W. Schews, State Printers, 1871), 40 in Annual/Biennial Reports: State Publicans 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa), ADAH.

[102] Case Numbers 1715-2160, Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV; Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Table 2., Appendix A.

[103] Robert Kenzer argues that there were roughly 4,000-6,000 war widows in Virginia. Since the 1870 Virginia Census lists 628,105 women living in the state, widows made up approximately 0.64-0.96% of the population. There were four war widows admitted between 1 January 1861 and 10 August 1868, while 175 women were admitted during that time period. Therefore, war widows made up approximately 2.3% of the population. See Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life," 113; Virginia 1870 Census Total Females, "Historical Census Browser," University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Accessed 17 December 2013,

The death of a husband alone, however, did not explain this increase of widows entering Western State Hospital. Loss did push many women to their breaking point. From 1861 to mid 1868, the death of a husband was the third highest cause of admission to Western State Hospital, following "domestic affliction" and "the war."[104] Still, only eight percent of widows entered due to the death of a husband, and all four of the widows who lost husbands during the war entered for reasons other than their loss.[105] In North Carolina, only one of the twelve widows who either entered or left the asylum in 1884 had "sorrow and

---

http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/state.php. The North Carolina Insane Asylum showed a similar increase. In 1856, widows represented only 3.3% of admissions. In 1884, widows represented 3.8% of admissions, but 12.9 percent of the discharges, suggesting a spike in widowed inmates in the intervening years. See "Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html, "Reports of the Board of Directors and Superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane of North-Carolina" (Raleigh, N.C.: Holden and Wilson, Printers to the State, 1857), 20, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asyl1856/asyl1856.html.

[104] Case Numbers 1715-2160, Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Table 3, Appendix A. The categories were unique for each hospital. For instance, the North Carolina asylum did not list 'the war' as a supposed cause, though domestic or family trouble did appear in one quarter of the cases, the highest percentage of known causes. See Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html.

[105] There was no way to distinguish which women grieved over the loss of a husband because the report listed exciting causes in a different table from marital status. The records at Western State Hospital are similar. From 1861 to 1868, only two of the twenty-one widows were admitted for grief. These two widows had been grieving for decades and were not war widows, suggesting that the duration of their grief or their old age might be the justification for admission. Eighteen of the twenty-one women could be located in the census. Johanna Kilzner, admitted in 1861 for domestic trouble, Rebecca Allison, admitted in 1868 for Epilepsy, and Susan Turner, admitted in 1868 for the loss of a child, could not be located in the census records. Based on their cause of admittance, it is unlikely that their mental illness was directly related to the death of their husbands. One other women, a Martha McClintic who as admitted in 1861 for Domestic Affliction, lost her elderly husband in 1861. His death technically occurred within the time frame of the war, but did not occur as a result of the war. Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. One of those women was admitted in 1865 and then again in 1868. A similar situation existed at Alabama Insane Hospital, though because of the reporting methods we can only evaluate the cause of admission for women as a whole. There were 191 female patients at the Alabama Insane Hospital from July 6, 1861 to October 1, 1861. Of those female patients, 11 were admitted for grief. Therefore, only 5.8% of the women were admitted for grief. "Annual Report of the Officers of the Alabama Insane Hospital at Tuskaloosa" (Montgomery: John G. Stokes & Co. State Printers, 1869),19, in Annual/Biennial Reports: State Publicans 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa), ADAH.

neglect" listed as the supposed cause of insanity, and the women's sorrow alone did not harm her mental health.[106]

The case files on those war widows at Western State Hospital suggest that a complex matrix of biological predisposition, personal tragedy, and financial hardship might prove more accurate as a cause than one single loss that doctors might have written down. In 1861, Martha McClintic lost her husband. By 1864, she had lost two of her sons as well, and family and friends observed, "She has been greatly taxed, in managing her farm, negroes, and domestic affairs."[107] Finally, she entered Western State Hospital for "domestic affliction" in 1865.[108] Like Mary, Ann Shivers lost her previously secure lifestyle when her husband died and Union forces burned her home. In 1866, Ann entered the hospital due to "pecuniary embarrassment," where she lived until she died in 1879.[109] Widows who had previously clung to the bottom rungs of the middle class found that the loss of a breadwinner produced more than embarrassment; it threatened their very survival. These thoughts were likely in Mary Woodell's mind in 1862 as she sank into depression because she firmly believed the war would ruin the country and her family. Unfortunately, her premonition proved accurate.

---

[106] Four widows entered the asylum and eight widows left. No widow who entered in 1884 left that year. Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html.

[107] "Martha A. McClintic," Case Records, Volume 287, page 463 in Western State Hospital, #41404, LOV; Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Appendix A.

[108] Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Table 1, Appendix A.

[109] Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Table 1, Appendix A. The North Carolina Insane Asylum also saw one widow admitted for financial trouble, and presumably the "neglect" listed for another patient included financial neglect. See Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html.

Mary's emotional state deteriorated when her husband died of small pox in 1863 and again when her son deserted to the Union in 1864. By the end of 1865, Mary realized that she needed help and entered Western State Hospital. Doctors blamed her condition on "the war."[110]

It seemed that the widows in Western State Hospital represented a vulnerable population in Virginia: those struggling financially while also facing burdens that limited their ability to survive, from mental illness to physical debility. With little societal support for these vulnerable populations, instability likely plagued these widows' minds while they struggled to support themselves and their families. Any downturn might push them into poverty and potentially to mental illness. In fact, admission records at Western State Hospital after 1868 confirm this correlation between grief, poverty, and mental illness. From mid-1868 to 1880, physical ailments, poverty, and domestic affliction ranked as the most likely causes of admittance to Western State Hospital, and overwork even pushed three percent of widows into the asylum.[111] The percentage of widows in the inmate population peaked in the late 1870s, after a period of economic decline.[112]

Though poverty might hurt some widows' mental health, admission records suggest that many of the widows who entered Western State Hospital also had a family history of mental illness. Over a quarter of the widows at Western State Hospital also had immediate

---

[110] Case Records, Volume 287, "Mary Woodell," 125 in Western State Hospital, #41404, LOV; Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV.

[111] 18.6% of widows entered due to physical ailments, 15.3% entered due to poverty, 10.2% entered from a domestic affliction, and 6.8% entered due to the death of a husband. See Table 4, Appendix A. Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV.

[112] In 1878 and 1879 the percentage of widows in Western State Hospital peaked at over 15%. See Table 2, Appendix A. Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV.

family members thought to be insane, a figure that grew even larger after including extended family. Including potentially hereditary physical illnesses, like epilepsy, that doctors also labeled as a supposed cause of mental illness, even more widows appeared biologically disposed to struggling with mental health. Having a mentally ill relative might have indicated a biological predisposition to mental illness. At the same time, if a widow had mentally ill relatives, she also had fewer family members to turn to in a time of crisis.[113] Either way, widows with a family history of mental illness found the difficulties of grief compounded, perhaps unbearably so.

Once admitted, widows in insane asylums faced a bleak future. Perhaps some widows found the shelter and food worth the treatments, and certainly some widows, like Martha McClintic, would stay only a short while before improving and returning to their families. Still, nearly half of the widows admitted to Western State Hospital between 1861 and 1880 would die there, including Ann Shivers.[114] Widows who were vulnerable outside the hospital

---

[113] Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. See Appendix A. Immediate family members include parents, siblings, and children. Twenty-eight percent of widows at Western State Hospitals had a record of immediate family members being insane. When distant relatives, such as aunts, uncles, or cousins, are included, the percentage rises to forty-one percent. Doctors recorded this information in order to prove heredity, and indeed some, though likely not all, of these widows may have inherited at least a predisposition to mental or physical illness. Both Western State Hospital and the North Carolina Insane Asylum listed Heredity and Epilepsy as factors explaining mental illness. Only 16.7% of widows in North Carolina in 1884 had a family history of mental illness, but the admissions and discharge records also included fewer details of family history. See See Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html.

[114] With the first admittance of returning patients removed from the sample, 48.7% of widows who entered Western State Hospital died within those walls. See Case Numbers 1715-2160, Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, LOV; Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. Only one of the twelve widows admitted or discharged in 1884 died at the North Carolina Insane Asylum. Conditions like varied state to state, but the records at Western State Hospital also offer a death date for each admitted widow rather than on discharge forms, creating a more complete list. See Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884" (Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell &

walls proved just as vulnerable within them. Potentially harsh treatments based on a gendered view of mental illness that linked women's emotions with their reproductive system could produce further harm rather than a cure.

Ann Winder was one widow who faced tragedy both outside and inside Western State Hospital. In 1867, Ann's brother admitted her to the asylum. Ann had been deteriorating for years. Ten years previous, Ann's first husband, Mr. Jones, died while Ann gave birth to their child. With little money and a young child, Ann remarried during the war only to see her second husband die seven months later. In 1866, Ann's mother died, one loss too many. Ann's brother noted that afterwards his sister's "melancholy has been deep and without intermission." Ann lost weight, committed an "unpardonable sin," and became obsessed with religion. According to her sister, Ann even stopped speaking in May of 1867. The night before arriving at the asylum, however, Mary reported that Ann "talked nearly all night" about her first husband. With Ann unable to care for herself or her children, Ann's family decided to commit her to Western State Hospital in June of 1867.

Sadly, Ann's condition worsened with treatment. On October 2, the doctors treated Anne for vaginal discharge with an "offensive odor," perhaps a sexually transmitted disease, by injecting an "astringent [and] antiseptic" solution into her vagina.[115] Afterwards, Ann developed a "surly [and] displeased countenance," particularly toward a fellow female patient.[116] On October 16, the doctors repeatedly administered a "douche" as a "remedy for

---

Gatling, 1884), 25-28, Documenting the American South, University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002, http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html.

[115] Case Book, Volume 287, "Ann S Winder," October 2 1867, 114, Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41404, LOV. For an explanation of medical terms, see Lombe Atthill, *Clinical Lectures on Diseases Peculiar to Women* (Dublin: Fannin and Co, Seventh Edition, 1883), 18-19.

[116] Case Book, Volume 287, "Ann S Winder," 114, in Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41404, LOV.

loss of speech."[117] A few days later, Ann assaulted the fellow female patient. Hearing voices, Ann began to believe that her first husband was alive, but that the hospital staff forced him into the other female patient's room instead of her own.[118] Then, Ann turned her anger towards Dr. Hamilton, who she said "had her tied down as no female should be."[119] The doctors assumed that Ann referred to an incident four months earlier when Dr. Hamilton administered an enema by force and his administering repeated vaginal injections. After making this connection, the doctors wondered if Ann's "excitement" and "erotic delusions" arose from her tinc cantharis treatment, a medicine used for treatment of warts and arthritis that doctors also thought might be an aphrodisiac. Really, the medicine only irritated the skin, causing painful genital swelling.[120] While the doctors dismissed Ann's ranting as part of her mental illness, Ann had come to see herself as "abused."[121] In November, Ann accused Dr. Hamilton of "maltreating her because she would not let him take liberties with her."[122] The doctors dismissed Ann's claims because she also claimed that both of her husbands were still alive and were "contending with each other for possession of her."[123] No one came to Ann's defense. After all, the doctors held power over the patients and the staff at the hospital.

---

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Case Book, Volume 287, "Ann S Winder," 115, Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41404, LOV.

[120] Ibid; Cantharis Raymond J. Corsini, *The Dictionary of Psychology* (New York: Brunner Routledge, 2002), 139.

[121] Case Book, Volume 287, "Ann S Winder," 115, Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41404, LOV.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

Presumably, Ann did not improve, nor likely did her treatment, and she remained at Western State Hospital until her death in 1913.[124]

Hopefully, few widows at Western State Hospital experienced the violent treatment that Ann endured. Some widows found shelter at asylums like Western State Hospital, and others found that gendered treatment practices only worsened their condition. Whether widows entered the asylum or battled their emotions at home, the death of a husband alone rarely brought about mental illness. Grief, however, expanded from a single loss to include a whole series of traumatic events related to that loss, from financial collapse to Confederate defeat, and together the resulting emotions might prove to be too much to bear, especially for widows who were predisposed biologically to mental illness. Widows in asylums represented a particularly vulnerable population of women who had experienced a great deal of loss with few tools, financial or social, to handle the resulting emotional onslaught. For these widows, one loss could begin a lifetime of grief in institutions not well suited to assuage that pain.

Conclusion

By studying widows' grief, historians can understand the emotional context in which widows struggled to survive in the postwar era. Widows narrated a story of redemption—sadness and despair led to a moment of crisis that widows overcame through God's help and the strength of their faith. The rest of their writings belied this neat narrative because tragedy knew no bounds. The initial sadness at the loss of a husband quickly grew to include fear and anxiety over financial insecurity. Confederate defeat and the insecurity of the postwar South only enhanced these concerns. Unhappy with their fate, widows quietly questioned God's

[124] Entry 2039, Admission Register 1828-1868, Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41253, LOV; Case Records, Volume 287, "Ann S Winder,"113-116, Records of Western State Hospital, 1823-1948, #41404, LOV.

plan for their lives and may have felt anger and bitterness as well. Companionship offered a lifeline in these dark moments for widows to connect with their loved ones while sharing some of their thoughts and feelings. Given the overwhelming and compounding emotions surrounding grief, however, it is no wonder that a few widows' mental health suffered, especially from depression. Ultimately few widows entered mental hospitals, but those who did were the most vulnerable members of society who remained vulnerable inside the asylum.

Regardless of whether widows entered mental institutions, grief built a barrier between widows and their family and friends. This sense of loneliness arose at a most inopportune time. Even though it seemed like no one could fully understand how they felt, widows found that companionship could distract them from their woes and even provide a renewed sense of energy and warmth that their loss had seemed to seep out of their souls. These bonds would quickly become significant beyond the emotional comfort they provided, since widows needed their friends and family to help them find financial and social stability in a constantly changing world.

CHAPTER 5:

LIVING

Soon after Frederic's death, quiet settled over Leila's broken home. Outwardly, life appeared to continue as normal, but the outward calm belied Leila's inner turmoil. Death rituals and condolence letters had not altered Lelia's situation; she would still have to raise two children alone in a war-torn country. A fog of emotions obscured choices and slowed action, yet Leila had to address some vital questions: Where will I live? How will I support my family? What will become of me?

For help, Leila turned to her social network. As a member of two wealthy and socially prominent Savannah families, the Habershams and the Elliots, Leila appeared to have every possible advantage. After the war, Leila and her recently widowed sister, Mary Elliot, bound themselves and their children together, alternating between their mother's home in the country and their relatives in Savannah.[1] But the war had consumed a great deal of treasure and lives, making it harder for family and friends to care for even their own. The Elliot brothers, all Confederate veterans, could offer little help. Percival died after having his leg amputated. John contracted malaria and moved to California, admitting that he could "not work enough to help my family who were in desperate need."[2] Only Robert remained.

---

[1] Mary's husband, Robert, was a 1st Lt. in "The City Light Guard" of Savannah. He served with Fred in Savannah. In 1862, Robbie caught camp fever, received a furlough, and was ultimately detached from the service to work in Atlanta. Later that year, he caught pneumonia and died. Leila believed the illness turned deadly because of his previous camp fever. Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederick*, 67, 78, 87, 97-8.

[2] "Autobiography of John Mackay Elliott", in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 251.

Quickly, Mary and Leila realized that their family and friends offered valuable but ultimately insufficient financial support. The sisters found stability not by going outside their social network to public or private assistance; rather, they relied on a continuously expanding network of family and friends. For instance, Mary supported the entire Elliot family by working with Ishamel and Cloe, an African American couple, to take in boarders during the war including a neighbor whose Unionist husband had returned "to burn and steal in Paulding Co."[3] Next, Mary salvaged rice from a local mill to sell within her community.[4] Leila also contributed, selling oranges to friends. When Mary remarried, Leila expanded her efforts by teaching cooking classes, thanks to her reputation among friends as a genius in the kitchen. Leila's charity work with her church and the Savannah Widows' Society also extended her social circle, and likely her customer base, allowing Leila to live out her days comfortably.[5]

Historians have described widowhood as an inherently risky and even threatening social position because it placed women on the margin of society.[6] In perhaps the most comprehensive study of Confederate widowhood, Jennifer Gross builds upon that understanding of widowhood in order to argue that Confederate widows challenged Southern patriarchy when it was most vulnerable, in defeat.[7] Confederate widows, often young

---

[3] Ishmael and Cloe may have been enslaved by the Elliots. See Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 255; M. [Mary Elliot] to Sister [Leila Habersham], 15 August 1865 in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 257.

[4] "Autobiography of John Mackay Elliott", in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 251.

[5] Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 262-3.

[6] See Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: Norton W. W. Norton and Company, 1985), 47-8; Kirsten E. Wood, *Masterful Women: Slaveholding widows from the American Revolution Through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1-5; Jennifer Lynn Gross, "'Good Angels': Confederate Widowhood in the Reassurance of Patriarchy in the Postbellum South" (PhD diss, University of Georgia, Athens, 2001), 117-118.

[7] Gross, "'Good Angels," 117-118.

mothers, survived by managing a limited inheritance and by working a limited number of jobs because ultimately few remarried.[8] According to Gross, the continued and visible existence of so many young, desperate widowed mothers led emasculated Southern men to use Confederate literature and the pension system to reassert a patriarchal relationship between widows and their state governments.[9]

Literature and even laws may have reflected some anxiety about gender dynamics in the postwar South. Families and local communities, however, found widowhood to be more of a practical challenge than an ideological threat. Lisa Wilson's study on Pennsylvania widows from 1750-1850 suggests that widows saw themselves as the head of the family first and as a woman second. Their participation in legal contracts and even social contracts was not an intrusion into the public sphere; communities agreed that widows were simply leading their family to survival. By asserting that family roles took precedence to gender roles, Wilson presents a "less dichotomous" and therefore less adversarial view of widowhood.[10]

Confederate widows also saw themselves as responsible for their families' success. The quest for housing and financial assistance seemed daunting in a region practically devoid of a state-sponsored social welfare system. Instead, widows weaved their social bonds into a safety net that, if crafted well, provided limited security in exchange for a variety of hidden costs.

---

[8] Gross, "Good Angels,"111-116.

[9] Gross, "Chapter 2: New Social, Legal, and Economic Experiences: "to Feel We Were Alone…Without Our Darling Protector!,"" in "Good Angels," esp. 117-8. Robert Kenzer found that two thirds of widows who submitted Death Claims in Virginia had married in the 1850s, with a median length of marriage of 6 years and a median of two children. See Robert Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life: A Profile of Virginia's Civil War Widows," in *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 115.

[10] Lisa Wilson, *Life After Death: Widows in Pennsylvania 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 5.

Availability

Before the Civil War, Southern counties and states had begun assuming the responsibility for public relief by building institutions like asylums, orphanages, and poor houses.[11] During the Civil War, Confederate state governments stepped in as labor shortages, inflation, and the outright destruction of farmland wreaked havoc on the citizenry.[12] For instance, Florida set aside $500,000 from the state treasury to assist needy widows of honorable soldiers.[13] The Confederate federal government helped as well by allowing widows to collect their husbands' back pay, though, according to Robert Kenzer, two-thirds of Virginia women who submitted death claims received less than $100.[14]

Confederate states' legal systems also afforded widows some aid through inheritance laws. So many soldiers died intestate that Confederate states established a minimum amount of aid allotted to widows from their husbands' estates. In Florida in 1864, a widow was "entitled to keep her wearing apparel and such household goods and farming utensils, provisions and clothing as may be necessary for her maintenance and that of her family..." Appraisers could not seize these items or consider them as a part of the widows' dower; they

---

[11] Peter Wallenstein, "Laissez Faire and the Lunatic Asylum: State Welfare Institutions in Georgia-- the First Half-Century, 1830s-1880s," in *Before the New Deal: Social Welfare in the New South, 1830-1930* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999), 7-9. See also, Elizabeth Wisner, *Social Welfare in the South from Colonial Times to World War I* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999, orig. 1970).

[12] Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 193-208.

[13] An Act to Provide for the Relief of Soldiers' Families and Others that Require Assistance (1863), *Laws of Florida,* chap.1420.37; An Act in relation to Estates in this State (1864), *Laws of Florida*, Chap. 1447.18. See also Miss Carlotta P. Mitchell, "Indigent Families in Alabama During the War Between the States," W.P.A. Project 1584 (1936-7), 67 in Military Volunteer Family Assistance Records, 1861-1865, ADAH; "Highland County: List of Indigent Soldiers' Families, 1862-1865", 1205104, LOV.

[14] Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life," in *The War Was You and Me*, 113-114.

could take everything else. Legislatures hoped that Southerners would "have special regard to the ability of such widow and children to provide for and maintain themselves."[15]

When husbands did leave a will, states ensured that widows received their due. That amount often proved relatively small, however, after all the other living dependents received their share. For instance, James Alexander's will divided his possessions and then allowed his wife, Frances, to remain on his property until their youngest child came of age. At that point, if Frances had not remarried, James's property would be divided equally among his family, with the understanding that "my Wife Frances Jane if a widow to have her Home on the premises...during her natural life."[16] Frances might have a roof over her head, but James left her no means to produce or to purchase food and goods. The inheritance alone could not sustain her, and the property could even become a tax burden without additional income.[17]

Despite lawmakers efforts, suffering increased faster than public relief. By the end of the war, laws seemed worth little more than the paper that they were written on, as the Confederate army's insatiable need for food, men, and money drained government coffers and Southern farms. Desperate women wrote to their leader, President Jefferson Davis, begging for support. These widows believed Davis had two choices: either he could send a male relative home from the front or he could direct the Confederate government to support the family.[18] "All I ask is that Government will endeavor to make some provision for the widow and permit buy at Government prices such things as wood and clothing," Mrs.

---

[15] An Act in Relation to Estates in this State (1864), *Laws of Florida*, Chap. 1447.18.

[16] "The Last will and Testament of James S. Alexander of Pickens District S. C.," 13 April 1863, James S. Alexander Collection, AU. See also Gross, "Good Angels," 85-6.

[17] For a discussion on the limits to estate law, inheritance, and debt, see Gross, "Good Angels," 84-90.

[18] Frances B. Hood to Jefferson Davis, 8 May 1863, PJD.

Charles Lee wrote.[19] Some Confederate women, likely including some widows, expressed a similar sentiment when they rioted in the streets of cities like Richmond and Atlanta, demanding bread.[20]

Together, these requests pressed government officials to do more based on the assumption that the Confederate government should support its suffering citizens.[21] Mrs. Lee acknowledged, "I beg for all widows husbands have fallen while defending their country." She believed that widows' sacrifice should compel Davis to "do what you can for us."[22] Unfortunately, Davis was too often powerless to help. The Confederate and state governments faced decreasing resources and increasing need until, ultimately, defeat ended all forms of Confederate aid. The national government did not fill the void. Though Northern citizens successfully demanded that their government bury the dead and assist the living, Southern citizens could not place the same demands on their former enemies or their defeated government, at least immediately.[23] The Southern Claims Commission did compensate some widows, but only those who could prove Union sympathies.[24] It was not until after the

---

[19] Mrs. Charles C. Lee to President Davis, 14 February 1865, PJD.

[20] For more on the riots, see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 198-9.

[21] See McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning,* 193- 194.

[22] Mrs. Charles C. Lee to President Davis, 14 February 1865, PJD. See also Elizabeth Fix to Jefferson Davis, 21 February 1865, PJD.

[23] For the lack of federal or state support for former Confederates immediately after the war, see Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life," in *The War was You and Me,* 114. For more on the strengthening of the relationship between citizens and the state based on wartime sacrifice, see Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*.

[24] Ellis Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), 6-7.

political battles of Reconstruction and the battles for the memory of the Civil War that Southern states again took up the mantle of public aid.[25]

Instead, private charitable organizations stepped into the void that defeat created. Churches and local community organizations offered financial and housing assistance to a limited number of widows, particularly in urban areas. For instance, the Savannah Widows' Society, founded in 1822 to help poor elderly widows in the city, opened their doors to widowed mothers in 1883. The Society only began to decline with the advent of the Federal Social Security system.[26]

While the Savannah Widows' Society proved successful, charity did not provide widespread support to widows across the South for three reasons. First, all Confederate families suffered and sacrificed; widows, though worthy recipients of sympathy, were not exceptional. Second, these organizations clustered in urban areas, leaving rural cases, the vast majority of the South, unassisted. Third, private organizations were under no obligation to distribute aid equally. The middle-to-upper class women who administered charity limited their generosity to widows who abided by their narrow definition of middle class morality.[27]

---

[25] Drew Gilpin Faust argues that Americans' sacrifice in the Civil War brought about a contractual relationship between citizens and their government. Sacrifice demanded compensation. Faust does not distinguish between Federal burial efforts and local Ladies Memorial Associations burying the Confederate dead, an important distinction. For more on LMAs, see Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations & the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[26] Adelaide Wilson, *Historic and Picturesque Savannah* (Boston: Boston Photogravure Company, 1889), 138. Polly Powers Stramm, "Savannah Widows' Society May Be One of the City's Best Kept Secrets," *Savannah Morning News,* Accessed 21 August, 2013, http://savannahnow.com/stories/112403/LOC_stramm.shtml.

[27] Jeffrey McClurken argues that families with surviving Confederate veterans first turned to their families for aid and, when that proved unsuccessful, they turned to churches and states. McClurken argues that Baptist Churches in Pittsylvania, Virginia helped local families who conformed to their religious and moral worldview. Widows found similar aid through churches. Widows did not find as much aid through their states, however, because artificial limbs, mental institutions, and soldiers' pensions were not necessarily useful sources for widows. Though the South did expand its social welfare system, widows would not necessarily benefit from that expansion immediately. See Jeffrey McClurken, *To Care of the Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Northern Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

Along with state institutions and charities, slavery provided white Southerners with financial and social security before the war. Many Confederate couples either owned enslaved human beings or relied upon wealthy benefactors who owned slaves.[28]As long as slavery remained intact, wives turned widows could continue to compel enslaved human beings to produce household goods and to generate income.[29] Furthermore, slavery ensured that even the most impoverished widow would not fall below enslaved men and women on the socioeconomic ladder.

In fighting a war to protect slavery, Confederates increasingly saw the system collapse around them. Enslaved humans beings seized their own freedom when Union lines drew near and few white men remained to keep them in bondage. Settling estates further destabilized the system because estate managers could more easily pay off debts and divide wealth by selling assets at auction, including enslaved human beings. This practice dismantled the farms and plantations that widows relied upon for support, sometimes at a financial loss. When Etta Kosnegary's husband died, she expected several of the family's slaves to run away before the upcoming auction.[30] All of this turmoil led widows to feel isolated on large plantations and even fear the very people that they had relied upon for survival.[31]

---

[28] Widows whose husbands owned slaves included Frances Polk, Ann Johnson, and Cornelia McDonald, among others. For families that hoped to own slaves, see Pierre Costello to Wife, 25 February 1862, Capt. Pierre D. Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862, ADAH.

[29] See Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 14 November 1861, Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary 1860, 1862, VHS; Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 29 November 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[30] Etta Kosnegary to Mother and Sisters, 12 November 1862, Etta Kosnegary Letter, LSU.

[31] For white women relying on enslaved human for protection during the war, see Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," ADAH; Sally Randal Perry Diary, 5 [December 1867], Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH. For white women seeking protection from enslaved human beings, see Frances B. Hood to Jefferson Davis, 8 May 1863, PJD.

In the postwar era, widows could not longer rely on a stable labor force, just as they were learning how to manage the farm or the plantation on their own. For instance, Ann Johnson disliked that her African American workers only agreed to month-long contracts; salary competition quickly left Ann with no employees and "a good deal to do."[32] By 1867, despondent Sally Perry wondered "if I will ever become accustomed to the new order of things." She missed the "familiar faces," particularly when the garden would "require extra labor just now." With less labor, Sallie's plantation was "rapidly falling into a dilapidated condition," symbolizing the deteriorating nature of her own life, as she saw it. Despite her concern, Sallie still turned away Dick, one of those familiar faces, when he returned looking for a job. "The hands are already employed for the coming year," Sally reasoned.[33]

Still, the end of slavery did not condemn all widows to poverty and field labor. The Union worked quickly to get African American laborers back to work. Many wealthy widows benefitted from these hastily written contracts and continued to rely on African American labor.[34] Sallie Perry, for instance, lost her children's "Mammy" but did keep a servant in her home, in addition to those hired to work in the fields.[35] The change was so slight in some areas that white families continued to use the same language of ownership. When Octavia Stephens encountered reduced financial circumstances in 1866, her brother assured her that she could "keep" Jennie and encouraged Octavia not "to sell her on account

---

[32] Ann E. Johnson to Son, 9 June [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[33] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 16 December 1867, ADAH.

[34] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 16 December 1867, ADAH; Ann E. Johnson to Son, 9 June [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[35] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 20 January 1868, ADAH. See also Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son, 5 July 1909, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 25 January 1872, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, Oct 10 [no year, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

of expense," ignoring Jennie's freedom.[36] Though slavery was legally void, racism sustained a social hierarchy that tied African Americans in the South to the land and provided a means of support for many white widows.

In the end, the Civil War did not convince widows to turn to their government for aid. Without a strong tradition of social welfare before the war, the South's inability to support its struggling populace during the war did not inspire confidence.[37] After Confederate defeat, state and federal governments could not and did not provide aid to Confederate widows. Though white Southerners saw to it that widows received their due legal inheritance, that sum could not support these women, often young mothers, for the rest of their lives. Even private charities helped only selected groups of widows. Though the system of racial labor remained intact, the stability inherent within the legal system of slavery disappeared and left widows without a secure financial future. If widows believed that they deserved compensation for their loss, where could they find help?

Networking

For Martha Newbill, the "trouble" began when her husband, James, suffered a severe chest wound while fighting for the Confederacy. After borrowing money, Martha rushed to his side only to watch James pass away. Martha found herself alone with "five children and no means of support."[38] The $500 that James had saved in 1860 by working as an overseer

[36] Willie to Tivie, 29 March 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

[37] Wartime assistance likely did inspire hope in state sponsored social welfare, but white Southerners would have to develop those institutions slowly over time. They were not readily available to widows in the first decades following the war.

[38] Martha R. Newbill to Mrs. Bailey, 6 June 1864, Bailey Family Papers, VHS.

and farm laborer must have disappeared by 1864.[39] "My all is gone in this world," Martha despaired.[40]

In her hour of need, Martha believed that she had two places to turn. First, she trusted that God "will be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow."[41] In fact, many widows saw His hand in every act of kindness, a comforting thought.[42] Second, widows like Martha believed, "I will have friends to help me in the troublesome world."[43] Martha did receive help from her social network. One friend gave the family meat while James's family likely assisted the struggling widow since, by 1870, Martha and her children moved near the Newbills in Tennessee.[44]

Martha found help all around her in the social bonds formed before the war. As Robert Kenzer found in a study of mid-nineteenth century Orange County, North Carolina, a network of friends, family, and neighbors influenced the way in which Southerners interacted with one another.[45] Death rituals and condolence letters had highlighted this network. Next, widows would have to navigate these social connections in order to find the help that they so desperately needed.

---

[39] 1860 U.S. Federal Census Population Schedule, Virginia, Mecklenburg, Regiment 98, "James H. Newbill."

[40] Martha R. Newbill to Mrs. Bailey, 6 June 1864, Bailey Family Papers, VHS.

[41] Ibid. See also Francis Polk to [Fanny Polk Skipwith], 1 December 1865, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; Francis Polk to Fanny Skipwith, 28 February 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[42] Ibid. See also Cornelia McDonald, *A Woman's War*, 239; Frances Polk to [Fanny Polk Skipwith], 4 March 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; Frances Polk to Dr. Gates, 19 January 1886, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[43] Martha R. Newbill to Mrs. Bailey, 6 June 1864, Bailey Family Papers, VHS.

[44] 1870 US Federal Census Population Schedule, Tennessee, Carroll, District 2, Martha Newbill.

[45] Robert Kenzer, *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County North Carolina, 1849-1881* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987). Antebellum era widows also relied on kin networks. See also Wood, *Masterful Women*, 61-82.

To begin, widows had to identify which family members and friends might offer the best support. This task proved challenging since the war tested and even destroyed many relationships, with some widows finding their closest friends and family transformed into the enemy. When J.E.B. and Flora Stuart sided with the Confederacy, they cut ties with Flora's family, who remained loyal to the Union. The couple even renamed their son, originally named Phillip after Flora's father, James Ewell Brown Jr. When General Stuart died, Major General Benjamin Butler granted Flora a pass through enemy lines to go to her father's open arms. Instead, Flora remained in Virginia, fulfilling a promise to J.E.B. that she would raise their sons in the South.[46]

Battle also cut widows off from their families and friends. As the Union pushed deeper into the Confederacy, widows left their homes, seeking refuge in more stable areas. These widows lived as "a stranger, in a strange land, and there was no ear into which I could pour my tale of suffering and poverty, but that of God…"[47] Even if widows remained at home, visits and correspondence became nearly impossible.[48] Within local communities, neighbor turned against neighbor as food and goods became scarce, especially in war torn areas.

---

[46] Benjamin Butler to Mrs. Flora Stuart, 28 May 1864, JEB Stuart Papers, 1833-1962, VHS. R. W. Cooke to Flora [Stuart], 16 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Jeffry D. Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause: A Biography of J.E.B. Stuart* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 367-8.. Emilie Todd Helm faced a similar decision and made a similar choice. See "Little Sister," *The Courier Journal*, 22 February 19[28], Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; "K. H. H. [Katherine Helm], "An Appreciation," ca 1930, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; Rena Niles, "Uncle Abe's Nephew a Republican At Last," nd, Emilie Todd Hel Papers; H. M. Bruce to Emily [Todd Helm], 30 September 1863, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[47] Cornelia McDonald, *A Woman's War,* 239. For other widows separated from at least a part of their social networks, see Mattie [Nichols] to Lisa [Nicholls], 9 September 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; Hattie to Friend, 27 March 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Elizabeth A Jarman to Jefferson Davis, 26 February 1864, PJD.

[48] Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU;

Complex social dynamics further limited the use of social networks. For instance, Martha might have banded together with fellow widows, like her prosperous friend Mrs. Phebe Bailey, for comfort and assistance.[49] Martha acknowledged that Phebe faced "trouble like I do" because "you lost your husband." Nevertheless, Martha felt bitter about her friend's relative wealth. After Phebe wrote her recently widowed friend, likely to sympathize with her, Martha responded, "you had a plenty to do for you to get you a plenty to eat and have a plenty to wear which I have not." Certainly some widows, like Leila and her sister, found common cause together. No matter how seemingly advantageous the relationship, however, jealousy and petty social differences influenced widow's decisions in who to ask for help.

Even though Martha worried that her new life would be "more than I am able to bear," she persevered in part thanks to navigating her social relationships skillfully.[50] Confederate widows like Martha searched for basic needs, like food and housing, and that also provided intangible necessities, like security and safety. Many found that they could place the most demands upon close family members, such as parents and adult children. These needs were so great that widows turned beyond immediate family to their network of friends and acquaintances. Ultimately, Martha and many others realized that "my only dependance [*sic*] is to work for somthing [*sic*] to eat and to clothe my children."[51] Every social connection provided an opportunity for aid, but extracting aid required a price, ranging

---

[49] Phebe Bailey was likely widowed before the war. Finding Aid, Bailey Family Papers, 1824-1886, Section 6, VHS.

[50] Martha R. Newbill to Mrs. Bailey, 6 June 1864, Bailey Family Papers, VHS. See also Georgia Smith to Mrs. Stuart, 24 May 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[51]Martha R. Newbill to Mrs. Bailey, 6 June 1864, Bailey Family Papers, VHS. See also Cornelia Peake McDonald, *A Woman's War*, 241-2; Mrs. Charles C. Lee to President Davis, 14 February 1865, PJD.

from autonomy to flattery. Widows would weigh the benefits and demands of every relationship while locating their most basic needs: housing and financial assistance.

Housing

Widows who inherited their husbands' estates could choose to remain in their family home.[52] For widows who felt emotionally attached to their home, independence was worth fighting for, even if it meant living more modestly.[53] The halls echoed with memories of a marriage and a lifestyle destroyed by war. When Sally Randle Perry rode through her plantation, she saw beautiful and love-filled moments with her husband. She clung to her home for three years because "the thought of leaving home is impossibly sad," and she only finally moved nearer to her parents when the plantation, "filled, as it will be, with strange negroes, began to contradict her memory."[54]

Independent living did not necessarily make widows independent from their family and friends. Widows with enough wealth to remain on a plantation often turned to adult sons or other male relatives, making them dependent on those men's business ability. For instance, Ann Johnson inherited her husband's estate, which had reduced from 26 slaves and over $200,000 in value in 1860 to $18,000 in 1870, still a tidy sum for a widow with grown children. Though Ann's family encouraged her to sell to avoid taxes and maintenance costs, Anne remained. She dreamed that an independent home would draw her children to her,

---

[52] Henry V. Johnson, 7 September 1875, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; D. R. Ravens to Daughter [Sallie Ravens Milner], 8 May 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[53] D. R. Ravens to Daughter, 8 May 1864, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH;1860 U.S. Federal Census Population Schedule, Georgia, Pike, "Richard Milner"; U.S. Federal Census Population Schedule, Georgia, Pike, "Sallie Milner"; McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 217; Gross, "Good Angels," 112-113.

[54] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 5 December 1867, 11 December 1867, 27-29 December 1867, 27 December 1868, ADAH. For widows who were attached to their land because they wanted to be near their husband's grave, see Sister Flora to Mattie [George], 3 May 1866, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

perhaps even for extended summer vacations. Reality crushed Anne's dreams. Anne turned to her son, Stoddard, to oversee the estate, but he managed money poorly.[55] His own failed speculation forced him to sell land to his mother in order to shield it from debtors. More land only increased Anne's tax bill. Instead of taking control of the property, Anne begged her son to purchase the land back. Stoddard refused, claiming bankruptcy. Her other son, Matt, asked for $3,500 to start a new business after being released from jail for killing an African American man, further depleting Ann's scarce resources. Far from bringing the family together, Ann's plight drove the family apart while the estate slowly deteriorated. Her children did not even visit because business "compelled us to remain at home." Eventually, Matt pleaded with his mother to sell the estate because it would "take a great deal of care...off of your hands." After all, Ann could always visit her sons instead. By 1875, Ann had sold her home to her son George.[56]

If widows could not remain in their home, paying for board allowed widows to keep a roof over their heads without becoming entirely dependent upon others. Frances Polk, an independent and even reclusive widow, told her daughter, "You cannot tell how glad I was to be able to pay your uncle two hundred dollars for our board, not that would cover it, but it was all I could spare."[57] Frances felt relieved to offer something in return for kindness, but

---

[55] A. E. J. to Brother, 24 February 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Georgie to Mother, 10 April 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 31 March 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; M C Johnson to Mother, 7 October 1868, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 25 September 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 4 October 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; M C Johnson to Mother, 1 August 1875, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS;

[56] Georgie to Mother, 10 April 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 31 March 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; M C Johnson to Mother, 7 October 1868, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 25 September 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 4 October 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; M C Johnson to Mother, 1 August 1875, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS;

[57] Frances Polk to Fanny Polk Skipwith, 4 March 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

renting was also a new and even frightening experience for many widows. Maria Hubard approached her new boarding house with "curiosity." After the first day of renting, she decided that her experience "promised well for the future."[58] Nor was there a social stigma attached to widows who rented in boarding houses. As one boarding house owner described, the resident widows were "such pleasant people."[59]

Nevertheless, some widows found independence to be overrated. Living alone on rural farms or even in the busy, anonymous city felt isolating, while living with others provided companionship. According to Jeffrey McClurken, one in six widows in Pittsylvania County, Virginia moved in with relatives after the war.[60] When Jeanie Autry considered an offer to live with her sister, she described feeling "soothing comfort when in the midst of loneliness and despair I look fearfully and trembling into the future."[61] Young widows with young children particularly favored moving in with their parents, at least temporarily. For instance, Mary Anna Jackson held tightly to her prewar Virginia home yet still moved in with her father after Thomas's death. [62]

As a last resort, friends sometimes offered widows temporary shelter that might prevent a single misstep from leaving widows entirely destitute. Lawrence Nicholls moved his wife, Lisa, from their home in Louisiana to Virginia in 1862, making it much easier for

---

[58] Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 5 August 1862, VHS.

[59] Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, Volume 3, 26 May 1863, Sarah Lois Wadley Papers #1258, SHC.

[60] McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 57.

[61] Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. James M. Greer, 20 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU.

[62] For a letter written from Cottage Home, Anna Jackson's father's home, see Anna M. Jackson to Col Richard F. Reynolds, 28 November 1866, Reynolds Family Papers, 1845-1869, #22998, LOV; Mary Anna Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson,* (Louisville: The Prentice Press, 1895), 161. For Mary's continued maintanence of her Virginia home, see M. A. Jackson to Rev. W. H. Ruffner, nd, William Henry Ruffner Papers, 1845-1907, #24814, LOV. For other widows who moved in with their parents, see Nancy Harris to Jefferson Davis, 5 October 1863, PJD; Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," 127, ADAH;

the new father-soldier to visit his family. When Lawrence died, the friend, J. E. Caldwell, invited Lisa to stay, believing it to be "a privilege in my inability to go into service myself, to do everything I can for those of my own state, and especially those who are connected as closely with us as the Nicholls family."[63] Lisa chose to stay with Caldwell in Virginia rather than travel to Lawrence's family in Louisiana, who also begged her to return despite recent Union attacks.[64] Lisa and Caldwell's friendship would not be tested permanently. By 1870, Lisa returned to Louisiana, eventually living with her children in New Orleans.[65]

Lisa might have moved in with her in-laws, yet she seemed reluctant to depend upon them. Her situation reflected the ambivalent relationship that many widows had with their in-laws. Marriage united two social networks; theoretically, wives became a part of their husbands' family. The husband's death tested the bond between the widow and her in-laws. Some relationships survived and even thrived, particularly for mothers who cared for descendants of the dead. "My precious boy taught you to love me and his widow and dear

---

[63]J. E. Caldwell to W. W. Pugh, 7 August 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. For further information about widows staying with friends, see Sister Mattie to Lisa [Nicholls], 13 August 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; E. H. Whitner to Jefferson Davis, 26 September 1864, PJD; Sue Polk to Fanny Skipwith, 20 July 1864, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[64] Town Council of Donaldsville, "A Tribute to the Dead," 19 July 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; Mattie [Nicholls] to Lisa [Nicholls], 9 September 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. Finding Aid, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; Husband [Lawrence Nicholls] to Wife [Lisa Nicholls], 5 December 1861, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. Sister Mattie to Lisa, 13 August 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; Mattie to Lisa, 9 September 1862, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.

[65]Widow of Lawrence Nicholls, "Declaration of Widow for Pension," 22 March 1899, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. For other examples of widows staying with friends, see US Federal Census Population Schedule, Mississippi, Panola, Township 6 Range 8, "Jeanie Autry." Katherine Kelley Dittmar, "I am the family face…: An Introduction to the Autry Family and the James L. Autry Collection," (New Haven, 1992), 33, accessed September 24, 2013, http://www.nps.gov/stri/historyculture/upload/Autry_James_collection.pdf .

children must ever be dear to my heart," at least one mother-in-law reasoned.[66] Based on this logic, widowed mothers found their in-laws incredibly helpful since they often paid for their grandchildren's education or provided the family housing.[67]

On the other hand, death removed the primary reason for widows and their in-laws to get along. When widows seemed to drain family resources, jealousy reared its ugly head. In 1863, Samuel Chapman invited his widowed daughter-in-law to live with him in Georgia, per his son's wishes. Martha accepted, but traveled by private conveyance rather than by rail, as Samuel had suggested. In turn, Samuel refused to meet the coach because he would not know her specific arrival time and therefore the travel seemed "very expensive and trying to me" because "my business too requires my whole time at home."[68] In 1870, Martha still lived in Florida rather than with her in-laws in Georgia.

Any bad blood that existed before the war poisoned a potentially helpful relationship. No family proved the potential for catastrophe more than the Turners of North Carolina. Newlyweds James and Marie Turner lived with James's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Turner, before the war. After James joined the Confederate army, tension erupted when Mrs. Turner accused Marie of seducing Dr. Turner by doting on him and combing his hair until he "cared

---

[66] Mother [Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison] to Child [Alice Harrison], n.d., Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Mother [Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison] to Child [Alice Harrison], 29 April 1867, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[67] For examples of in-laws caring for widows, see Sister in Law to Mrs. Emma L. Garnett, 20 May 1863, Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV; Mary Anna Lynch Dearing to Roxanna Birchett Dearing, 18 November [no year], Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Mary Black to Daughter [Melinda Black], 12 February 1863, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; E. L. Gordon to Mary Gordon, 8 August 1863, Gordon Family Papers, VHS. Jeffry D. Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause: A Biography of J. E. B. Stuart* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2008), 368.

[68] Father Samuel Chapman to Daughter Mattie Chapman, 4 December 1863, Chapman Family Papers 1858-1883, FLST; S. Chapman to Martha Chapman, 26 January 1864, Chapman Family Papers, 1858-1883, FLST. For a similar affectionate but contentious relationship, see J. R. H. to daughter [Alice Harrison], n.d., Harrison Family Papers, VHS; Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 14 September 1861, Harrison Family Papers, VHS; Mother to Child, 19 September 1862, Harrison Family Papers, VHS.

more for" Marie "than any man might for any woman but his wife." Though Dr. Turner assured Marie that his wife was simply deranged with anger, Marie quickly found life alone with her in-laws to be unbearable. After James's death, Marie decided to quit the Turners and to rely on friends and a nearby Uncle instead.[69] In the meantime, her mother advised, "do not say a word to any human being about your troubles" until she could safely travel home to Texas.[70]

In the decades after the war, widows would rely on a combination of friends, family, and in-laws in their desperate search for a stable home. After the shock of loosing a husband, widows like Mary Long Gordon wanted nothing more than to rebuild their families upon a permanent foundation. Instead, Mary found her family divided and constantly moving for over a decade. During the war, Mary retreated from her husband's Virginia property, Longwood, to care for her mother in Halifax County, North Carolina. Mary found her new home isolating and decided "it is the one great wish of my heart to live at Longwood again." Persevering, Mary cared for two of her children in Halifax while sending her eldest son to live with her mother-in-law in Virginia to attend school. Furthermore, Mary asked her uncle to manage Longwood, but he proved inept at collecting rent. Mary became "tired of having people live there for nothing," and so determined to return to Virginia. "A bare support will satisfy me, so eager am I to have a home of mine own. I care not how humble it is," Mary reasoned.[71] The move to Virginia was so tumultuous that Mary prayed to "never be without a

---

[69] Ibid. Husband to Wife, 18 August 1863, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. Marie S. Turner to Mother, 12 December 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU. For addition evidence of conflicts with in-laws, see Roxanna Dearing to Mother, 6 October 1864, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.

[70] Mother to Daughter, 15 October 1865, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[71] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead [Gordon], 10 April [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. See also Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 20 September [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead [Gordon], 21 June [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS;

home again."[72] Thanks to the kindness of many different friends and family members, as well as her astute management of social connections, Mary had come home, where she remained until her death in 1876.[73]

Financial Support

A home offered shelter and a sense of stability, but widows would need more to survive. Once again, social networking would play a critical role. Widows readily accepted gifts and services from a complex web of friends and family but had to be equally ready to reciprocate with their labor or their time.

Immediately after the funeral, widows found a veritable cornucopia of assistance. Friends, family, and neighbors all pitched in to offer food, clothing, money, and, most frequently, promises to provide those goods. Too often, promises faded quickly. After Winston Stephens's death, his widow, the wealthy Floridian Octavia Stephens Bryant, moved in with her Aunt and readily accepted her brothers' offer to manage her financial estate. Willie and Davis had felt duty bound to help their sister, yet they also hoped to restart their lives. Davis moved to New York to work with his father and Willie began to build a business in Savannah, so the young men promised to help from afar.[74] The brothers offered advice

---

Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 1 August 1868, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, December 9 [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

[72]Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 16 March 1870, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. See also Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 3 August [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921.

[73] *Genealogies of Virginia Families: From Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007, orig. 1981), 533. For additional evidence of widows searching for an independent, permanent home, see Frances Devereux Polk to Fanny Skipwith, 4 March 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; F. A. Polk to Dr. H. M. Anderson, 19 April 1873, 2 May 1873, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[74] Nicole Milano, "A Guide to the Stephens-Bryant Family Papers," UFL, http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/pkyonge/stephens.htm, accessed 23 July, 2013. Their younger brother was still in school and could not help. See Geo P Bryant to Sister Tivie, 5 February 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

mostly by mail, arranging payment of taxes and debts during infrequent visits. Octavia was to write when she needed money.[75] By 1866, the young men struggled to maintain even that level of care.[76] Instead, Willie and Davis encouraged Octavia to make her own decisions as to "the amount of expense you allow Aunt Julia to assume" but to "insist upon paying" for any corn that her benefactors purchased.[77]

As Octavia discovered, receiving help would require widows to manage their own financial affairs as well. Widows faced perhaps the most complex, legalistic financial hurdle immediately: settling their husbands' estates. Often the executrix, widows had to settle debts; they could not afford to stiff friends and neighbors, who would comprise who critical social network.[78] To make matters worse, not all widows had close male relatives who could help either routine tasks or financial emergencies.[79] Even if widows could turn to a brother, uncle, or father living nearby for help settling debts or the estate, they could not escape day-to-day managerial and accounting duties. For the rest of their lives, widows would keep records of

---

[75] Willie to Sister Tivie, 29 January 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Willie to Sister Tivie, 2 January 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Willie to Sister Tivie, 20 February 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Davis to Sister Tivie, 26 January 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL

[76] Davis to Sister, 13 June 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

[77] Willie to Sister Tivie, 3 June 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

[78] For widows settling the estate, see Malinda A. Lewis, "Receipt of money paid by Pamela Lewis Executrise of late husband Phillip P. Lewis," Lewis Family Papers, 1856-1863, VHS; "The Last Will and Testament of James S. Alexander of Pickens District, S.C.," 13 April 1863, James S. Alexander Collection, AU; Father Samuel Chapman to Daughter Mattie Chapman, 4 December [1863], Chapman Family Papers, 1858-1883, FLST. For widows paying debts to neighbors and friends, see E. A. Goldsborough to Mrs. Stuart, 2 February 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Ann W. Bradley to Friend, 13 April 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

[79] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 1 August 1868, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; M. L. G. to Armistead Gordon, 26 October [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Stoddard Johnston to Mother, Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 25 September 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Stoddard Johnson to Mother, 4 October 1869, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

purchases and expenses in order to make sure that the financial and social balance remained in their favor.[80]

"No doubt, these things add much to your unhappiness," as one mother-in-law surmised.[81] Sally Randle Perry certainly agreed. After her husband died in 1862, Sally managed her family plantation. She struggled to decide when she should rely on others and when she should trust her own judgment. According to her diary, Sally attended business meetings, made hiring decisions, and cared for the garden; she recorded few details about financial management, presumably leaving investment decisions to male friends and family.[82] By 1867, Sally considered her efforts failed. She blamed her own "bad management," concluding "I trusted too much to others when I should have depended alone in myself."[83] Sally ultimately wondered why men that she admired would "heap up their coffers with money robbed from the Orphan."[84] The power of gold confounded her, since it could be "a blessing when wisely employed" but could also turn good people's warm hearts

---

[80] For purchasing and recording expenses, see J. C. S. to Flora, 5 February [1868], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Wm. M. Hazelgrove to Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, 24 June 1866, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Annie Ruff to Flora, 20 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; "Receipt for goods from Hoss & Durham," 13 July 1870, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; "Account Book of Hetty Cary Pegram Martin," 1877, Wilson Miles Cary Papers, 1877-1905, VHS. For paying taxes, see "Tax Receipt for M. H. Dawson," 21 January 1873, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Tax Receipt for Nancy Gilliam, E.W. Garland tax collector, 1884-5, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904; John Daniel, Tax Receipts, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH.

[81] Mother [Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison] to Child [Alice Harrison, 27 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[82] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1869, 5, 27-29 December 1867,27 December 1868, ADAH.

[83] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 25 December 1867, ADAH. For evidence of widows conflicting with men over business matters, see Frances A. Polk to University Finances, "Claim of Mrs. Polk," [1873], MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[84] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1869, 27 December 1868, ADAH. For additional evidence of widows struggling to find a male representative, see Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 27 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

to iron.[85] As a result, Sally felt ready to "sink in despair." [86] In fact, Sally's deepening depression and increasing withdrawal likely further damaged her business relationships.

And yet, other widows did successfully balance dependence and independence in financial matters. Better advice, a willingness to learn from mistakes, and emotional stability all helped transform widows like Flora Stuart from passive to confident businesswomen. After J.E.B.'s death, Flora turned to her brothers-in-law for financial advice. William Stuart offered guidance but also encouraged Flora's participation.[87] At first, Flora hesitated, even struggling to articulate questions. Finally, Flora reached out by corresponding directly with the financial manager in St. Louis, Mr. Wickham.[88] Gaining confidence, Flora took it upon herself to contact William's farm manager for a cow promised to her, but the man's rebuff sent Flora back to William's protection.[89] Flora pressed on, only to make another mistake. She addressed a draft wrong, so the bank had to ask her to rewrite it.[90]

Still, Flora learned from each interaction and developed reliable business connections. By March of 1867, Flora had mastered her position within a network of advisors. In a letter filled with flattery and deference, Flora questioned William and Mr. Wickham's recommendation for leniency on a loan rather than legal recourse.[91] "[My] Brother in law is busy," Flora wrote, "[and] authorized me to write [~~and] act as I choose [and] as you~~ [placing]

---

[85] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1869, 25 December 1867, ADAH.

[86] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1869, 27 December 1868, ADAH. For additional evidence of widows struggling to find a male representative, see Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 27 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[87] W. A. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 17 February 1866, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[88] J. Wickham to Mrs. Flora Stuart, 15 March 1866, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[89] W. A. Stuart to Sister Flora, 30 June 1866, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[90] Barr, Duncon Co to Mrs. J. E.B. Stuart, 2 October 1866, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[91] J. Wickham to Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, 12 March 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

my business entirely in your hands." She then reminded Mr. Wickham, "The times are hard I know, but may not this putting me off be carried on, continually?"[92] As a compromise, Mr. Wickham converted the loan to a mortgage by fronting the money out of his own pocket, sending the money to Flora via William.[93] The transaction perfectly paired Mr. Wickham's desire to incur greater financial reward through risk with Flora's goal to concentrate her husband's assets into usable income.[94]

The business relationships that widows like Flora cultivated became more important over time. One single generous moment would not sustain a widow for decades, so widows thanked their benefactors with an eye to the future. For instance, Flora praised Mr. Wickham for his "disinterested, noble deed," likely bolstering Mr. Wickham's self esteem and even his masculinity.[95] If Flora needed another favor, Mr. Wickham would be more likely to respond.

Financial success required this delicate dance, and Jeanie Autry performed it particularly well. In 1860, Jeanie had enjoyed a middle class lifestyle. By 1870, she lived with another family and could claim no personal or real estate. Small acts of kindness for over a decade helped keep the family afloat. One friend sent the family corn while another

---

[92] Flora Stuart to Mr. Wickham, 22 March 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[93] John Wickham to Mrs. Flora Stuart Ex'trix of Genl J.E.B. Stuart decd, 30 May 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; W. A. Stuart to Sister Flora, 4 June 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. [John Wickham] to Brother Alex, 8 June 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[94] Flora did not repay her own debts to family members with the same promptness. See, Julia C. Sharpe to Flora, 2 February 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For further evidence of Flora conducting her own business affairs, see Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart to Hill and Goddin, 5 July 1872, Newton M. Lee Correspondence, 1865-1880, reel 4379, LOV. For additional evidence of widows handling their own financial affairs, see Sheriff Wm Irvin to Mrs. E. L. Todd, 3 October 1868, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; Davis to Tivie, 29 January 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL; M. Southall, "My Will," 25 September 1870, copied by W. W. Sharp on 3 October 1874, Charles Scott Venable Papers, UTA; Frances Polk to Fanny Polk Skipwith, 28 March 1867, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[95] Mrs. J. E. B. Stuart to Mr. J. Wickham, 8 June 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

sent a one hundred dollar check.[96] After some light protest, Jeanie readily accepted these gifts.[97]

Despite the difficulties of working and raising a child, Jeanie did not neglect her friends. When others offered help, Jeanie responded with profuse thanks and flattery, reinforcing her benefactors' masculinity, Christianity, or class identity. One male friend, after hearing her thanks, even imagined his act as rescuing a damsel in distress.[98] Any number of acts, over time, bonded widows to their family, friends, and neighbors. Widows who could not donate money to charities or to friends instead donated their valuable spare time by cooking, sewing, and shopping for friends and family members. Hopefully, their loved ones would return the favor when needed.[99]

Through small acts of kindness, Jeanie had built a solid network of friends by the time that James Jr. was ready to go to college. Friends and family then helped Jeanie provide an education for her son that would have otherwise been out of her reach. A Bishop offered Jeanie's son a scholarship, designated for sons of Confederate soldiers, to go to an Episcopal

---

[96] Mrs. B. Mickle to Mrs. Jeanie Autry, 18 July 1864, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Johnson, Denegre and Penn to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 26 November 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. See also Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mrs. Mary A. Greer, 1/4 May 1864, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU.

[97] Mrs. Jeanie V. Brown to James L. Autry, 24 January 1881, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For additional examples of widows accepting aid, see Mary L. Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 15 April 1872, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 22 November [no year], Gordon Family Papers, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, May [no year], Gordon family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Daughter Martha to Mother, 7 April [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; J. R. H. to Daughter, [no date], Harrison Family Papers 1756-1893, VHS; Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 14 September 1861, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS; Frances Polk to Fanny Polk Skipwith, 6 June 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; Charles Henry Lynch to Roxanna Dearing, 24 April 1869, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Mrs. Peter Birchett to Roxanna Dearing, 10 April 1868, Dearing Family Papers, VHS.; Lt. C. H. Keton to Sister, 2 May 1864, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA.

[98] Mr. Jo Caruthers to Mrs. J. V. Autry, February 1870, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. See also

[99] [Marie] to Sister [Flora Stuart], 10 April 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Geo to Tivie, 6 April 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Lt. C. H. Keton to Sister [Amanda Holcomb], 2 May 1864, John M. Holcomb Papers, UTA.

school. Other friends chipped in to board and to look after the young man during the school year.[100] Jeanie had successfully pooled her resources and had given her son the start to a prosperous career.

As critical as these small gestures were to the family's ultimate success, they could not have fed and clothed the Autry family for over a decade. Benefactors offset expensive costs, like schooling, or provided excess income; they did not provide a regular living wage. By 1900, however, the Autry family lived in their own freely owned house, which a cook and a servant helped them maintain. What brought about such a dramatic change?

Jeanie's remarriage might offer one possibility. Two decades after James Autry's death, Jeanie married Isaac N. Brown, a veteran of the U.S. and the Confederate Navy. Jeanie found her marriage "comfortable," but the union did not provide financial security or success. Isaac proved to be a poor farmer, bringing the couple "financial disappointment."[101] With her son already provided for in school, Jeanie did not seem to mind. Perhaps she simply wanted company after he son moved away. Widows like Jeanie remarried for a variety of reasons, from desperation to companionship, but those who did take a second husband were in the minority. Ultimately, few widows could have found a second husband in a population

---

[100]Bishop W. M. Green to Mrs. J. V. Autry, 27 June 1873, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; James L. Autry to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 13 December 1873, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Ann Worthington to Mrs. J. V. Autry, 32 August 1873, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. See also Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry to Mr. Jas. M. Greer, 20 June 1866, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1869, 10 January 1868, ADAH; Nannie to Mrs. Stuart, 14 August 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Cousin Nannie to Mrs. Stuart, 7 January 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 30 October 1871, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mother [Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison] to Child [Alice Harrison], 29 April 1872, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, VHS.

[101] Mrs. Jeanie V. Brown to James L. Autry, 11 February 1881, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For another widow whose second marriage proved to be a financial disappointment, see Mark Dosson to Melinda Dosson, 9 February 1866, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; Mark Dosson to Melinda Dosson, 9 February 1866, William W. Black Family Papers, UTA; H. Pollard to Sheriff of Panola County, TX, January 1867, William W. Black Papers, UTA; M. H. Dosson to Melinda Dosson, 8 February 1866. William W. Black Papers, UTA.

depleted of available men.[102] Besides, widows, more than other women, knew that marriage did not guarantee a secure future. In fact, Jeanie would live to bury her second husband as well.

The Autry family also thrived because James capitalized on the education that his mother and her friends had provided for him. He became a successful lawyer and invited his mother into his home. Jeanie doted on him incessantly, to the consternation of James's wife, and seemed content to remain in her "mother's room" for the rest of her life.[103] In ways, Jeanie and James Jr.'s codependence was the culmination of Jeanie's journey through her social network. Jeanie cultivated friendships in order to provide for James, who in turn labored for his community and provided Jeanie the security and happiness that she had long desired.[104]

---

[102] Gross found that two-thirds of widows in Brunswick County, Virginia had not remarried by 1870. McClurken found an even lower rate of remarriage, noting that only seven percent of widows in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, had remarried by 1870. Given that Robert Kenzer found that four-fifths of Virginia widows who filed a Death Claim and did remarry did so before 1870, Gross's statistic would likely only slightly decrease after 1870. Kenzer also argued that widows with older children were much less likely to remarry than younger widows, while Gross argued that widows with younger children were more likely to remarry. pointed to the complex set of See Gross, "Good Angels," 95-100; Kenzer, "The Uncertainty of Life," in *The War Was You and Me*, 125-130; McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 55-56; Jane Turner Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 32-33.

[103] Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 18 February 1904, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For Jeanie's dependence on her son, see Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 7 July 1909, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For the conflict between Jeanie and her daughter-in-law, see Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 1 March 1904, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 28 March 1904, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], April 1904, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. For other examples of widows living with adult children, see Edward McCullan to Cousin Eliza [Nicholls], 22 June 1886, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC; M. S. C. to Sister, 10 Jan 1886, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; [maybe Ann Johnson] [maybe Flora Stuart]. For an example of a widow who did not rely on their adult children, see Scrapbook, "Funeral of Mrs. Polk," Leonidas Polk Family Papers, HNOC; Frances Polk to Fanny Skipwith, 6 June 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[104] Jeffery McClurken also argues that many widows chose to live with their children. Though some widows did rely on their adult children immediately after the war, it was also a condition that developed over time as widows aged before the advent of the pension system. See McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 56. For more instances where widows invested in their children, see A. E. Johnson to Son, n.d., George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Eloise Brown Landon to Mother, 6 December 1891, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU. Mother [Jeanie Autry Brown] to Son [James L. Autry], 11 October 1908, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU;

A final reason behind the Autry's reversal of fortune was Jeanie's own labor. While raising her child alone, Jeanie also taught school. The income may have permitted the mother and son a degree of independence, yet also likely permitted the family to remain dependent upon the generosity of the Gilchrist family, with whom they lived. Perhaps Jeanie used her money to contribute food and goods for the household while the Gilchrists shared the burden of childcare. In this way, working entangled Jeanie more deeply within her social network rather than providing an independence from it.[105]

Teaching provided widows with education and social status within their community a livable, stable income that did not challenge their gender role.[106] Mary Gordon, an extremely well-read and educated widow, taught classes including "sewing and attending to the dining room and dairy."[107] As she built up her connections in her new community in Halifax, Mary soon joined an established staff at Henry In-School House, where she hoped to raise her enrollment from fifteen to twenty five students. "If I do I shall insist of receiving 30$ which will help me vastly," Mary wrote.[108] To turn a profit and to satisfy the customers, who were also often friends and neighbors, teaching proved to be a laborious profession. Mary found

---

Eloise to Mother, 11 May 1909, James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998, RU; M. C. Johnson to Mother [Ann Johnson], 28 December 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Martha to Mother [Ann Johnson], 25 May [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, October [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Davis to Sister, 8 April 1866, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL. The same principle applied to aiding other family members. See L.C.S. to Mary, 24 May [no year], Charles Scott Venable Papers, UTA; Edward McCullan to Cousin Eliza [Nicholls], 22 June 1886, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC.

[105] Jane Turner Censer has found that upper-class white women redefined womanhood for new conditions of the postwar South by taking on new tasks that increased their independence but did not necessarily entirely reject their gender roles. Widows work within their social network supports and adds to that argument. See Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood.*

[106] See Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood,* 7-8, 153-206.

[107] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, 22 March [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

[108] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 27 November 1871, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

that teaching left her "less time than before" so that she had "scarcely time to breathe." Still, Mary enjoyed her job and eagerly hoped "to meet many bright little faces at the school house."[109]

Like teaching, most paid position required widows to work hard and to rely on their social connections. Some widows transformed domestic tasks like gardening, baking, sewing, and even boarding into income, while others turned to the soil as a last resort for subsistence or profit.[110] Providing these products and services for sale, however, required an extensive customer base, leaving widows dependent on their friends and family as well as fluctuating market conditions.[111] Widows in urban areas could work in administrative positions with the Confederate or, later, the state and federal governments, provided they had a connection in the department or a referral.[112] Only nationally popular widows made a career out of widowhood, fulfilling the demand for stories of Confederate heroes by writing and speaking about their deceased husbands.[113]

---

[109] Mary L. Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 15 April 1872, Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. See also Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 27 November [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. For other widows who taught, see William E. Bates to "To Whom it May Concern", 14 October 1874, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; Elizabeth H. Moberly, "Baltimore's Barbara Fritchie," n.d., *Baltimore Sun*, in McIntosh Family Papers, 1827-1966, VHS.

[110] McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 62-3. Gross, "Good Angels," 102-109.

[111] For widows producing goods, see Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 22 May 1862, VHS; M. L. Gordon to Armistead, n.d., Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Tivie to Brother Davis, 8 February 1865, Stephens-Bryant Family Papers, UFL. For boarding, see Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 27 November [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. For difficult market conditions, see Mary Dougherty to Flora, 16 March 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Eugene to Grandmother, 28 May 1890, Chunn/Land Family Papers, AC 44-101, GDAH.

[112] K.H.H. [Katherine Helm Halley], "An Appreciation, ca 1930, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (New York: Portland House, 1997), 166. See Gross, "Good Angels," 105.

[113] Mrs. Stonewall Jackson at the Home of Gen. Evans," in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey and Mrs. Charlee N. Davis, comp, UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241 GDAH. Other women who wrote and spoke extensively based on their status as a widow included Emilee Todd Helm.

Friends and family judged widows' labor based on the degree that it allowed them to maintain their role as women and mothers. Often, a reliance on friends and family would therefore make widows labor acceptable and even applauded. When Cornelia McDonald's family suggested that she should move to Richmond in order to find work, they worried that living as a single mother in the city would prevent her from caring for her children, so they believed that she should allow her children to be "distributed among the older members of the family," an argument that Cornelia rejected outright.[114] When widows leaned on their families, their labor became more acceptable. For instance, Flora Stuart began teaching while living with her brother-in-law, who likely provided help with childcare. Her father admitted that the news "just startled me a little" but also assured her "its all right no doubt," since the "philosophy of the age" permitted able women to work. After all, he found happiness "when I had interesting labor to perform regularly," so Flora should as well.[115] Flora successfully raised her son while working as the principal of the Virginia Female Institute, where she expanded the school and the curriculum. She even managed the financial affairs, building off her experience handling J.E.B.'s estate.[116] By the time Flora retired, her friends, family, and

[114] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War,* 217.

[115] [Father] to Flora, 23 December 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For additional evidence of social networks embracing widows' work, see "Mrs. Leila Habersham Dead," *Savannah Morning News,* 1 May 1901, in Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, 276; Stoddard Johnston to Mother, 31 March 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Eliza to Sister, 7 February 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS.

[116] For her work improving the school, see R. W. Cooke to Flora, 6 March [no year], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; R. W. Cooke to Flora, [no date], Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause*, 368. For the financial management at the school, see W. A. Stuart to Flora Stuart, 29 June 1881, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart to West Johnson, 19 January 1881, West, Johnston & Company Records, 1876-1893, Microfilm Misc. Reels 4385-4387, originals at Robert Alonzo Brock Collection, The Huntington Library, LOV; Flora Stuart and L. M. Blackford, Financial Accounts, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

colleagues praised her successes.[117] Ultimately, they admired the widow's labor because it represented a "strict adherence to duty" and "supported herself and her children," ideal qualities for a woman in the nineteenth-century South.[118]

Whether or not family and friends approved, widows had to work because "There are so many things to be done, and no one to do them but myself."[119] Widows like Cornelia McDonald did not take up these tasks willingly. A plantation mistress turned impoverished refugee, Cornelia found that even simple domestic tasks like boiling water proved challenging. She once spilled it and badly burned her foot. The burden of labor proved so difficult that Cornelia began to question her own life and her belief in God. Labor proved isolating. Her poverty seemingly demonstrated that she had few friends left, and she was too busy, or depressed, to socialize. Her mood only improved when friends offered her money, which temporarily delivered her from poverty while also reconnecting her to loved ones.[120] Still, most widows would have to work, however distasteful. "I long so for rest & quiet. There are days when the school is more than I can bear," one widow complained.[121]

"This thing of all work [and] no play or pay is... not pleasant, but I am sure my lot is appointed in wisdom and love, nor would I change it," Hetty Cary Pegram wrote.[122] Unable

---

[117] Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause*, 368; A. M. Randolph to Flora Stuart, 1 March 1899, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Estate of Mrs. Flora Stuart, Deceased, R. B. Spindle, Jr. Executor, 15 July 1925, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. "Resolution of Diocese of Virginia," 18 May 1899, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[118] K.H.H. [Katherine Helm Halley], "An Appreciation, ca 1930, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[119] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 22 May 1871, Gordon Family Papers, VHS. See also Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, September [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

[120] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 244-245.

[121] Sister Flora to Mattie [George], 3 May 1866, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

[122] Hetty Pegram to Jamie, 29 January [no year], Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS. See also Tivie to Brother Davis, 8 February 1865, Stephen-Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

to change their lot, widows instead cultivated their relationships with others in order to help their family survive. Over time, these social bonds built a strong safety net that helped widows support themselves and their families for decades.

Confederate Assistance

"Immediately after the close of the war the entire population of Virginias was so engrossed in the struggle to live, to rebuild homes, to reclaim farm lands, re-establish business ventures closed during the war that few had time to think of the many homeless and destitute women who were facing life broken in spirit and health with no means of support," wrote Elizabeth Montague, President of the Homes for Needy Confederate Women (HNCW) in Richmond, Virginia.[123] By the 1880s and 1890s, former Confederates and their children began looking to the past once again. The Civil War generation, the last link to Confederate glory, seemed to be slipping away. Former Confederates followed two impulses to preserve the past. Some, through organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy, would build lasting monuments in stone and in book. Others tended to the living memory of the Confederacy, its widows and veterans, through a system of public assistance that included both state-based pensions and private charities.[124]

Though several states began pension programs for disabled veterans shortly after the war, Southern legislatures generally did not extend benefits to Confederate widows until the 1880s or later. A few states like North Carolina and Alabama began issuing pensions to disabled veterans by 1867, but Georgia became the first state to include widowed residents in

---

[123] Mrs. A. J. Montague, "A Fitting Tribute to our Mothers the women of the Confederacy," Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV. http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/lva/vi00280.bioghist

[124] Both impulses built off the work of Ladies Memorial Associations throughout the South. For more information, see Janney, *Burying the Dead*.

1879. In each state, benefits expanded haphazardly through individual grants and ultimately through legislation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the states with the highest estimated death totals included widows earlier that other states, especially border states. North Carolina began issuing pensions to widows in 1885, with Alabama and South Carolina soon following. From 1888-1889, four more states, including Virginia, extended or began pension programs. In states where veterans and widows represented a much smaller constituency, state legislatures left Confederate widows without support until the twentieth century. Arkansas and Oklahoma did not issue widows pensions until 1915, and Missouri never extended widows benefits.[125]

In many states, the program quickly gained in popularity, and legislatures struggled to meet the demands of an aging veteran and widow population. Florida, for instance, began issuing five dollars per month to disabled soldiers in 1885, if they could prove that war injuries left them unable to work.[126] When demand increased, legislatures increased the allotment and raised taxes.[127] Then, in 1889, Florida opened pensions to widows whose husbands died during or after the war. Confederate widows signed up so quickly and in such large numbers that the state governments were quickly overwhelmed. Legislatures refined

---

[125] For a comprehensive list of pension law dates in former Confederate states, as well as links to each state's pension records archives, see National Archives, "Confederate Pension Records," http://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html (accessed February 28, 2014). For more information about widows and Confederate pensions, see McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 148-154; Mary L. Wilson, "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia: The Programs and the People" (PhD diss, University of North Texas, 2004); R. U. Ratchford and K. C. Heise, "Confederate Pensions," *Southern Economic Journal* 5, no. 2(1938): 210, accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1052448; "Good Angels": Confederate Widows in Virginia," in Catherine Clinton, ed. *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict during the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 133-154.

[126] *Laws of Florida*, 1885, §3570.15 1885.

[127] *Laws of Florida*, §3690.18; *Laws of Florida*, §4363.42; *Laws of Florida*, §4520.6; *Laws of Florida*, §4521.7.

their definition of deserving widows from simply losing a husband in the war to a more complex matrix of class, gender, and citizenship ideals. By 1897, widows in Florida had to document the nature of their husband's death, to own less than $1,500 in property, to be unable to support themselves, to prove that they had never remarried, and to have lived in Florida since 1880. The local Camp of Confederate Veterans served as the investigative body for widows' claims.[128] In return, widows received $150 per year, a sum equal to the highest a man could receive for any disability.[129] Two years later, Florida legislatures placed more limitations on the system by lowering the disqualifying amount of property to $600 and by paying widows whose husbands died after the war $60 less than war widows. With the newest revision, legislators required all widows to refile their paperwork in order to receive compensation. If money was still short, then the funds available "shall be distributed pro rata among the pensioners entitled to receive pensions therefrom."[130]

Despite state government efforts to restrict which widows received pensions, many impoverished widows in their twilight years could still stake their claim. The faint of heart need not apply. Widows had to fill out paperwork, swear an affidavit, and collect corroborating statements. Nevertheless, the time and effort could translate into an income that made the difference between living independently and turning to public charitable

---

[128] *Laws of Florida, 1897*, §4521.7.

[129] *Laws of Florida, 1897,* §4521.7.

[130] *Laws of Florida, 1899,* §4670.9. Similarly, Texas began a land grant system for Confederate veterans and widows in 1881, but the program ended after two years when public land was exhausted. Virginia also faced a similar problem of expanding to meet an increasing need, and then having to restrict payment based on property qualifications. See McClurken, *Take Care of the Living,* 148-154. Because of limited funds, the Confederate state-based pension system could not pay as well as the Federal government paid Union veterans. See Wilson, "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia", 29-30, 45-6.

homes. As government officials quickly discovered, many widows wanted the money that they believed they deserved.[131]

As the Confederate public expanded the pension system, private charities also increased the aid that they provided to Confederate widows. Organizations like the HNCW built houses from state funds and solicited donations in order to provide a respectable refuge for aging Confederate widows who could no longer support themselves.[132] In a letter soliciting money from the Tennessee Memorial Committee, Mary A. Johnson, the home's first applicant, depicted the HNCW as her savior. Mary emphasized that she worked hard until physically unable. With no friend or family member to turn to, she went to the poorhouse. "Oh! sir my husband never dreaded the prison more than I did the poor house," Mary wrote.[133] Increasingly, when social networks failed, widows could find relief in public charity, for which they were extremely grateful.

---

[131] Widows applied for federal pensions as well when their husbands had served in other wars, such as the Mexican War. These pensions were not established until the 1880s either. Widow of Lawrence Nicholls, "Declaration of Widow for Pension," 22 March 1899, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, LaRC. For examples of widows pension applications, see Clarissa Bellamy, Taylor County, Pension Application, July 1909, Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894, UFL; Mary St. Clair, Bedford County, Pension Application, 6 April 1888, Jonathan D. St Clair Letters, LOV; Mary M. Scott, Pension Application, 4 April 1888, VA CSA Pension Applications, LOV; Mary A. Shank, 1 May 1888, VA CSA Pension Applications, LOV; Mrs. Nancy Gilliam, Jackson County, Pension application, 1 June 1895, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904; ADAH.

[132] In 1897-8, the HNCW received $1500 from Bazaars and received $1000 from the state legislature. UDC VA Division, "Home for Needy Confederate Women", #34092, LOV. The Home for Needy Confederate Women in Richmond was the first of several such homes, all begun much later. The United Daughters of the Confederacy refused to build a national home, insteady relying on state chapters, like those in Maryland and in Texas, to provide homes. See Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 80-83. For the home in Texas that opened sa a private home in 1886 and became state funded in 1891, see Wilson, "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia," 46. A home for widows of Confederate veterans was established in North Carolina in 1915. See R. U. Ratchford and K. C. Heise, "Confederate Pensions," *Southern Economic Journal* 5, no. 2(1938): 210, accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1052448.

[133] Mary A. Johnson to The Chairman of the Memorial Committee Memphis Tenn., 26 May 1891, Home for Needy Confederate Women, Resident Files, #34092, LOV.

Unfortunately, funding for organizations like the HNCW ran short and expenses skyrocketed as widows flocked to the doors.[134] The original home, opened in 1900, cost $7,500, and the new building in 1904 cost $16,500.[135] In 1910, the HNCW received $9,652.50 from donations and government appropriations but spent $9,701.71.[136] Organizers blamed their fundraising failures on the Southern obsession with monument building, or as the HNCW saw it, "cold and unfeeling stone."[137] Organizers dedicated to charity leveled bitter critiques to the public, charging that "under the shadows of the lofty pillows and pyramids you have erected to the dead, those dearer to the living and the dead than life itself are shivering in cold and almost nakedness, starving for lack of proper food, dying for lack of proper care."[138] Monuments celebrating Confederate heroes attracted more attention than movements to help women whose husbands died in service to the Confederacy. To build just one of the statues on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, the United Confederate

---

[134]Jessica Tyree, "A Guide to the Home for Needy Confederate Women Records, 1862-1997: A Collection in the Library of Virginia Accession Number 34092," LOV, accessed 24 September 2013, http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00280.xml.

[135] "Home for Needy Confederate Women Annual Report, 1904," page 40, Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV.

[136] "Financial Statement" in Mrs. Andrew Jackson Montague, "Home for Needy Confederate Women," 1911, in Annual Reports of the Home 1909-1911, Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV. See also "Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home" (Richmond: Wm Ellis Jones, Book and Job Printer, 1890), 7.

[137] Jessica Tyree, "A Guide to the Home for Needy Confederate Women Records, 1862-1997: A Collection in the Library of Virginia Accession Number 34092," LOV, accessed 24 September 2013, http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi00280.xml.

[138] Broadside, "Will Build a Home," 29 March 1897, Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV. See also Mrs. Andrew Jackson Montague, "President's Address, February 1911," Home for Needy Confederate Women, Administrative Files, #34092, LOV.

Veterans raised $20,000 between 1896 and 1899, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy added $70,000 over the next eight years.[139]

With limited funds, Confederate charities placed restrictions on their applicants, similar to the pension system. For the HNCW, applicants had to be over 65 and had to "prove herself to be a needy widow, sister, or daughter of a Confederate soldier who saw active service."[140] This seemingly inclusive definition of deserving belied the HNCW's full expectations. Male organizers expected widows to have "toiled to sustain themselves and the dependent ones at home" with "unwearying devotion," while women, rarely widows themselves, believed deserving widows should have given "their active years to molding the citizenship of the Southland."[141] Furthermore, the HNCW imagined an ideal candidate to

---

[139] The money built the Jefferson Davis monument. See W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2005), 49. White Southerners also preferred honoring the dead to helping living Confederate veterans. See Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 132. Not all organizers blamed monument building. Samuel Lewis blamed organizational inefficiency. See "Welfare of the Association, Draft," 3 November 1898, Samuel Edwin Lewis Papers, 1861-1917, VHS. For evidence of organizations assisting Confederate veterans and their families, including widows, see "Constitution and By Laws of the Southern Relief Society of the District of Columbia," Article II, page 3, 1896, Samuel Edwin Lewis Papers, 1861-1917, VHS; "The Woman's Auxiliary Ex-Confederate Aid Society Circular," Samuel Edwin Lewis Papers, 1861-1917.

[140] "Rules and Regulations," Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. See also "Confederate Home and College: 35th Annual Report" (Charleston: The Lucas-Richardson Lithograph & Printing Company, 1903), 14 in Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV.

[141] "Letter of James Power Smith," in Home for Needy Confederate Women Annual Report 1904, Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. [untitled document c 1897], Home for Needy Confederate Women, UDC VA Division, #21706, LOV; "Mrs. Montague's Address," *The World-News,* Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV. See also "Letter of Rabi Calisch," in Home for Needy Confederate Women Annual Report 1904, Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. Elizabeth Montague was married after the war, while LaSalle Pickett was widowed after the war. Few board members from similar organizations, like the Protestant Episcopal Church Home and the women's group within the Southern Relief Society of D.C., were widows. See "Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home" (Richmond: Wm Ellis Jones, Book and Job Printer, 1890); Circular, "The Woman's Auxiliary Ex-Confederate Society," 27 October 1891, Samuel Edwin Lewis Papers, 1861-1917, VHS; "Report for 1900 Virginia Home for Incurables, Richmond VA" (Richmond: Taylor & Taylor Printing Company, 1901) In Home for Needy Confederate Women, Series 7, #34092, LOV.

"have lived in affluence, and old age finds them thrown upon the charity of the world."[142] Once admitted, these women had to be healthy and act with good conduct.[143] To enforce the class barrier, Confederate charities confiscated the applicant's property and possessions and investigated their relatives to eliminate other means of assistance.[144]

Ultimately, Confederate public assistance provided mixed results. Many women had passed away or remarried by the 1880s and 1890s. Those still surviving had spent decades relying on their own hard work within social networks, balancing resources and connections in order to provide for their family. The pension system likely benefited more women more equally than Confederate charities, yet, in the end, both forms of public assistance helped widows by expanding the availability of a social welfare system.[145]

That widows eagerly embraced these limited public assistance programs demonstrated two main beliefs. First, widows must have accepted that the public owed them some debt for their sacrifice because they accepted that assistance more readily than the local poor house. Second, many widows lived on the margin of financial stability in their twilight years. Social networks had helped widows survive but not always thrive.

Conclusion

---

[142] Untitled and Undated History, Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. See also "Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home" (Richmond: Wm Ellis Jones, Book and Job Printer, 1890), inside cover, 8, In Home for Needy Confederate Women, Series 7, #34092, LOV.

[143] "Rules and Regulations," Home for Needy Confederate Women, Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. Other charities not connected to the Confederate cause would provide help to people with physical or mental diseases. "Report for 1900 Virginia Home for Incurables, Richmond VA" (Richmond: Taylor & Taylor Printing Company, 1901), 23 in Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV.

[144] "Charters, By-laws, Rules and Regulations Governing the Home for Needy Confederate Women (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1910), 19-21, in Home for Needy Confederate Women Administrative Files, #34092, LOV. See also "Fifteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home" (Richmond: Wm Ellis Jones, Book and Job Printer, 1890), 7, 16, in Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092, LOV.

[145] For more on the changes to the Pension system over time in Virginia, see McClurken, *Take Care of the Living*, 148-154. McClurken also casts the HNCW as a state-aid charity because it accepted some funds from an 1898 General Assembly Act. See *Take Care of the Living,* 154-5.

Confederate widows' sacrifices in the Civil War did not compel the government to assist them in return. The Confederacy collapsed and neither the state nor Federal governments immediately filled the void. Instead, widows relied on a network of friends and family, along with their own ingenuity, to survive. Each social bond, whether formed by friendship, by marriage, or by birth, formed one link in a complex web. Rather than relying on any single relationship, widows balanced all of their social connections in order to piece together enough housing and income to support their families over time. Even among close friends and family, no aid came free. Widows either paid an unseen price in independence or provided a more visible asset back to their network. By flattering their benefactors' sense of self-worth, by donating time and goods, and even by working, widows sustained and strengthened relationships within their social network, allowing them to continue to turn to friends and family for support for decades. Public assistance in the form of pensions and Confederate charities did not become available until the 1880s and 1890s. That so many widows embraced these forms of aid suggested a desire for a more stable, centralized form of support. As many widows ultimately discovered, they "may be as independent as it is good for people to be- none are entirely so."[146]

[146] R. More to Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, 14 January 1870, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

CHAPTER 6:

MEMORY

In the summer of 1863, Leila Habersham sat down at her writing desk with pen and paper. Frederic had died just two months previously. In the intervening months, Leila had carefully gathered his letters, his bloodied uniform, a gold locket that had been removed from his body, newspaper clippings about his death, and "the chest that we had packed together, filled with all that love could suggest for his comfort far away."[1] This collection of objects represented a final, fragile link to Frederic and to Leila's self-conception as a happily married wife with a bright future. That link anchored Leila in a rapidly changing world. When Leila clutched these items, memories of her lost marriage flooded her mind while joy and grief swelled in her heart. Time, however, threatened to sever this link to the past, since both objects and memories eventually degraded. The act of remembering, or purposely reliving those memories, combated this erosion, so Leila carefully preserved Fred's possessions and wrote a memoir that ordered her fragmented memories into a story of a happy marriage tragically but temporarily interrupted until the couple reunited once again in heaven. As the ink dried, Leila's memories of Fred as a husband and of herself as a happily married wife became more permanent. Fred, and thereby Leila's marriage, would live on within the pages.

[1] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederick*, in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 173. Fred's chest contained a saddle, bridle, pistols, and trappings.

Ultimately, she charged her "three children to keep this book carefully, to value it above gold & silver, & to let it descend to their children as the record of a noble life."[2]

In preserving the memories of her husband and her marriage, did Leila also preserve the memory of her grief? In short, yes and no. Leila never intended to preserve her grief, instead writing a "life of Frederic." Nevertheless, Leila's memoir recorded her thoughts and feelings about her loss, thereby leaving an invaluable record of her grief that has helped make this study possible. Yet preserving personal memories for posterity fell short of including those personal memories within a collected memory of the Civil War.[3] Leila did not publish her memoir during her lifetime. In fact, rather than distributing her memories of grief, Leila's memoir relied heavily on others recounting and interpreting Fred's death in letters and newspaper clippings. Leila's memories absorbed other remembrances rather than inserting themselves into a broader, public dialogue.[4] Feasibly, Leila might have recounted her recollections during Memorial Day celebrations or while building local graveyards for the Confederate dead, but Leila did not participate in Confederate memorialization activities. Instead, she devoted her talents to Episcopal aid organizations. Leila donated some of Fred's possessions to a time capsule in a Confederate monument, but even those objects, in another's hands, proved Fred's military exploits rather than Leila's feelings about loss. As a

---

[2] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*, in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 27.

[3] This chapter will use the term 'collected' memory instead of 'collective' memory based on Jeffery Olick's work, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," Sociological Theory, 17 (November 1999), 333-48. Olick suggests that cultural memories reflect a combination of narratives rather than a single, coherent narrative. That distinction proves useful in considering the way in which individual memories transform into cultural narratives like the Lost Cause. 'Collected' emphasizes the biological fact that memories originate within individual human brains, even if later those memories contribute to a cultural understanding perpetuated in institutions and structures outside of individual people. We must understand the process of memory collection in order to understand which narratives become included within the broader cultural memory, and which do not.

[4] For more on individuals using newspapers and letters to make sense of their individual experiences, see Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997).

result, the story of Leila's grief might have survived on a dusty bookshelf but not within the broader, public memory of the Civil War.

In the pages that follow, widows like Leila faced similar emotional memories that offered a stable identity during the transition from wife to widow. These widows clung to the past yet could chose only activities that fulfilled social expectations for grieving in the present. Death letters had called for widows to preserve the memory of the men who died, while funerals and condolence letters had encouraged widows to avoid expressing their grief publicly. Since widows could not separate their memories from their emotions, they cultivated their personal memories privately by reburying the body, caring for children, saving relics, and writing memoirs. In that way widows could preserve their husbands' memories in full emotional detail. Widows also expressed their grief privately. In effect, Southern expectations for grieving prohibited widows from contributing their personal memories of a painful loss to the collected memory of the Civil War. By the time that Confederate memorial organizations began to seek out the wartime experiences of a dying generation, the Lost Cause narrative had permeated the few remaining widows' memories, so that their grief no longer challenged the glorified depictions of the Civil War.

The Function of Memory

To a certain degree, the study of memory can be a deceptive enterprise by overemphasizing the dominance of the past in daily life. In fact, the prominence of memory within widows' lives varied over time. While grief initially overwhelmed widows, each new moment produced new memories that might overshadow, though not eliminate, the old memories. Flora George might have never wiped away the memory of working in a hospital during the war, but if she visited the ward enough times in a new context, she would build

fresh competing memories. If specific objects, spaces, or writings recalled the past, then widows could choose to revisit the past by engaging with those objects of spaces. Perhaps, in time, widows could choose to forget simply by not trying to remember. [5] Even widows who enjoyed remembering past marriages still found that present-day weddings and family gossip increasingly competed with memories.[6] For instance, in 1867 Frances Polk penned a letter to her daughter, reflecting on her sixty years of life.

> I was sixty years old yesterday & have much, very much to be thankful for in my good health, & the kind friends & good children I have. & certainly under the circumstances a more comfortable home could not be found me. I have indeed many mercies, & not the least is the recollections of the past are such as they are. As to the country, that I have, & as your dear father did, having done our duty we must be content to have all in God's hands. We have nothing to do with results, those are to God.[7]

Memories performed an important function for Frances. Remembering could spark warmth and contentment, though likely pain as well. At the same time, those memories did not consume Frances's life. Far from being swallowed by grief, Frances made new connections in the postwar era that added happy memories. Indeed, the ever-practical widow preferred to focus on her present comfort rather than an unchangeable past.

Even if memories played a small role in daily life, many widows found the memories of their marriage and their loss to be incredibly influential. In 1868, Sally Perry offered an

---

[5] Certainly some women might have wanted to forget their past as much as others hoped to remember it. Wives of abusive husbands or women who found greater love in a second marriage might have shied away from memory activities. The act of forgetting, however, removed these women's actions from the historical narrative and left them little chance to shape the direction of the Lost Cause. The women who chose to remember and did leave a record of their thoughts, however, might have shaped that Lost Cause narrative. As a result, this chapter will examine the ways in which widows remembered the past rather than the ways in which they forgot the past.

[6] See E. P. Litchfield to Aunt flora, 18 May 1868, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Stoddard Johnston to Mother, 3 February 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, KHS; Mrs. Peter Birchett to Roxanna Dearing, 10 April 1868, Dearing Family Papers, VHS; Willie to Sister Octavia, 3 June 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

[7] Frances Polk to My Dear Child [Frances Polk Skipwith], 22 March 1867, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

astute observation about a "subtle association of ideas" where "the most trivial thing will recall certain circumstances [and] certain persons to [our] memory."[8] Routine activities, innocuous objects, anniversaries, or even news of World War I might unwittingly recall the past.[9] For instance, imagine how Anna Smith must have felt when she received a job offer for her deceased husband from the Louisiana Military Academy in 1870.[10] Memories likely clouded her mind that day, as she crafted a heartbreaking reply. Some days, it seemed as though widows could not avoid intrusive reminders of a past pain. On May Day in 1866, the Griffin Fire Company hosted a celebration at the Direction Hospital Ward. Flora George, a Confederate widow, was horrified. She remembered that room as "where I saw "Willie Stewart" and many a brave, brave boy die; where Father baptized poor Veatch and others. Could your feet have danced over that floor Mattie? O the noble, precious blood that was poured out in vain: in vain for those who have already forgotten them."[11]

---

[8] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 20 April 1868, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH. Indeed, Sally Perry remarkably predicted our modern understanding of the way in which memories form in the brain. . See Eric Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of the Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

[9] For anniversaries, see Frances Polk to My dear Child [Frances Polk Skipwith], 16 June 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 8 August 1862, Maria Mason Tabb Diary, 1860-1862, VHS. For news of World War I, see Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924, 2-3, in ADAH; "Tribute to Mrs. Plane: Work of One Woman," 23 December 1917, Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, Comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH. Memories of slavery invaded as well. See M. C. Johnson to Mother [Ann Johnson], 28 December 1867, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS. Mary L. Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 19 April [1868], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Sally Randle Perry Diary, 30 November 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

[10] Anna Smith to C.H. Toy, 14 April 1870, Smith Family Papers, 1805-1928, VHS. For other instances where letters might recall memories, see Fanny A. Polk to W. D. Gale, 19 February 1866, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS; Kate Lamar to Cousin Caro, 29 April 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH; R. Moore to Mrs. Gen. JEB Stuart, 14 January 1870, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Paul Hamilton Hayes to Madam [Hetty Cary Pegram Martin], 30 March 1885, Paul Hamilton Hayes Letters, 1885 March 18- June 16, Copse Hill, VHS; Flora Stuart to [Mary Lee], 8 May 1867, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS.

[11] Sister Flora to Mattie, 3 May 1866, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU.

The vivid memories that flooded widows' minds also overwhelmed their hearts with both sadness and joy. As Leila composed her memoir she admitted, "my hand trembles now as I write."[12] When Sally Perry rode past the spot where her husband left for the last time, she recalled her sadness in those parting moments. In her diary, Sally wrote, "How well I remember that evening! How handsome he looked in his grey uniform [and] how I stood watching him as he dashed away. I listened sadly to the last sound of "Nellie's" hoofs in the distance [and] when no longer heard I returned with my little ones to our own lonely home!"[13] For Flora Stuart, simply seeing Captain Lee, her husband's comrade, proved to be "very painful-bringing back the past with so much vividness."[14] When Flora felt that pain, she remembered J.E.B.'s advice, " Look not mournfully into the last- it comes not back again, but wisely improve the present, and go forth to meet the future, a bold [and] manly heart."[15] Yet Flora did not completely ignore her memories because they could provide joy as well. "I look back upon the first years of my married life as the happiest I have every spent," Flora noted.[16]

Because widows' memories intertwined with their grief, cultural expectations for grieving limited the way in which widows might express these memories. Death rituals and condolence letters had encouraged widows to curtail their grief in public. Yet if widows'

---

[12] Habersham, *Sketch of Frederic*, 161.

[13] Sally Randle Perry Diary, 11 December 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

[14] Flora Stuart to Friend [Mary Lee], 20 July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS.

[15] Flora Stuart to Friend [Mary Lee], 20 July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS. See also Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[16] Flora Stuart to [Mary Lee], 8 May 1867, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS. See also Sister Flora to Miss Mary J. George, 22 June 1865, George Family Papers, 1860-1866, AU. Sally Randle Perry Diary, 26 December 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH.

memories even contained grief how could they fulfill this prescription? The newly developed death letters, which had responded to wartime challenges to the Good Death, offered widows a solution. These letters had assured widows that private remembering, like reburying the dead and preserving relics, might provide acceptable outlets for continued grief. In fact, these memory activities had much to recommend for grieving widows. By preserving the last remnants of their husbands on earth, widows might find some continuity between their past and their often-unstable present. When standing over a grave or when holding a locket of hair, widows once again became wives. Perhaps they had not lost their husband or their sense of self at all. Combined with the popular interpretation of salvation, memories merely connected a happily married past to a future partnership in heaven.

While widows weaved a precarious web of social networks simply to survive , the role of memory extended beyond marital stability into a broader sense of security that was seemingly unavailable in the unstable postwar era. For instance, after the war Cornelia McDonald devoted her free time to china painting. The hobby fit Cornelia's image of herself as a white, upper-class lady who could not only avoid strenuous labor but also had the wealth and time to pursue an expensive hobby with little practical gain. According to her daughter, however, Cornelia's love for china painting did not come merely from her self-perceived class status. When her daughter asked why she loved china painting, Cornelia answered that the colors were "permanent, never fading or changing."[17] Cornelia had found that change was not always for the better after losing her partner and her financial security. The life that Cornelia had expected to live crumbled around her. In her later years, she wanted to

[17] Minrose C. Gwin, ed. "Introduction," in *A Woman's Civil War: A Diary, with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1992), 6. This quotation supposedly what her daughter remembered from a conversation with her mother. To quote is in the introduction to Cornelia's memoir and is not cited.

recapture the sense of stability and continuity that the war had degraded, and memory helped Cornelia accomplish that task. Yet, Cornelia's illusion of permanence was just as fragile as the china. Without constant acts of remembering, those memories would fade along with Cornelia's link to her past. Only remembering helped the colors of the past remain strong, vibrant, and even real.

Widows' Memorial Activities

While few widows dedicated themselves to china painting, many did share Cornelia's concern with preserving the memory of their husbands. Immediately after the war, those widows with sufficient wealth and knowledge of the original gravesite reburied their husbands' bodies. Still, most widows could only cling to items and clothing in some way linked to their husbands. Children offered widowed mothers the most direct link to a once happy marriage. As time wore on, only widows of wealthy Confederate officers then put pen to paper to write memoirs that praised their husbands as marital partners, often remembering romantic moments more than the difficult times, in order to shape the public image of their husband as a man rather than merely a soldier or an officer. In the process, widows maintained a stable link to their past lives as happily married women.

Reburying a body proved to be an intensely personal process that required a good deal of financial and social capital. According to Caroline Janney, "limited resources in the South had left the Confederate government unable adequately to reclaim and reinter bodies."[18] Though communities congregated to bury the dead within their limits, they did not return those often unidentified bodies to their loved ones. Widows would therefore take on the responsibility for reburying their husbands. Logistical and financial difficulties hampered

[18] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 36. Ladies Memorial Associations buried the dead surrounding local communities, but it was left to individual families to locate and to reinter their own loved ones.

the process, yet widows still wished to live close to their husbands' graves, no matter how well local communities cared for the dead. Flora Stuart appreciated the attention that others gave her husband's grave, either out of love for him or from the money that she paid them, yet she complained of being "denied the great privilege & sad pleasure, of going there myself."[19]

For Jeanie Autry, caring for her husband's grave was a responsibility made possible by her husband's estate and by a detailed death letter that forged a connection across time and space.[20] When Col. James Autry died, his nurse, Fanny Craft, wrote to Jeanie that local people had wrapped his body in a blanket, placed it in a box with a lid, and buried the body near Murfreesboro, Tennessee.[21] Three years later, Fanny's husband, Mr. Adison Craft, helped Jeanie to rebury her husband at their home in Mississippi. Mr. Craft arranged with several companies to disinter the body, to place it in a metallic case, and to transport it to Holly Springs, Mississippi. The entire process lasted over two weeks and cost almost $500.[22] The reburial sparked a mourning process within Autry's local community, though the time

---

[19] Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, VHS; James O'Keeffe to Mrs. JEB Stuart, 22 August 1870, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For family and friends writing to widows to assure them that the graves were well cared for, see "Captain and Mrs. William Plane: The White Roses and the Little Flag," Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey and Mrs. Charlee N. Davis, comp, UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH; Kate to Cousin Caro[line], 21 January 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH; James O'Keefe to Mrs. JEB Stuart, 22 August 1870, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. For hopes for reburial, see Betty Warren to Sister Sallie, 29 October 1862, Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622, SHC; Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH. For widows wanting to move closer to the body, see Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, 30 November 1867, ADAH.

[20] For other widows who reburied their husbands, see "Captain and Mrs. William Plane: The White Roses and the Little Flag," Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey and Mrs. Charlee N. Davis, comp, UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH; Kate to Cousin Caro[line], 21 January 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH; Cousin John to [Emilie Todd Helm], 10 November 1884, Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[21] Fanny Y. Craft to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, [1863], James L. Autry Papers, RU.

[22] Accounts list, Adison Craft to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 10-27 February 1866, James L. Autry Papers, RU.

line remains unclear. Mr. Craft shipped the body to Jeanie in February 1866, but the local Board of Aldermen did not prepare a deed for a lot in the city graveyard until June. Sometime in between, the local Masonic Lodge, to which James had belonged, wore a badge of mourning for thirty days and passed a resolution of sympathy for Jeanie. They remarked that the occasion, "has afforded us an appropriate opportunity heretofore denied by the exigencies of war, of expressing our affliction at his death."[23] The moment likely provided a similar opportunity for Jeanie as well.

In ways, constructing a gravesite resurrected the man, leaving a visible, seemingly permanent symbol upon the earth. Caring for that symbol then became an important representation of the affection that widows continued to have for the dead. Distance made the task more difficult, and, by 1870, Jeanie had relocated several counties away from her husband's grave. As a result, Jeanie worried that she had become "remiss" in her efforts. "It is something, which gives me constant pain, the apparently careless, neglected spot," Jeanie wrote when asking Jonathan Caruthers for advice about replacing the enclosure around the plot, perhaps to both protect and decorate the area.[24] The lot was larger than most, and the local iron foundries remained closed even five years after the war, so Jonathan believed that Jeanie should wait rather than spend $40 for an inferior product.[25] After all, Jonathan assured Jeanie that there was "no appearance of neglect about it," as he had seeded the lot with blue grass while Jeanie herself had planted vines and shrubs.

---

[23] Masonic Lodge No. 35 to Mrs. James L. Autry, [1866], in James L. Autry Papers, Box 1, RU.

[24] Mr. Jo Caruthers to Mrs. J. V. Autry, February 1870, James L. Autry Papers, RU.

[25] Mr. Jo Caruthers to Mrs. J. V. Autry, February 1870, James L. Autry Papers, RU. See also Davis to Sister [Octavia], 8 April 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, UFL; Willie to Sister [Octavia], 3 June 1866, Stephens Bryant Family Papers, UFL.

With such care, Jeanie had succeeded in building a space that both preserved her husband's memory on earth and proved that their love lived on. She literally fenced in her memory to that geographical space so that, to a degree, Jeanie could choose when to remember her past love and when to focus on pressing issues in the present, like finding employment. During and immediately after the war, widows reported visiting their husband's grave frequently, often experiencing overwhelming grief in those moments.[26] Over time, visits might come less frequently. They certainly did for Jeanie, who in a few short years moved with her son to Texas. Perhaps Jeanie's remarriage in the 1880s reduced Jeanie's need to visit, yet, since she continued to save her husband's papers it is more likely that the move made it difficult to travel across two states.

Gravesite visits might have decreased because widowed mothers, like Jeanie, took on the responsibility of raising their children alone. Even childcare could become an act of preservation. Since James Autry Jr. already carried his father's name, his very identity seemed to embody his father, literally carrying his blood into the future. Other mothers even changed a child's name to produce that effect. Leila Habersham renamed her son, Ralph, Frederic Augustus Habersham Jr.[27] Though boys acted as namesake most frequently, girls were not immune from the practice. Mattie Morgan named her daughter "Johnnie" after the girl's father, General John Hunt Morgan.[28]

By selecting a child as a namesake, widows revealed even greater expectations for their children to embody their fathers. As Mattie Morgan described little Johnnie, "She has

---

[26] Cornelia McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 219; Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862, 15 April 1862, VHS.

[27] Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 285.

[28] James A. Ramage, Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 247.

indeed proved a blessing to me direct from God, and the only happiness I look forward to in future is that of rearing her. She is said to be a perfect little Morgan in appearance."[29] Friends and family encouraged this line of thinking, even when the widow could not "see the resemblance to their Father though some do."[30] Personality was just as important as physical characteristics. As one woman wrote to her widowed sister, "Yes, it is a true, noble, manly and (Thank God!) a Christian heart which beats in the breast of your first born!"[31] Because of this likeness, widows and their loved ones alike assumed, as did Maria Turner, that children were "a great consolation" because "I look at them and think there are the pledges of our love."[32]

Some widowed mothers clung to the hope that their children might mimic their fathers' successes even more than his looks or mannerisms. After all, maybe those children could build more stable and successful lives in a time of peace than their fathers had been able to in a time of war. No doubt, a son's success had wide-reaching implications for widows, who told those young men, "on your success in life we all depend."[33] Raising these young namesakes, however, meant far more to widows than a simple financial investment toward future security. The fervor and passion behind widows' efforts toward crafting their children's educational and professional careers suggested that widows hoped to recreate their husband's successes and even to rewrite past failures. Unfortunately for widows, those young

---

[29] M.M. to H.M., 24 July 1865, Hunt-Morgan Papers, University of Kentucky Library, Lexington, quoted in Ramage, *Rebel Raider*, 247.

[30] Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[31] The date on this letter is unclear. It might have been written before Carter Harrison's death. Mary Anne Fitzhugh to Sister [Alice Harrison], 26 May [no year], Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS.

[32] Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU.

[33] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, 8 March [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS.

minds often tread their own path rather than the one set for them, so while widows proudly trumpeted their children's accomplishments, their memory work proved only partially complete.

Flora Stuart's efforts to educate her young son, named J.E.B. but nicknamed Jimmy, exemplify these efforts to mold children into replicas of their fathers. Flora desperately wanted to see her husband in Jimmy's face. She noted, "He is not much like his Pa, but I sometimes see for a moment an expression of face that recalls the dear face vary [sic] distinctly."[34] By 1872, Flora had sent her son to Norwood High School and College for his education, where Thomas Seddon managed Jimmy while Flora directed her son's educational activities. General J.E.B. Stuart had graduated from West Point, so Flora was determined that Jimmy would too. "You have already written that you desire your son prepared for West Point," Thomas wrote, and "should you wish to enter more particularly into his studies I hope you will write- other wise we will guide ourselves by the studies required for entrance at W.P."[35]

Jimmy's behavior threatened to derail Flora's hard work. When Jimmy moved to the Episcopal High School of Virginia in 1874, he began to act out. At first, he blamed his excessive demerits on Mr. Hoxton, who immediately wrote to Flora in protest. Actually, Mr. Hoxton had "assigned him [Jimmy] a seat near me, with the view of removing the temptation to incur demerits." [36] In fact, Mr. Hoxton claimed, "I find those given by me to be less by nearly one half than those received from the teacher in charge of the night study and

[34] Flora Stuart to [Mary Lee], 8 May 1867, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS.

[35] Thos. A. Seddon to Mrs. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, 10 September 1872, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence 1870-1873, VHS.

[36] L. Hoxton to Mrs. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, 5 January 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence 1875, VHS.

dormitory."[37] At first, the teachers chalked the behavior up to "thoughtlessness and a love of fun not at all uncommon in young boys."[38] By the next year, however, Jimmy had become "the most unruly boy in the school."[39] The principal, Mr. Blackford, wanted to expel the young man, but other school leaders worried over the young celebrity. Mr. Stringfellow even assured Flora that Jimmy was a good boy and the principal "seems to revere the memory of Genl Stuart as much as I do." Though initially addressing these comments to Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, Mr. Stringfellow crossed out the first name and inserted "Flora," perhaps in an attempt to reduce the emphasis on Jimmy's famous father.[40] Unfortunately, Principal Blackford himself soon wrote to "Madam," as he called Flora.[41] Jimmy was once again "on probation," the only time in Mr. Blackford's six year tenure "where any boy has been so three months in succession." Therefore, "Regard for my self-respect and for the discipline of the school renders it impossible that this should continue," Mr. Blackford argued.[42] Without improvement, Jimmy would be expelled. Jimmy's behavior simultaneously threatened his academic prospects and proved him to be his father's son, who also had a knack for earning demerits.[43] Fortunately, Jimmy must have matured rapidly, because he remained at the school until 1877, when he entered the Virginia Military Institute at the age of seventeen at his mother's urging. His uncle, William Stuart, advised Flora against "pushing Jimmy's

---

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] F. Stringfellow to Mrs. J.E.B. Flora Stuart, 8 November 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence, 1875, VHS.

[40] Ibid.

[41] L. M. Blackford to Madam, 31 December 1875, Flora Cooke Stuart 1875 Folder, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause*, 17-18.

application strongly" that year, but yielded to Flora's insistence.[44] VMI had not been Flora's first choice, but the sight of Jimmy in the gray uniform that his father wore no doubt made her proud and even a bit reminiscent.

Shaping children into replicas of their fathers likely proved to be the most daunting way that widows preserved their husbands' memories, though also perhaps the most fulfilling. While physical likeness fell to chance, widows pushed their children, especially older namesake sons, to embody a professional and personal likeness as well, a task that widows devoted countless hours and letters with mixed results. In that particular act of remembering, however, widows preserved the memory of their husbands rather than the memory of their own grief. When others gazed at their sons, like the teachers at Jimmy Stuart's high school, they saw the son of the fallen General, not a grieving widow's attempts to provide stability or continuity in her life. Even when those children went on to participate

[44] W. A. Stuart to Sister Flora, 4 December 1877, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS. See also Sean M. Heuvel, ed. *Life After J.E.B. Stuart: The Memoirs of his Granddaughter, Marrow Stuart Smith* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc, 2012), 36. For a similar situation with a son following in his father's footsteps, also by going to VMI, see J. R. Harrison to Child [Alice Harrison], 4 March 1872, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS; Mother to Child [Alice Harrison], 29 April 1872, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS. The University of the South was a popular destination for widows' sons. Jeanie Autry sent her son, James Autry Jr., to the University, and Leila Habersham sent her second son, Charlie. Both would have worn Confederate gray. Mary Gordon sent her son to the University of Virginia. Both mothers also doted on their eldest child and dreamed about their possible successes in life. For Jeanie Autry Brown, see Mrs. Jeanie V. Brown to James L. Autry, 24 January 1881, James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU; Mr. Jo Caruthers to Mrs. J. V. Autry Brown, February 1870, James L. Autry Papers, Box 1, RU; Ann Worthington to Mrs. J. V. Autry, 31 August 1873, James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU; Gen. J. Gorgas to Mrs. J. V. Autry, 12 April 1874, James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU; Mrs. Jeanie V. Brown to James L. Autry, 24 January 1881, James L. Autry Papers, Box 2, RU. For Leila, see Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 269. For Mary Long Gordon, see Mary Long Gordon to Armistead [Gordon], 24 May [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, 13 April [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS; Mary Long Gordon to Armistead [Gordon], 3 May [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. For instances of widowed mothers pushing their children's careers, outside of school, see A. E. Johnson to Son [Junius Johnson], 9 June [no year], George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 14, KHS; F. A. Polk to Dr. H. M. Anderson, 2 May 1873, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

in the Lost Cause narrative, they continued widows' work to honoring the memory of their fathers' personal and military exploits rather than their mother's feelings about that loss.[45]

Yet caring for children was not the only way that widows might cling to what remained of their husbands on earth. Though the man's soul might have gone to heaven, his possessions remained on earth. Gathering and preserving these possessions became another act of memory for grieving widows, as objects as simple as letters, an old hat, or a lock of hair contained an ephemeral connection to their previous owner. Therefore, widows clung to these items since the loss of these objects would symbolize the loss of the man all over again.[46] Mary Gordon shared her husband's love of books, so, after he died, she noted which ones her husband had prized and "for his sake I prize them too."[47] When one of those prized books went missing, perhaps in transit to her son at school, Mary became worried. After all, they "were the last books your Father gave me, and are very dear."[48] Books were one thing to cling to, but Mary Anna Jackson had trouble even parting with two house stoves. "I feel a

---

[45] See William Mecklenburg Polk, *Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General* (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1893), digital image, www.google.com/books, accessed February 10, 2014. J.E.B. Stuart would also continue Flora Stuart's work. He donated his father's saddle and other possessions to the Museum of the Confederacy in 1896. See *Catalogue of the Confederate Museum* (Richmond, VA: Ware & Duke, Print, 1905), 20, digital image, www.google.com/books, accessed February 24, 2014.

[46] Nearly every collection in this dissertation represents a widow saving some parts of their husbands' possessions or writings. For specific mention of saving letters or possessions see Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; John Esten Cooke to Flora Stuart, 12 December 1865, J.E.B. Stuart Papers, 1833, 1962, VHS; William H. Townsend, "Emilie Todd Helm: An Appreciation," [ca 1930], Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; "Thomas Stuart Garnet Obituary," Charles Willard Hoskins Warner, trans., Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083, LOV; Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," 03, in ADAH; Helen Plane, "How I Managed During the War," [1899], in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH; Receipts and Letters, Charles Scott Venable Papers, UTA.

[47] Mary L. Gordon to Armistead Gordon, 1 March [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. See also Frances Polk to Child [Frances Polk Skipwith], 28 February 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[48] Mary Long Gordon to Armistead, 29 March [no year], Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921, VHS. For the loss of other possessions, see Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, 20 July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS; Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS; Frances Polk to Frances Polk Skipwith, May 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

peculiar attachment to them," she wrote while living away from her married home, "having used them in my chamber & parlor, during all the time we kept house, & I wish to keep them always, if possible, & hope the time may come when I can get them in actual possession again."[49] Even widows who remarried, like Mary Brown Venable, saved their first husband's papers, though perhaps with less gusto that widows who did not remarry. Remarrying did not negate widows' self-imposed responsibility to preserve their former husbands' legacy.[50]

Saving these precious relics was rarely an easy, passive process for widows. Immediately after the death, widows tried to track down items that went missing in the chaos by reaching out to family, friends, and even strangers. To stake their claim, widows called on their identities as wives. Ann Johnson wrote to her brother, "I would be glad to know what became of my dear husbands papers after the Battle of Shiloh, or rather what Willie did with them when he left Old Town...I am afraid they have been destroyed or lost like other things taken there [from] by the Enemy."[51] These papers were valuable to Ann because "his last words were in reference to his papers, and who he wanted them sent to and cant help but think there must have been something in regard to his business matter."[52] Soon, a rousing exchange of memory objects ensued. Comrades and caregivers made every effort to return

---

[49] M. A. Jackson to Rev. W. H. Ruffner, no date, William Henry Ruffner Papers, 1845-1907, #24814, LOV.

[50] For evidence of remarried widows continuing to save their husbands' papers and relics, see the papers saved by Mary Brown Venable and Sallie Milner Speer. See Receipts, Charles Scott Venable Papers, UTA; Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH.

[51] A. E. J. to Brother, 24 February 1863, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 8, KHS. For other instances with objects lost or stuck in transit, see John H. New to Hetty Pegram, 12 February 1865, Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS; W. W. Polk to Mother [Frances Polk], July 1864, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[52] Ibid.

cheap yet now priceless, objects, like William Lang's comb and shoes or even locks of hair.[53] Relics with monetary value faced a more uncertain fate. Cash strapped widows needed money or could not afford to pay for transporting certain items. For instance, Mrs. M.A. Pritchett sold her husband's horse but wanted his pistol.[54] Others likely sold the pistol as well.

Widows with less wealth and social connections quickly exhausted the possessions that they could collect; widows of prominent Confederate officers, however, transformed collecting relics into a postwar hobby. Oftentimes, these officers commanded a loyal following among their men and even among the Confederate nation, increasing the number of people who might have saved a scrap of paper or a discarded memento. In the decade following the war, these men's widows reached out to others to gather as many relics as possible. As late as 1870, one of Jeanie Autry's relatives forwarded her a letter from General Bragg to the late James Autry, noting "I know you will prize it."[55] If the letters and relics did not come to widows, many widows sought them out, once again emphasizing their identity as the dead men's wives. Flora Stuart wrote General G. W. C. Lee for a specific letter from General Stuart. When Lee returned the wrong letter, one she already had, Flora wrote again.

---

[53] Fannie Dungan to Mrs. Lang, 20 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, GDAH. For returning mundane personal possessions, see John E. Beck to Mrs. Margaret Puckett, 7 March 1863, John E. Beck Letter, LSU; J. R. Gilliam to Mother, 1 November 1862, Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904, ADAH; Matty to Mother [Ann Johnson], 16 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 6, KHS; J. E. Allen to Cousin [Sallie Milner], 7 April 1863, Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH. For locks of hair, see Ellie Reutch to Mrs. Clark, 14 November 1862, Thomas J. Clark Papers, FLST; S. S. Jackson to Mrs. Geo W. Johnson, 14 April 1862, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 6, KHS; Mollie to Sister Fannie, 30 October 1863, Confederate Records, White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74, GDAH.

[54] Samuel J. Thompson (for M. A. Pritchett) to Capt. Thos. S. Flannery, 9 April 1862, Samuel J. Thompson Letter, #42500, LOV. For other widows considering selling some items, see J. E. Deloatch Captain Commanding to Mrs. William Lang, 14 August 1864, Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9, , GDAH.

[55] F. Valliant to Mrs. Jeanie V. Autry, 25 November 1870, James L. Autry Papers, Box 1, RU. See also Kate Lamar to Cousin Caro, 29 April 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH.

Hoping that Lee would not think her "inconsiderate, or troublesome," Flora asked Lee, "to let me have it- if it is in your possession. You must know that everything of his is to me most sacred."[56] Even though Flora believed that the note should be destroyed, she found it "impossible to do so."[57] After all, "there is no special value to be placed upon these letters," Flora wrote, "but it is a gratification to me to have from his own pen, an expression of his feelings for his country's cause, and will be most highly valued by his children in years to come."[58]

Though many widows actively sought out their husbands' possessions, they were often not the only relic-seekers in the postwar South. From funerals onward, the entire Confederacy laid claim to mourning their dead heroes. Most Confederates, but especially veterans who had served with these fallen men, also sought mementoes. While Flora was collecting letters and reports from her husband, she obtained several reports from H. B. McClellan, who shortly asked for them back. Flora would only offer to send copies, so McClellan demurred, declining even the copies. "I only wanted these manuscripts in case you had others of the same reports," he argued, "and they were valuable to me, for the same reason that you prize them, because they were the same papers that I had seen so often in the hands of my loved General…But I would not on any account deprive you of them."[59]

---

[56] Though this letter is undated, Flora wrote from Saltville, her postwar residence. Flora Stuart to Gen. G. W. C. Lee, 1 August [no year], Flora Cooke Stuart Correspondence no date, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[57] Flora Stuart to Gen. G. W. C. Lee, 1 August [no year], Flora Cooke Stuart Correspondence no date, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[58] Ibid. For more of Flora's efforts, see E. E. Wiley to Mrs. Flora Stuart, 23 March 1867, Flora Cooke Stuart Correspondence 1866-1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[59] H. B. McClellan to Mrs. Stuart, 16 October 1864, Henry Brainerd McClellan Letter, 1864 October 16, Below Petersburg [VA], to Flora Cooke Stuart, VHS. See also E. A. Goldsborough to Mrs. Stuart, 2 February 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence, 1866-1867, VHS. See also Kate Lamar to Cousin Caro, 29 April 1866, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH; M. A. Jackson to Dr. Hage, 10 November 1875, Jackson Family Papers, 1861-

As the years progressed, requests for relics and documents became more insistent as the purpose shifted from personal desire to promoting the history of the Confederacy. In 1874, a former Confederate officer and apparent stranger, Waring Mickell, wrote to Ann Johnson that he was compiling an autograph book with Confederate leaders' signatures to send to The Historical Society of Southern California. "I have to lament the absence of that of your illustrious & lamented husband, Ex Gov Geo. W. Johnson," he wrote. Unable to acquire a signature elsewhere, Mickell wrote "to request that great boon at your own hands: and to ask that, if possible, it be sent me in duplicate, & in any form most convenient to your excellent self, thou, taken from any old letter or paper."[60] Perhaps the historical society could better preserve these signatures, but Mickell pressed a different argument. Reminding Ann of Gov. Johnson's commitment to the Confederate cause, Mickell asked Ann to "cheerfully and generously, lend every aid, in your power, in promoting this feeble effort."[61] Preserving the history of the Confederacy was Ann's duty, Mickell argued, because Southerners need "to perpetuate the names & services of these heroes, patriots, and martyrs of our 'Lost Cause': as well as to train our children, that the principles, … may ever most fragrantly bloom in their tenderest memories, and our cause be every greenly cherished & nourished."[62]

1875, #22070, LOV; Mary Anne [Harrison] Fitzhugh to [Alice Harrison], 1 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS.

[60] Waring Mickell (late Capt. C. S. army) to Mrs. Geo. W. Johnson, 17 February 1874, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 9, KHS.

[61] Ibid.

[62]Ibid. See also John W. Daniel to Flora Stuart, 8 April 1876, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, John [Walker] Daniel Folder, VHS; Thos. R. Price to [Flora Stuart], 12 December 1875, Unprocessed flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence 1875, VHS. The Confederate Museum at the former White House in Richmond solicited artifacts for preservation and for the 'Lost Cause' as well. See also Henrietta Morgan Duke to Mrs. Helm, 1 October [ca 1890s], Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

Though Ann's reply remains lost, other widows seemed conflicted on the appropriate response to these requests. At first, some readily complied, happy to spread the memory of their husbands to others.[63] At the same time, widows did not wish to surrender their most precious objects that readily recalled their lost love. For instance, Flora Stuart wrote Mary Lee that a Mrs. Goldsborough "shall certainly have something of my dear husbands," though she had not yet sent it because "I feared to trust to uncertain hands, things to me so sacred."[64] Mrs. Goldsborough did eventually get her relic, half a year later.[65] Though Flora was willing to part with an artifact of her choosing, she was less open to certain specific requests. In the same letter, Flora wrote, "Mary too, shall have the button, but I am sorry, so sorry, I have none, that he ever wore in battle, but those on his vest- that vest, pierced by that fatal ball."[66] Flora refused to part with the most emotionally significant items that recalled her grief, a button worn in battle. Widows had already sacrificed a great deal, and some balked at sacrificing more. Frances Polk, who had already endured financial hardship and separation during her husband's service to the Episcopal Church, refused to fulfill Leonidas's wishes to

[63] Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; See also Clara M. Daniels to Mrs. Lamar, 20 April 1867, Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65, GDAH; Marie S. Turner to Mother and Sister, 16 October 1864, Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913, RU; Mela to Sister Martha Lewis, undated note to Lines of Verse, Lewis Family Papers, 1856-1863, VHS; Mary Anne [Harrison] Fitzhugh to [Alice Harrison], 1 January 1862, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS.

[64] Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS.

[65] E. A. Goldsborough to Mrs. Stuart, 2 February 1867, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Stuart Correspondence, 1866-1867, VHS. See also H. B. McClellan to Mrs. Stuart, 10 October 1864, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, Flora Cooke Stuart 1864 Folder, VHS.

[66] Flora Stuart to Mrs. Lee, July 1865, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 25, VHS.

give his books to the church. Frances told her daughter "I think your father had given the ch's use enough for years and years."[67]

This exchange of relics produced a peculiar effect on Confederate memory. For widows, each object held two meanings: the biographical connection to their husband and a reminder of their own individual memories. When widows held those objects, the biographical connection caused their own memories of love and loss to come rushing back. When the objects changed hands, however, those individual memories did not transfer. A historical society or even a friend saw the biographical and historical connection to the original owner, the dead Confederate hero, rather than a widow's grief. In other words, the memory of the dead transmitted to a larger collected memory, but the emotions of the living that the object elicited remained unique to the viewer.

One way for widows to inscribe their own feelings onto relics was to transform those relics into a written biography of their husbands. These writings often responded to public demand for information about the lives and military careers of dead Confederate heroes. Wealthy widows of Confederate officers played an important role in these writings. As confidants, wives turned widows could provide otherwise inaccessible information about their husbands' lives and thoughts. Widows' knowledge of their husbands carried power, as did the papers and relics that they fastidiously preserved. When Anna Smith corrected particulars in Rev. C. F. Toy's biography of her dead husband, she justified her intrusion by arguing, "There can be but little connected with his military life of which I could not inform you, better than anyone else, as I was with him most of the time."[68] Anna concluded, "Having

[67] Frances Polk to [Frances Polk Skipwith], [letter damaged, notation Feb? 1866], Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[68] Anna Smith to Rev. Crawford Toy, 14 April 1870, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS.

in your possession all the materials that can be procured and knowing, as I hope I have made clear the wishes of his family in regard to them, I leave it with you to decide whether you will proceed in your work."[69]

Biographers needed access to the dead men's papers to write histories, yet widows often controlled those documents and thereby controlled their husband's legacy. For instance, Anna Jackson clung to her husband's letters and restricted access to the documents. She found John Esten Cooke's biography to be "better than I expected" though still flawed because he saw only the General, not the pious "veritable man."[70] Anna hoped that Rev. Robert Dabney's narrative would prove more accurate, thanks to her own input based on a selective reading of her husband's letters. Anna claimed to copy the parts of Jackson's letters that "would be of most interest & value" to Rev. Dabney, but she clearly had an ideal image in mind.[71] Most of her excerpts focused on Jackson's pious character since she emphasized his avoidance of travel on the Sabbath or the couple's domestic life together, such as Jackson sending her flowers from the garden.[72] Through Rev. Dabney, the news of Anna's letter

---

[69] Ibid. For the rest of their conversation, see Rev. Crawford Toy to Mrs. F. W. Smith, 30 March 1870, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS; Anna Smith to Crawford Toy, 15 March [1870], Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS; Crawford Howell Toy to [Anna Smith], 19 April 1870, Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928, VHS. Emilie Todd Helm also controlled the narrative of the Lincoln family's history. See "Little Sister," the Courier Journal, 22 February [1928], Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; Stephen Berry, *House of Abraham: Lincoln & the Todds, A Family Divided By War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2007, reprint 2009), 227 n.144. Anna Jackson also considered herself an authority on her husband's life. See Sarah E. Gardner, "'A Sweet Solace to My Lonely Heart': 'Stonewall' and Mary Anna Jackson and the Civil War," in Carol K. Bleser and Lesley J. Gordon, eds., *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War: Military Commanders and their Wives* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 64-5. See also Anna M. Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D. D., 19 September 1863, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, Series II, T. J. Jackson Papers, LOV.

[70] Anna M. Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D. D., 19 September 1863, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, Series II, T. J. Jackson Papers, LOV.

[71] Ibid.

[72] All excerpts attached to Anna M. Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D. D., 19 September 1863, in Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, Series II, T. J. Jackson Papers, LOV. For evidence of Thomas Jackson's religious

collection spread. Soon, a Dr. Hage also wanted a portion of a letter. Mary Anna refused, arguing, "the letter is so hastily & carelessly written, that I'm sure he would have preferred that no eye but mine should see it & it contains nothing of interest to any one but myself, except the mention of having heard you preach."[73] Instead, Mary Anna sent the doctor two letters and two autographs, with explicit instructions that he may have only one item.[74] Perhaps the letter contained some information that Mary Anna did not want associated with Jackson's memory.

In the process of crafting their husbands' legacy, widows like Mary Anna were less than forthcoming about their own grief. Mary Anna warned Rev. Dabney that her annotated comments within the letter excerpts were "intended for your eyes alone."[75] Though Mary Anna provided extensive information about her husband, she refused to describe her grief, admitting, "it is so difficult for me to speak of those days of bitterest anguish, & I was so distracted & overwhelmed, that I feel as if I could never give a very [correct] or satisfactory account."[76] Mary Anna had "not yet brought myself to the sad task" of recording the deathbed scene.[77] Over time, Anna seemed dissatisfied with any account that didn't contain her perspective on her husband's life and death, unsurprising given that Mary Anna had

---

character, see the following copied entries attached to the letter: 20 June 1857, 5 October 1859, 13 April 1859, 18 August 1859. For the couple's domestic life together, see the copied entries: 12 May 1859, 20 April 1859.

[73] M. A. Jackson to Dr. Hage, 10 November 1875, Jackson Family Papers, 1861-1875, #22070, LOV. That was not the first time that Mary Anna had edited Thomas's letters. When she provided material for Dabney's biography of Jackson, which she ended up disliking, she also copied him only excerpts of many letters. See, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, Series II, T. J. Jackson Papers, LOV.

[74] M. A. Jackson to Dr. Hage, 10 November 1875, Jackson Family Papers, 1861-1875, #22070, LOV.

[75] Anna M. Jackson to Rev. R. L. Dabney D. D., 19 September 1863, Dabney-Jackson Collection, #24816, Series II, T. J. Jackson Papers, LOV.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid. Sarah E. Gardner argues that Mary Anna Jackson publicized herself by publicizing her husband. See Gardner, "A Sweet Solace to My Lonely Heart," 56.

begun to publicize her husband's exploits even while he lived. Finally, in the 1890s, Anna published a series of biographies that proved to be incredibly popular and told her story of Jackson's death, in many ways the most unique part of a biography that borrowed from many other previous authors.[78]

Unpublished or limitedly published memoirs were more likely to include widows' thoughts and feelings about their loss. In fact, the act of writing sparked reflection that revealed more about the author than the subject. Even though Cornelia McDonald began her diary at the insistence of her husband, she focused her writing and rewriting efforts on her own wartime experience, both before and after her loss.[79] Perhaps most tellingly, Leila Habersham's 175 page "Sketch of the Life of Frederic Augustus Habersham" covered Fred's life prior to their meeting in two pages.[80] Much more than a biography of her husband, the writing chronicled their married life and its demise with an emphasis on Leila's grief. The act of writing for a limited family audience allowed these women to tell the story of a marriage lost and the subsequent emotional struggle for survival.[81]

Frances Polk's memoir of her husband, Bishop turned General Leonidas Polk, can serve as an example of the way in which widows used these memoirs to work through their grief. In 1866, Frances wanted her daughter to write "a life" of Leonidas. "The only trouble,"

---

[78] Gardner, ""A Sweet Solace to My Lonely Heart," 64-5. For Mary Anna's work, see Mary Anna Jackson, *Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson* (Stonewall Jackson) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892); Mary Anna Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson By His Widow* (Louisville, KY: The Prentice Press, 1895).

[79] McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War*, 21.

[80] Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*.

[81] The actual feelings are recorded throughout this dissertation. For author's whose postwar writings reflected largely on their own experiences, rather than their husbands' experiences, see Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH; McDonald, *A Woman's War*.; Habersham, *A Sketch of Frederic*; Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924", in ADAH. For more on how women's postwar writing could be an act of catharsis, see Rubin, "Aftermath of Sorrow."

Frances thought, "will be to condense into some twenty pages, what you wish to say."[82] She wanted something "slight and touching no point which would promote controversy, that must be left for others."[83] Frances even wrote to Robert E. Lee, asking for details about Leonidas's career at West Point, and Lee provided what he could.[84] Ultimately, Frances would be the one to bring Leonidas back to life, at least on paper. On the surface, Frances's memoir defended her husband from his critics by emphasizing events that had not been "recorded" previously, especially Polk's character as a husband.[85] To counter those who disapproved of a fighting Bishop, Frances depicted Leonidas as a pious man with a "high moral sense", noting that even as a soldier, "no matter at what hour of night he retired he always awoke me to have prayers."[86] Like many memoirs, Frances also defended her husband's decision to fight for the slave South, a piece of evidence that questioned Leonidas's Christian morality, at least in the North. Frances claimed Leonidas cared for his slaves, even to his own financial detriment.[87] She even recounted one incident where Leonidas cradled a dying enslaved man, who "suddenly throwing his arms around his masters neck he exclaimed 'Now Master I can

[82] Frances Polk to Child [Frances Polk Skipwith], 20 July 1866, Polk Family Papers #4207, SHC.

[83] Ibid.

[84] R. E. Lee to Mrs. Leonidas Polk, 21 November 1867, Lee Family Papers, 1824-1918, Section 43, VHS.

[85] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 2-3, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS. Frances Polk's memoir does not have page numbers, so I have provided my best estimate of the page number in the book.

[86] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 1, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS and last is IMG 2711; Much of the diary talks about his ecclesiastical career. For evidence that he was a particularly pious man, see Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], pages 28 and 34, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[87] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], pages 34-6, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS

die in peace. I do love you so I have often wanted to hug you & now let me die with my head in your breast & you praying for me."[88]

True or not, Frances's image of Leonidas represented the 'veritable man' that she, like Mary Anna, found absent in other writings. In the process, Frances could consider these memories in light of the tragedy to come, remarking, "'God gave us this time to prepare for storms which must come.'"[89] Joyous times warmed Frances's heart. "I used to love to recall those days of the summer of 28 when he read with me, talked with me, took such pain to direct my mind right," Frances wrote.[90] At the same time, writing a private memoir provided an outlet for frustration and anger, and an opportunity to justify those feelings. Frances remembered being "left alone to bring up my children" during Leonidas's mission trips, and she later "complained how very little I saw of him."[91] Leonidas's efforts in founding the University of the South proved to be Frances's breaking point. She admitted, "I felt as if I had lost my husband & my children their father[.] upon one occasion I remember saying 'I hate the University' greatly to his amusement."[92] Frances reasoned, "I was willing to give him up to a Parish, to the Diocese, but this seemed outside, & I felt as if I was cheated of my rights."[93] In these writings, Frances embraced her identity as Leonidas's wife. She seemed

---

[88] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 36, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[89] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 15-16, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[90] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 7, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS. See also Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 15, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[91] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 17 and page 33, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[92] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 42, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[93] Ibid.

simultaneously defiant towards the church and guilty that she harbored resentment toward a dead man, especially for the religious activities that might have saved his soul. Few other outlets other than a private memoir could have permitted such conflicted though understandable expressions.

The closer Frances's tale drew to its ultimate, untimely end, the more she noticed, "how many memoires come rushing past me."[94] Their final "precious" moments together were "spent in his room occupied in prayer & communing with God, the book in his pocket with the leaf turned down at the Hymn beginning Full of trembling expectation," a hymn admitting fear and asking Jesus to "make me patient to endure, make me faithful to the end."[95] After a large space, Frances wrote, "Thy Will be done."[96] A deep sadness seeped between the lines. On the whole, Frances claimed to celebrate that her husband had been "taken from the evil to come" while she came to see the world as "dark cheerless."[97] The memoir itself reconciled these feelings, as she remarked, "only the memories of 'what has been' lift me."[98]

---

[94] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 66, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS.

[95] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 70-71, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS. For the hymn, see Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A. Hymns for the Use of Families and on Various Occassions (London: J. Kershaw, 1825, second edition), 50-51.

[96] Frances Ann Devereux Polk, "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children" [not dated], page 71, MS 90, Polk Family Collection, UOS. Like Flora, Alice Harrison wrote a memorial book about her husband for her children. We can read about the writing of it through the Harrison letters. See Mother [Janetta Ravenscroft Harrison] to Child [Alice Harrison], 19 April 1872, Harrison Family Papers, 17756-1893, Section 10, VHS. J. R. Harrison to Child [Alice Harrison], 4 March 1872, Harrison family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS; J. R .H. to Child [Alice Harrison], 29 February 1872, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10. VHS.

[97] Polk, "Leonidas Polk," 3.

[98] Ibid.

Unpublished writings, like Frances's memoir, helped widows remember and pass on their feelings of grief, but they did incorporate those feelings into the Southern, collected memory of the war. Frances never published her account, leaving that duty for her son to accomplish after her death.[99] William Polk's biography appeared in two volumes, the first describing his father's ecclesiastical career and marriage and the second detailing his military exploits. William tried to fuse the image that his mother saw with the image of the warrior that the public demanded. The result, predictably, presented a story about a pious, devoted Confederate stripped of its references to Frances's conflicted feelings or grief. Ever the private woman, Frances would have likely approved. Besides, she had already benefitted from her work simply by resolving her expectations as a wife with her husband's continued absence, first in service to God and then to God himself. Still, the broader Southern understanding of the Civil War missed an important story of love and loss. Instead of filling libraries across the South, widows' unpublished memoirs rested on a single dusty bookshelf in the home of those who needed no further education on the pain of loss. Perhaps widows had neither the time nor the desire to break the gender barriers in publishing during the late nineteenth-century, or perhaps they preferred to keep their grief private, like Frances. Even if they had wanted to share their story, however, condolence letters had encouraged widows to limit public expressions of grief, while the Southern public demanded stories of heroes triumphant not of struggling widows. The effect proved the same as that of reburial, childcare

[99] Glenn Robins, *The Bishop of the Old South: The Ministry and Civil War Legacy of Leonidas Polk* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 212-3. Robins argues that Frances did not become a published writer because William chose to write instead. Yet William's biography was not published until 1893, long after Frances's death. See William Mecklenburg Polk, *Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General* (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1893), digital image, www.google.com/books, accessed February 10, 2014.

and preserving relics: widows' memories intertwined with their grief but those thoughts and feelings did not transmit into the collected memory of the Confederate war effort.

Confederate Memory Organizations

While widows preserved their husbands' memories, Ladies Memorial Associations (LMAs) sprung up locally across the South and quickly became a mouthpiece of the Lost Cause movement. The women who led these organizations directed a community-wide effort to bury the dead strewn across the South in beautified cemeteries, where ex-Confederates might celebrate their war effort with political speeches at least once per year. Logically, widows might have flocked to these organizations devoted to caring for the dead. In fact, LMA lore claimed that a widow, Mrs. Mary A. Williams of Columbus Georgia, first began the practice of decorating graves by making "frequent visits" to her husband's grave in the Columbus cemetery. Mary suggested that her community set "apart one day in every year to lay a tribute of love upon each Confederate grave throughout the South."[100] The concept sprang up organically in many communities and drew some Confederate widows into the effort. Nancy Branch, a prominent widow in Raleigh, led her local LMA.[101] In a similar vein, Flora Stuart donated money to the Hollywood Memorial Association's effort to build a statue of General Robert E. Lee, likely persuaded by her own political commitment and the pleadings of her friend, Mary Lee.[102]

---

[100] Alberta Malone, "History of the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association, 1866-1946: Markers and Monuments, 1946" (Self Published, 1946), Typescript copy in GDAH.

[101] Minutes of the Ladies Memorial Association of Wake County, 1866-1882, 23 May 1866, Ladies Memorial Association of Wake County Records, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina. For more on Nancy Branch's LMA activities, see Mrs. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch (1817-1903) Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[102] Mrs. M. C. Lee to Flora Cooke Stuart, 14 February 1870, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS; Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 108. Lisa Nicholls also participated in the Ladies Confederate Memorial Association of

Despite some widows' visible participation, most widows did not flock to LMAs. In an extensive study of the groups in Virginia, Caroline Janney argues, "LMA members tended not to be the widows and orphans of men who died in the fighting."[103] According to Janney, LMA members' "male relatives, especially husbands, did not serve in the Confederate military; rather, they tended to remain in the community, either because of job obligations or of age."[104] Janney even claims, "most of the Ladies in Virginia did not lose male relatives in the war."[105] Though a broader statistical study of LMA membership is needed for conclusive results, membership records of LMAs in Virginia and Alabama confirm that widows were at least not overrepresented and might have been underrepresented in these memorial organizations. As one newspaper article described, the LMA that formed in Talladega, Alabama in 1867 had been "chiefly composed of the wives and mothers of Confederate soldiers, and later joined by a few somewhat younger in years."[106] Some widows appeared initially but seemed to find the organization in some way unsatisfying. In Appomattox, Virginia, only thirteen of the original thirty LMA members were married, and only two might have been widows. Neither of those women participated after the first meeting.[107] Similarly,

---

Louisiana. See "To the Ladies Confederate Memorial Association of LA," 1893, Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639, Box 2, LaRC.

[103] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 57.

[104] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 56.

[105] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 57. Certainly, women who were not widows may have faced their share of hardship, especially losing sons during the war. Janney does not reveal the full weight of her evidence for these assertions but points to her extensive research that is evidenced clearly throughout the book. Janney may have found few war widows, but those widows also made up a small percentage of the total population. Therefore, a broader statistical study is needed to determine the degree to which war widows were underrepresented in LMAs.

[106] Our Mountain Home, 1 May 1901, in Talladega Ladies Memorial Association, 1867-1901, Alabama Associations Collection, 1850-1984, ADAH.

[107] Neither woman was elected to office, appeared in future committees, or was even mentioned again in the meeting minutes. By 1870, they were marked off the rolls. Ladies Memorial Association of Appomattox Minute

the Montgomery Alabama LMA's first organizing committee consisted of five prominent women, including the widowed Mrs. Dr. Holt.[108] When the organizing committee elected officers, Mrs. Holt did not assume a leadership position, and her continued participation is unclear.

Why did widows not flock to LMAs? For most widows, the answer was simple: they had neither the financial nor the social capital to become members. Only ladies could become "Ladies," and, to make matters worse, the financial instability of widowhood threatened to push women out of the class some who might become Ladies.[109] Furthermore, membership required dues, regular attendance, and participation in activities. With all that even wealthy widows had to do, many would have struggled to take on such an additional burden. Perhaps those widows who initially joined and then left the LMAs in Appomattox and in Montgomery shrunk at these daunting tasks.

For Janney, however, the reason for widows' absence lay deeper within the motivation behind the movement. "The 'mourning' demonstrated by these women at Memorial Days and cemetery dedications were not of a personal nature; they were not there to secure the proper burial of their own fathers, sons, and brothers, or, in most instances, even

---

Book, 25 May 1866, pg. 3-4, VHS. For the Ladies Memorial Association of Petersburg, of the ten women who were officers, I could locate eight. None of those women were war widows. See Ladies Memorial Association of Petersburg, Records, 1866-1912, LOV.

[108] Mrs. Dr. Holt was the wife of the former mayor who had died during the war for unstated reasons. Mrs. I.M. Porter Ockenden, ed. "The Confederate Monument on Capitol Hill…Montgomery, Alabama (Ladies Memorial Association, 1911), 8, 48, 57-8, in Alabama Associations Collection, 1850-1984, ADAH. The officers of the Montgomery LMA still saw their share of hardship. The founding chairman lost a son and the first vice president lost at least two sons. A broader statistical study might be revealing because Confederate war widows were a relatively small percentage of Virginia's population, so it might be expected that only a few members would be widows. Each organization by itself would contain too small of a sample size to suggest significant results, so the scope of such a study would have to be geographically expansive.

[109] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 55.

to decorate the graves of a loved one," Janney argues.[110] Instead, LMAs buried and celebrated the dead as a political expression vindicating the Confederate war effort.[111] Perhaps widows, with their own graves and grief to tend, felt little need to transform these mournful acts into a political act. Still, some widows who did not join LMAs still supported other Confederate memorial activities. Leila Habersham, who remained active in Episcopal organizations that helped the poor and widowed of her city in the postwar era, had the time and the social standing to participate in an LMA. Leila did donate two of the buttons from Fred's uniform to a box within the cornerstone of a Confederate monument laid in 1874, the only record of her participation in such activities.[112] Similarly, Hetty Cary Martin, widow of General John Pegram, did not join an LMA yet still supported "our struggle for freedom."[113] A friend agreed with her sentiments, writing, "Truly, as you say, the contrast between the pensioned, prosperous Union Soldier, and our poor, defeated, suffering Heroes, is indeed most 'pathetic.'"[114] Perhaps that belief is why Hetty also received a request to work for a Confederate Bazaar on behalf of wounded and impoverished veterans.[115]

---

[110] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 57.

[111] Janney, *Burying the Dead*, 56.

[112] Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 268.

[113] Hetty Cary Pegram to John Cunningham Kelton, 9 May [1865], Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941, VHS.

[114] Paul Hamilton Haynes to Madam [Hetty Cary Pegram Martin], 18 March 1885, Paul Hamilton Hayne Letters, 1885 March-June 16, VHS.

[115] Bradley T. Johnson to Miss Hetty, 22 July 1885, Bradley Tyler Johnson Letter, VHS. If widows did not mention joining LMAs or the UDC in their letters, it is difficult to absolutely rule out membership. Of the women who never mentioned their participation in their diaries or memoirs, however, all still expressed the deepest sentiments with the Confederate cause. See Sally Randle Perry Diary, 30 November 1867, Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868, ADAH; Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," 65-66, in ADAH; V. Jefferson Davis to Mrs. Harrison, 7 June 1893, Harrison Family Papers, 1756-1893, Section 10, VHS; Daughter to Mother [Ann Johnson], 26 December 1864, George M. Johnson Papers, Folder 8, KHS. Widows who did participate in LMAs and UDC unsurprisingly developed a very public image around these sentiments. See "Captain and Mrs. William Plane: The White Roses and the Little flag," in Mrs. Julian Thweatt

Though most widows did not participate in LMAs, the widows of prominent Confederate generals did participate in Confederate veteran ceremonies, which functioned much like the wartime funeral services for Confederate heroes. In 1875, Mary Anna Jackson and Flora Stuart both attended the unveiling of the Stonewall Jackson statue in Richmond. According to Harry Heth, the Adjutant Marshall in Chief, a carriage would pick up Flora and take her "to the Executive Mansion to join Mrs. Jackson [and] Mrs. Heth, with whom you will be conducted to the position assigned to the most distinguished guests."[116] On that day, "the city was decorated and festooned with flags, flowers, and streamers all along the parade route."[117] Life stopped as Richmonders and former Confederates watched the "imposing pageant."[118] According to historian David Blight, "perhaps this was the celebratory funeral that the old Confederacy had been edging toward."[119] Flora and Mary Anna's ceremonial roles certainly mirrored their roles in the heroic funerals held for their husbands during the war. The crowd placed these widows on a pedestal, holding them high and thereby distancing them from mourning below. As a result, Flora and Mary Anna served as reminders of their husbands' lives and deaths, more than they, contributed to the public grief.[120]

Bailey, comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH; William H. Townsend, "Emilie Todd Helm: An Appreciation," [ca 1930], in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[116] H. Heth to Mrs. Genl. J.E.B. Steward [sic], 25 October 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[117] David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Rev. Ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 80.

[118] D. H. Hill, from *Southern Home,* in Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 80.

[119] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 80.

[120] Jennifer Gross argues that widows' presence also allowed Southerners, especially men, to assume a masculine role as provider and protector, even when they could not afford to supply pensions. Perhaps some men did find such comfort in these ceremonies, but widows had been brought back into the traditional gender roles almost immediately. See Jennifer Lynn Gross, "The United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate Widows, and the Lost Cause: 'We Must Not Forget or Neglect the Widows,'" in Rudolph M. Bell and Virginia Yans, *Women on Their Own: Perspectives on Being Single* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 180-181.

Flora, at least, gave no indication that she found her role as General Stuart's widow to be unsatisfactory. At the same time, Harry Heth worried that Flora would feel "over looked" because "in the pressure of business, this communication has been delayed."[121] Perhaps the tension really stemmed from Flora and the Stuart Cavalry's efforts to erect a statue of their own beloved General. At the celebration for Jackson, Flora might have felt simultaneously hopeful for interest in her cause while perhaps a bit jealous that Jackson's statue commanded more attention.[122] As J.E.B.'s widow, Flora nearly came to embody her husband after the war as she continued to serve as the spokeswoman for the memory of her husband and his men. In 1919, she wrote to Mrs. N.V. Randolph, worried that her husband's monument at Yellow Tavern might be moved and that "the Plates bearing name [and] state, had been torn off," agreeing to "arrange for the payment" of a new plate.[123] Her justification was that "the monument at Yellow Tavern was erected by the followers of Genl Stuart [and] I think almost entirely by those who were in that Cavalry fight. Many of them are at rest [and] cannot speak_but I feel sure would say "no" to its being [moved] from its present location."[124]

Indeed, these widows of dead Confederate heroes identified with their husbands' men in a way that they did not necessarily identify with the pageantry of Confederate memorialization. For instance, Eliza Griffin Johnston simultaneously praised the commemorations and reunions as “soul stirring” while setting herself apart from those celebrations. Writing to a veteran, she remarked that the “beating of Drums” were “calling

---

[121] H. Heth to Mrs. Genl. J.E.B. Steward [sic], 25 October 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[122] One friend emphasized the hopeful side. See F. Stringfellow to Flora Stuart, 8 November 1875, Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers, VHS.

[123] Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart to Mrs. N.V. Randolph, 20 August 1919, Stuart Papers, MOC.

[124] Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart to Mrs. N.V. Randolph, 20 August 1919, Stuart Papers, MOC.

you around the majestic commemorative monuments with which you are decorating your cities." The emphasis on "you" suggested that Eliza did not include herself in these celebrations. Instead, she described her position as someone "who waited in vain for the returning step of their loved protectors."[125] Where the veterans celebrated their former glory prominently, Eliza wanted her sentiments to remain "private, I have always so objected to being conspicuous in any way."[126] At the same time, Eliza identified specifically with the men who had served under her husband during the war. Eliza thanked "my highly appreciated comrades of the Louisiana Div of the Army of Tennessee" for bestowing a badge of honor upon her.[127] In signing her letter, Eliza wrote, "I do not deem that I transcend my right, when I sign myself, your Comrade and friend."[128]

By the 1890s, the LMAs had begun to drop in membership while the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) snatched the leadership of the Lost Cause movement. That transition marked a change in the way that Confederates celebrated the memory of the Civil War. Instead of burying the dead or memorializing them within the cemetery, the UDC built large, ostentatious monuments in public spaces.[129] In theory, this shift might have made

---

[125] Eliza G. Johnston to Dr. Scott, 10 November 1895, Eliza Griffin Johnston Letter, LSU.

[126] Ibid..

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid. Eliza had saved her husband's relics and donated them to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. June Melby Benowitz, "JOHNSTON, ELIZA GRIFFIN," Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fjoba), accessed February 05, 2014. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Emilie Todd Helm also acted as the "mother" of her husband's old regiment, giving her a similar symbolic but powerful role. See "Old Boys in Gray: Reunion of the Confederate Veterans' Association at Louisville in June", 22 April 1900, in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[129] For more on the UDC, see Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "A Duty Peculiarly Fitting to Women," in *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 12-54; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 171-179.

widows less likely to participate. Indeed, by the 1890s many of the women widowed during the war had passed away or would have been too elderly to participate. That fact, however, led the Daughters to actively seek out widows' participation as a part of their campaign to exalt living veterans in addition to the dead. In ways, widows themselves had become relics of a bygone era. Even though the ninety five-year old widow Mrs. Francis Bartow Seabrook was not a "regular attendant" at her local UDC meetings, "she was invited to the convention and to the platform that the entire assembly might rise and do her honor."[130] At that ceremony, the UDC offered Mrs. Seabrook a pension for life in order to "express their affection" for General Francis Bartow's "widow and by the pension which will be hers now, they have fulfilled that desire."[131] The money was likely welcome but perhaps forty-five years remiss.

Despite earning a few prominent widows' participation, the UDC remained largely an organization for the rising generation of women, with a few particularly famous widows of Confederate heroes taking on a matronly role in leadership. With time, their numbers in the UDC only declined until the UDC was truly an organization for daughters and granddaughters, not widows.[132] Between 1897 and 1902, the Mississippi UDC received 454

---

[130] "Widow of Gen. Bartow Remembered by U.D.C.," 1910, clipping in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH. The UDC did not seem to discriminate against widows who remarried, like Mrs. Bartow Seabrook. Many of the most famous UDC widows, including Flora Stuart and Helen Plane, had not remarried. Jeanie Autry Brown remarried in the 1880s and served as a charter member for her local UDC chapter as well. See [unknown] to Mrs. Brown, 13 October [1906], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. Mary Southall Brown also remarried. See Homer Richey, ed, "Memorial History of the John Bowie Strange Camp, UCV, (1920), 13, Archive.org, Accessed 25 February, 2014, http://www.archive.org/details/memorialhistoryo00richiala.

[131] Ibid.

[132] In 1934, all of the members of the Clara Ryder Hayden Chapter listed their direct relation to the war as a grandparent or a great-grandparent. See "Membership List, Chapter No 2027 Clara Ryder Hayden Chapter," Clara Ryder Hayden Chapter, UDC, FLST. From 1908 onward, there is no indication that the applicants to the Appomattox Chapter of the UDC included widows. See Applications, UDC Appomattox County, 1908-1984, LOV.

applications for membership. Fourteen of those women marked themselves as widowed either during or after the war.[133] In Calhoun County, Alabama, none of the charter members claimed to be widows, nor were any of the non-charter members in 1923 listed as widows.[134] Of the 43 charter members of the Albemarle County UDC Chapter, only 23 were even married, and Mary Southall Brown Venable was the only widowed member.[135] Membership did not necessarily infer continued participation. Jeanie Autry Brown served as a charter member for her local UDC chapter. In the following years, she donated money and paid her dues even after she moved away with her son.[136] Soon, the chapter seemed more interested in her than she in them. The chapter first asked Jeanie to serve as a delegate to the local convention in 1906. Jeanie left no record of her attendance, and when the chapter asked her again to serve as a delegate in 1908, they wrote, "You were a delegate to Gulf Port, but I doubt if you were informed of it: were you?"[137] Perhaps Jeanie only contributed money, though the chapter remained convinced "that your heart is as much in the work as ever and

---

[133] Because membership applications and pension records all focus on the biographical history of the male veteran, it is difficult to tell if a woman was a war widow. It is unlikely that all of the women who applied as widows were widowed during the war, but it is also possible that some widows who remarried might have not marked themselves as widowed. A comprehensive biography would have to be done of each woman who applied to be certain of the number of war widows. See Unknown UDC Bound Volume, Membership Applications, Transcripts, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Mississippi.

[134] "Calhoun County, Charter Members, Oxford, Confederate Dames Chapter" in Confederate Veterans & Widows 1859-1940, Public Information Subject Files, ADAH; "Calhoun County, Non-Charter Members, Oxford, Confederate Dames Chapter" in Confederate Veterans & Widows 1859-1940, Public Information Subject Files, ADAH. In 1926, several other counties made lists of their members. Out of five counties, none of the members were listed as widows. See the following lists: "Bount County, Oneonta Chapter UDC," Dekalb County, DeKalb Chapter U.D.C. at Ft. Payne Alabama," Elmore County, John B. Gordon Chapter," "Elmore County, Etawah Chapter," Jackson County, B'port Chapter," in Confederate Veterans & Widows 1859-1940, Public Information Subject Files, ADAH.

[135] See Homer Richey, ed, "Memorial History of the John Bowie Strange Capt, UCV, (1920), 13, Archive.org, Accessed 25 February, 2014.

[136] For charter member, see [unknown] to Mrs. Brown, 13 October [1906], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. For donating money, see Carrie M. Vannill to Mrs. Brown, 14 March 1907, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. For paying dues, see Fannie J. Halbert to Mrs. Brown, 9 February 1906, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

[137] Fanni J. Halbert to Friend, 20 October 1906, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

that you will do what you can."[138] As the years wore on, age increasingly bounded widows' influence.[139] In 1895, Flora Stuart briefly served as President of the Grand Division of Virginia, the only widowed officer, until she argued that it would be too taxing to "add to her already heavy duties" and became a long-term vice president instead.[140]

Widows might not have participated in large numbers, but their leadership did influence the direction of the UDC. Widows took an interest in all of the UDC activities, from monument building to collecting relics, often those same objects that widows had been preserving for decades. At the same time, widows seemed particularly interested in ways to help the living, a heavily debated task within the UDC. For instance, Helen Plane, a widowed UDC leader and founding member of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, advocated for a Daughters-sponsored Home for Needy Confederate Women, modeled after the newly opened home in Richmond, Virginia. Helen believed that such a home would be a "better and more enduring monument" for "those who with unflinching courage sent forth husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, and lovers" to war but later found themselves "in poverty and obscurity, suffering in silence rather than acknowledge their changed condition."[141] The

---

[138] [unknown] to Mrs. Brown, 13 October [1906], James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU.

139 Minutes of the Daughters of the Confederacy, entries 15 October 1894, 12 February 1896, UDC Grand Division of Virginia, Minutes, 1894, 1896, 1898-1899, VHS.

[140] "Grand Division Meeting Minutes", 17 February 1895, in United Daughters of the Confederacy, Virginia Division Minutes, 1894-1899, #29254, LOV; "Minutes of the Annual Convention of the Grand Division Daughters of the Confederacy in Virginia, 22 April 1897, page 13, in United Daughters of the Confederacy, Virginia Division Minutes, 1894-1899, #29254, LOV; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Grand Division of Virginia UDC, 7 November 1899, page 11, in United Daughters of the Confederacy, Virginia Division Minutes, 1894-1899, #29594, LOV. In advanced age, Anna Jackson tired as well, and begged off of some official duties. See "Mrs. Stonewall Jackson's Letter," by M.A. Jackson, in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH.

[141] "Mrs. Plane Advocates Home for Aged Women," [ca 1910] in Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH. For other widows who also supported caring for poor Confederate women, see Fannie J. Halbert to Mrs. Brown, 9 February 1906, James L. Autry Papers, Box 3, RU. Leila Habersham contributed to an organization assisting the widows of her city. See Smith, A Savannah Family, 270. See also Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 80.

Daughters debated Helen's proposal in part because she imagined a home for previously wealthy women cast down after the war, rather than women of all classes. Instead, the Daughters relegated her proposal to a relief committee that monitored welfare rather than providing it.[142]

Like the UDC and the rest of the country, widows sensed that important memories of war were slipping away to age and to death. In a 1901 address, Helen admitted "I have arrived at the age where I live in the past."[143] In returning to the place where she had first been engaged, Helen remarked, "This was the gateway through which thirty-six years before I had passed out with the husband of my youth; my first born child, my faithful servants—where were they now? Where my friends and neighbors…are there none to welcome me? No answer came. Only the lengthening shades of evening falling softly ever where seemed to whisper out of the depths' shadows—shadows; all shadows."[144] Those widows, like Helen, who participated in the UDC's memory gathering efforts often contributed their own memories. By the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, however, those memories arrived too late. Too few widows remained to speak up, and those who did speak seemed detached from present issues, seeing absences more than what remained. Many widows, like Helen, even began to use the Lost Cause narrative to interpret their own personal experiences by boldly praising "faithful servants" and willingly commemorating

---

[142] Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 80-83. Emilie Todd Helm was also a very active member of the UDC. See "At Richmond: Daughters of the Confederacy Meet Next Year," clipping in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS; "End Comes to Mrs. Ben Helm: Was Widow of Confederate Brigadier-General and Half Sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln: Funeral to Be Saturday," clipping in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[143] "Mrs. Plane's Address at Columbus to the U.D.C.," 2 November 1901, Mrs. Julian Thweatt Bailey, comp., UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbooks, 1895-1939, Volume I 1918-1926, AC 71-241, GDAH.

[144] Ibid.

"the cause for which he [William F. Plane] died."[145] Memories that might have shaped the course of Confederate memory during the LMAs Memorial Days became the romantic reflections that honored Confederate loss rather than communicating the pain of that loss.

Conclusion

In the postwar era, widows found that emotional memories of their marriage and their loss continued to intrude upon their present lives. Death letters had encouraged widows to delve into these tasks, especially by reburying their husbands, caring for their children, and preserving their husbands' possessions. Eventually, some widows wrote memoirs ostensibly about their husbands but also reflecting upon their loss and its long-term consequences. In each of these activities, widows found stability and continuity in their identity as wives by preserving the past while simultaneously confining their emotions to specific memory spaces or objects, offering a sense of control over their own emotions.

While widows' memories were inseparable from their grief, that grief did not become a part of the collected memory of the Confederate war effort. Condolence letters and funeral rituals had encouraged widows to control their grief in public, perhaps limiting the degree to which widows could express their emotional memories in community ceremonies. Besides, widows' struggle to survive limited their ability to participate in extracurricular activities. In the end, only a few wealthy widows of Confederate heroes participated in Confederate memorial activities. Though they believed themselves to be comrades in their husbands' regiments, public ceremonies echoed earlier funeral services by placing widows in a

[145] Ibid. See also Eliza J. Kendrick Walker, "Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924," ADAH. For more on using collected memory to explain personal memories, see Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*. Helen saved her husbands' letters but did not publish them, despite her activities within the Confederate memory movement. These letters were ultimately published in 1964. See S. Joseph Lewis, Jr., ed. "Letters of William Fisher Plane, C.S.A. to His Wife," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1964): 215-228.

symbolic role rather than allowing their interpretations of the meaning of wartime sacrifice to be heard. At the same time, even donating their husband's relics failed to translate the grief that widows felt as they carefully preserved those items for decades.

The combined significance of widows' private memorial activities and their lack of participation in public activities was a sterilization of memory. Widows' grief never became a part of the South's collected memory of the Civil War, the Lost Cause movement. Without a cultural outlet to express emotions publicly, widows' grief remained a story waiting to be told, while the Lost Cause narrative relied primarily on the stories of survivors and the bodies of the dead who could no longer speak, making it easier to glorify warfare.

CONCLUSION

On the morning of April 30, 1901, Leila Habersham passed away in her Savannah home "after a lingering illness."[1] The *Savannah Morning News* announced her death: "Mrs. Leila Habersham Dead. She was the Founder of the King's Daughters in Savannah."[2] During her long and full life after the war, Leila had seen both triumph and tragedy. Her entire extended family survived the Civil War by investing in rice planting, only to see that industry decline along with their fortunes. At the same time, she saw three children grow to adulthood and two of them die. By the time of her own death, Leila's surviving son, Fred Jr., had lost his wife, remarried, and moved across the country to California to start a new life. Once again, Leila was left alone. Throughout this tumultuous period, Leila's grief and her identity as a widow remained consistent.

Recently, Aaron Sheehan-Dean has called for historians to "draw inspiration" from the current research on the Long Civil Rights Movement in order to study the "Long Civil

---

[1] "Mrs. Leila Habersham Dead," *Savannah Morning News*, 1 May 1901, in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 276. For other examples of widows' obituaries, see "Romance of Civil War is Recalled in Passing Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart: Widow of Famous Southern Cavalryman and Daughter of Northern General Dies at Age of 88," May 1923, in U.D.C. Atlanta Chapter Scrapbook, 1895-1939, Volume II, May 1918-1928, AC 71-241, GDAH; "Death of Mrs. Sallie Speer," nd, newspaper clipping in Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; "Mrs. S. P. Speer Died at Concord," 28 May 1907, newspaper clipping in Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40, GDAH; "Funeral Services Today for Mrs. C. Helen Plane, Memorial Plan Founder," 25 April 1925, newspaper clipping in U.D.C. Atlanta Chapter Scrapbook, 1895-1939, Volume II, May 1918-1928, AC 71-241, GDAH; "Funeral of Mrs. Polk," transcript in Scrapbook, Folder 4, Leonidas Polk Family Papers, HNOC; "End Comes to Mrs. Ben Helm: Was Widow of Confederate Brigadier-General and Half sister of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln: Funeral to be Saturday," newspaper clipping in Emilie Todd Helm Papers, KHS.

[2] Ibid.

War," thereby linking the fighting with the postwar consequences.[3] By examining the grieving process of Confederate widows, this study has linked death in war to the long-term consequences of that loss for widows like Leila. Confederate widows' husbands would not return after the surrender at Appomattox. Instead, after the fighting ended, widows' struggle for survival merely continued, albeit in a time of peace. As a result, Leila's loss and her subsequent grief would continue to shape her sense of self, her emotional stability, and her relationships to other people for decades after the war.

Identity

Even thirty-nine years after Fred's death, Leila's widowhood framed her identity in her own eyes and in the eyes of her community. The obituary led by defining Leila as "the widow of Lieut. Frederic A. Habersham, C.S.A., who was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville."[4] Leila's marriage to Fred had offered her a place within her community as a wife and, ultimately, as a mother, so by maintaining her identity as a widow, she found a sense of continuity in a world spinning out of control. Unfortunately for Leila, her marriage had also offered a sense of companionship with a young man whom she loved deeply. The loss of Fred's financial and emotional support left an absence in Leila's life that would be difficult to fill. Leila's Christian beliefs, however, assured her that she parted with her partner only temporarily. Since Leila expected to reunite with Fred in heaven upon her death, the last day in April in 1901 would have seemed bittersweet to those who loved Leila and knew of her love for Fred.

---

[3] Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "The Long Civil War: A Historiography of the Consequences of the Civil War," *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 119, no. 2 (March 2011): 106. *MasterFILE Complete, EBSCOhost* (accessed March 17, 2014).

[4] Ibid.

Leila's continued identity as a wife demonstrates that widows did not necessarily contradict the patriarchal gender hierarchy in the postwar South. When Fred died, Leila did become a single woman. Almost immediately, however, Leila's community embraced her as a widow by recognizing her deep mourning clothes and giving her a position of honor at the funeral service. Her role as a widow was predicated on her identity as Fred's wife, not as a single woman. When widows acted as household heads or worked outside the home, they did so based on their identities as wives and mothers, struggling for the family's survival during their husbands' absence. Furthermore, widows depended upon friends and family for assistance in the postwar South, so that few widows could truly claim an identity independent from social networks. Far from remaining outside of gender relationships within the community, widows wove their identities into the local social fabric to order to survive.

For historians, the fact that Leila built her identity around her widowhood offers an opportunity to consider whether social hierarchies or experiences offer the best lenses through which to view the formation of identity. Race, class, and gender certainly informed cultural expectations and thereby shaped Leila's identity. Part of the threat of losing a husband was also the threat of losing financial security and therefore social status. The choices that Leila made were, in part, to maintain her status as a white, wealthy widow. Her social position offered her greater opportunities than poorer white or African American widows, while Leila only gently bent traditional gender boundaries by working as a teacher after the war. Yet Leila was much more than a wealthy, white woman. In ways, Leila's personality shaped her choices as well. Historians have understandably balked at analyzing personality with often-incomplete historical evidence that might inhibit rather than facilitate a scholar's ability to draw connections between historical actors. Experiences like

widowhood, however, offer a lens through which to view the interplay between categories of analysis and between individual needs and cultural expectations. That interaction, by linking personality and social hierarchies, constructed widows' identity.[5]

Emotion

As Fred's widow, Leila faced the scrutiny of her friends and family over the appropriate way to grieve. During the war, southern communities encouraged widows to curtail their grief almost immediately. As widows moved from their parlors to the funeral service and beyond, they bottled up the emotions that continued to rage inside. Both wartime funerals and postwar memorial ceremonies placed widows in a place of honor that enforced widows' stoic facade while distancing them from the communal mourning of Confederate loss. This emotional regulation extended beyond public ceremonies, however. Death letters and condolence letters represented the expectations of a wide swath of the Southern population, including strangers and veterans from other communities as well as widows' closest friends and family. These writers disagreed on the proper way to mourn the dead, either urging widows to preserve the past or to look toward a future reunion in heaven. Together, however, these letters expressed a common desire to alleviate widows' suffering and clearly commanded widows to curtail grief.

For widows like Leila, these emotional restrictions proved to be isolating. The initial outpouring of support that might have provided some comfort quickly dissipated. When the crowds left, Leila poured out her feelings into her memoir and lovingly preserved the last links on earth to her beloved husband, his grave and his belongings. For Leila, these activities

[5] For other research that emphasizes the creation of subjective identity through experiences, see Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 12-13; 90, Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation & the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 17.

renewed her identity as Fred's wife while allowing her to express grief over the temporary interruption in their relationship. At the same time, she did not feel free to share these feelings more publicly and chose not to publish her memoir. Instead, Leila's community only saw the more visible acts, like wearing mourning clothes or decorating Fred's grave, which stressed Leila's identity as a widow rather than her grief. Even by 1901, Leila's community did not recognize their neglect of widows' plight. The *Savannah Morning News* approved of Leila's actions, writing, "For many years Mrs. Habersham had always decorated her husband's grave on Memorial Day, and it was only this year and this last year that ill health prevented her from continuing this custom."[6] The article said nothing of Leila's grief.

Unfortunately, this emotional silence produced unintended and ultimately detrimental consequences for Southern communities as well. For widows, grief over their loved and lost husbands infused nearly every memory of the war. If widows could not express grief, then they could not express their memories of the war publicly. Therefore, cultural restrictions on expressing emotion can help explain how a region that suffered through the most devastating war in American history ultimately glorified sacrifice in the collected memory of the Civil War. Such a massive loss of life might have produced antiwar sentiment, with widows as likely leaders of that movement. Instead, ex-Confederates argued over who bore the blame for catastrophic defeats, like the Battle of Gettysburg, but few publicly doubted the righteousness of the cause.[7] Many factors influenced the development of the Lost Cause narrative, from the struggle for political control within a defeated section to a need to justify sacrificing so many lives in the name of slavery. Yet the inability to connect the conflicting

[6] Ibid.

[7] For more on the debates over who is to blame in the South as compared to a more unified Northern memory of the war, see Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997).

emotions about personal losses to the collected memory of wartime sacrifice also limited debate over the meaning of the Civil War. Aside from the dead, widows could have perhaps best spoken to the true costs of war in the public ceremonies, and without their voices, an alternative interpretation of death during war would have been unlikely to arise.

As a result, the story of widows' grief suggests that ex-Confederates did not unite behind the Lost Cause narrative. Advocates of the Lost Cause, whether in newspapers or in Confederate memorial organizations, had the loudest voices in the postwar South. Yet many Confederates, including widows, did not lend their voices as loudly, if at all. The reason for the division was not necessarily ideological, as many Confederate widows continued to support the Confederate cause for the rest of their lives. Instead, the divisions arose from self-imposed limitations within the community. As scholars have demonstrated, Confederate memory organizations catered to the wealthy. Imposing limitations on the expression of emotion further limited the number of ex-Confederates who might share their wartime experiences within the collected memory of the war.

To discover other voices or messages that remained silent in the postwar era, historians need to investigate emotional expression in the South more broadly. For instance, were mothers of dead soldiers given greater latitude to grieve openly? How did men, both veterans and survivors, express their feelings about loss? It is likely that cultural restrictions on emotional expression had even more widespread impact on forming postwar memory than can be seen from examining only Confederate widows' grief. Furthermore, this tension between individuals and their communities over the expression of emotion might prove to be significant in understanding the direction of political debates and memory activities in post-conflict societies more generally.

Social Connections

The Savannah community prized Leila's symbolic, and quiet, dedication on Memorial Days equally with her impressive dedication to community service on the other 364 days of each year. In the second paragraph of her obituary, the newspaper wrote, "Mrs. Habersham was noted for her good works among the poor and for her devoted Christian character."[8] Leila's list of accomplishments could barely fit into the short article. In the four decades after the war, Leila had been a "lifelong member of Christ Church," president of the Bishop Elliot Society for nearly twenty years, the first director of the Widows' Society for seven years, on the board of managers for the Episcopal Orphan's Home, and the founder of the King's Daughters in Savannah.

According to the obituary, these "good works among the poor" proved Leila's "Christian character," demonstrating the lingering effects of wartime challenges to the Good Death. The article did not emphasize the manner in which Leila passed away or even her last words, two essential components of the Good Death before the Civil War. During the war, most soldiers died far from home, so that the deathbed scene alone could no longer prove the dying man's salvation. Comrades, hospital workers, and even strangers wrote to widows to testify to the man's bravery, commitment to the Confederate cause, and Christian behavior as a means of offering comfort otherwise unavailable. Widows clung to these words as proof of their husbands' salvation and hoped that deeds in life overshadowed the horrific nature of death on the battlefield or in the hospital. Perhaps the emphasis on Leila's life rather than her final moments reflected this change in emphasis, though more research on American

[8] Ibid.

attitudes toward death is needed to fully understand how death letters and condolence letters fit into a larger history of American death traditions.

Though Leila likely hoped that her Christian devotion would allow her soul to rise to heaven and to reunite with Fred, she also wrote a will to pass on her remaining possessions on earth. Leila left all of her wealth and property to Frederic Jr. and his heirs, or, if Frederic Jr. had no heirs, to her sister, Mary, who had struggled through widowhood as well.[9] Leila and Mary had survived thanks to the generosity of their extended family, a close network of socially prominent families including the Elliots, MacKays, and, Hugers, who intermarried and shared business prospects. By drawing on these social connections, widows like Leila and Mary built a limited safety net that helped them survive the postwar era. Upon her death, Leila returned to these families the wealth and property that had kept her socially and financially stable during her widowhood. It was her last act of reciprocity within her social network.

In ways, however, the terms of Leila's will undermined her "good works." Previous research on Confederate pension programs has emphasized the surprising expansion of state programs in the last half of the nineteenth-century. Yet the pension system helped veterans more than their families, and the delayed implementation of the Confederate pension system left Confederate widows with little support immediately after the war, at the time when they were most vulnerable. Instead, widows turned to their social networks for support, rather than to the state, that social network absorbed both failures and successes. This system based on trust and familiarity perhaps offered less risk than publicly funded aid. The human bond could be a powerful tool, but, without regulation, not one distributed fairly or equally for

[9] "Mrs. Habersham's Will," *Savannah Morning News*, 3 May 1901, in Smith, *A Savannah Family*, 277.

widows who all lost a husband in service to the Confederacy. Social networks ultimately offered the greatest help to those widows with the least need, women like Leila with many powerful friends and family members. At the same time, widows with little financial or emotional support likely had smaller and less powerful social networks and therefore fewer avenues for help. As a result, many widows living on the margin fell into poverty or occasionally into insane asylums.

Though social networks distributed resources unequally, widows needed these social connections for far more than financial support. By studying the relationship between widows and their social networks, we can better understand the way people connect with one another in a time of crisis. Human beings are social animals; an individual's survival often depends upon the acceptance and the cooperation of a larger social group. Yet the drive for connection stems from an even deeper place, a need for companionship. For Confederate widows, a husband's death eliminated a prime source of support and companionship, so in the postwar era those widows turned to their family and friends for emotional as well financial support. Maintaining these connections required more energy and time than many widows had to give, yet widows found pleasure in social contact. Even seemingly mundane activities like church services and letter writing helped counteract the sense of isolation that private grief produced.

In the quest for companionship, widows and their family and friends struggled to overcome the biological limitations of a human body that unequivocally isolated an individual's thoughts and feelings from others. The brain thinks and feels but relies on the body to express these thoughts and emotions. Words and gestures convey these internal experiences but cannot permit another person to actually experience these thoughts and

feelings. As a result, no widow could truly share her grief with others; she could only express it. This divide between individuals and their communities opened a space for tension to arise.

Widows' need for companionship made even small empathetic gestures incredibly important and their absence incredibly influential. In many ways, the drive to connect with one another coupled with the limitations of expressing feelings fueled two competing impulses: the cultural expectation for widows to suppress their feelings and individual empathy for widows' plight. In the wartime South nearly every family grieved for some lost loved one. No one widow's pain could take precedence. Instead, funerals and memorial ceremonies emphasized the thoughts and feelings of Confederates as a collective because they were unable to handle the sheer weight of personal grief. Since communities had to work to overcome the biological barrier to individual feelings, suppression proved easier than reaching out across the emotional gap. At the same time empathy, or the attempt for one person to sympathize with the experiences of another person, underlined nearly every page of this dissertation. Leila might have been an elite widow, but she reached out a hand to other widows in her community during her lifetime, much like male and female companions who mourned Fred's death with her or who offered her assistance in a time of need. The absence of that empathetic connection, such as when widows felt unable to express their grief, created a sense of loneliness. Empathy therefore acted as a powerful tool within the postwar South by shaping the way in which people connected to one another.

Application

Studying the history of emotion, including Confederate widows' grief, can encourage a mutually beneficial conversation between historians and psychologists over the nature of grief. Since the brief rise and fall of the use of psychoanalysis within the humanities, the

dialogue between these two disciplines has fallen silent. Yet recent research in psychology has explored the boundary between biological and cultural influences on behavior, research which historians might find useful. At the same time, research on the history of emotion could also inform scholarship in psychology. The most recent diagnostic manual evaluates mental illness by observing behaviors that deviate from cultural expectations, with the assumption that the deviation arises from an interaction between biological and contextual causes.[10] By studying Confederate widows' grief this study has demonstrated that cultural standards for emotional expression have changed over time, and therefore the benchmark for appropriate grief has changed over time as well. Indeed, for a few widows, the pressure to demonstrate a sound mind by suppressing their feelings within an environment with little financial or social support ultimately deteriorated their mental health. This case study can serve as a reminder that the distinction between mental health and mental illness in part rests on historical context.

More immediately, research on grief is needed now more than ever as the United States emerges from more than a decade of war. The military and American society have become increasingly aware that war can leave invisible scars upon the minds of veterans, and recent scholarship has discovered additional devastating consequences for veterans' and soldiers' families. In response to rising reports of suicide, the Department of Defense has only begun to consider the feasibility of tracking the rate of suicide among military family members. While studying the past cannot voice the needs of today's widows, further research on the emotional repercussions of war in American history combined with further evaluation

[10] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

of the success of cultural and political strategies for dealing with that trauma might inform these critical conversations today.[11]

Though this dissertation has told the story of Confederate widows' grief, much more work needs to be done in order to understand the experience of widowhood during the Civil War and the long term emotional consequences to wartime loss. White and African American widows of Union soldiers both likely experienced slightly different cultural expectations for grieving. Furthermore, Union widows made sense of their loss within the context of victory, a condition that might have produced delicate problems for African American widows who lived in the defeated South as racial violence increased. [12] While the literature has plenty of room for each of these groups of widows to have their voices heard, a comparative approach to studying widowhood or grief might prove particularly enlightening. For instance, the Federal government offered pensions to disabled veterans and war widows in 1862, in stark contrast to the late, sporadic efforts to construct a pension system in the postwar South.[13] A comparative approach might shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of public assistance. Furthermore, the memory of the war developed differently for Union and Confederate families, so that widow's grief, however it was expressed, might play different roles in the

---

[11] See Department of Defense, Defense Suicide Prevention Office, "Suicide and Military Families: A Report on the Feasibility of Tracking Deaths by Suicide among Military Family Members," by Jacqueline Garrick, RefID 2-819BC86 (N.P.: 2013), http://buildingcapacity.usc.edu/resources/Suicide%20and%20Family%20Members_DSPO_final_report.pdf (accessed March 12, 2014).

[12] David Silkenat has shown that white and black North Carolinians shifted cultural practices in reaction to the war, but often in different ways. It seems likely that cultural practices surrounding grief differed based on racial experience as well. See David Silkenat, *Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, and Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

[13] Margaret E. Wagner, Gary W. Gallagher, and Paul Finkelman, eds, *The Library of Congress Civil War Desk Reference* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2002), 745.

formation of collected memory in different societies.[14] Finally, this study has examined how Confederate widows expressed their grief over time, but widening the scope to include widowhood during later wars might better illustrate how American cultural expectations for grieving changed after the Civil War.[15]

While there is much work left to do, this dissertation has endeavored to show that studying the history of emotion can help historians not only discover new voices from the past but also rediscover new meanings behind familiar debates. Widows like Leila left a record of their feelings in letters, memoirs, and scrapbooks that now reside in the archives, waiting to be discovered. These widows could not find a voice in their own time, but their voice remains significant today because the way in which widows could and could not express their grief shaped the way in which they connected with other people in the postwar South. Those relationships, in turn, shaped the political dialogue over the memory of the Civil War. In short, widows' personal feelings about their experiences became significant far beyond their own hearts.

---

[14] Erika Kuhlman's comparative study of American and German widows in World War I also highlights the potential benefits of comparative study. See Erika Kuhlman, *Of Little Comfort: War Widows, Fallen Soldiers, and the Remaking of the Nation after the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

[15] For a model, see Kirsten Wood, *Masterful Women: Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

APPENDIX A: WIDOWS IN WESTERN STATE HOSPITAL

Table 1.
Widows Admitted to Western State Hospital, 1861-1868.

Case Number	Name	Occupation	Year	Age	Supposed Cause
1719	Johanna Kilzner	Wife of Laborer	1861	40	Domestic Trouble
1817	Ann E Thomas	Not Listed	1863	Not Listed	Not Listed
1859	Lucy A. Roberts	Widow of Miller	1864	42	Domestic Affliction
1863	Martha Saul	Widow of Farmer	1864	40	Not Listed
1871	Eliza M. Reynoldson	Widow of minister	1864	66	Death of Husband
1880	Catharine Bailey	Widow of Laborer	1864	50	The War
1888	Susan Pool	Not Listed	1865	77	Old Age
1896	Martha McClintic	Widow of Farmer	1865	52	Domestic Affliction
1902	Louisa J. Reaney	Widow of Merchant	1865	53	Not Listed
1938	Mary Wooddell	Widow of Milwright	1865	50	The War
1944	Caroline V. Clark	Widow of Physician	1865	61	Death of Husband
1951	Annie E. Kirby	Widow of huckster	1866	29	Not Listed
1952	Letilia W. Whillocke	Widow of Physician	1866	48	The War
1967	Elizabeth Pittman	Widow of Merchant	1866	45	The War
1969	Maria J. Conway	Widow of Judge	1866	44	Not Listed
1982	Elizabeth Y Hobbs	Widow of Merchant	1866	49	Domestic Affliction
2002	Ann B Shivers	Widow of Farmer	1866	57	Pecuniary Embarrassment
2039	Ann S Winder	Widow of Farmer	1867	32	Domestic Affliction
2061	Catherine V Hall	Widow of Farmer	1867	54	Domestic Trouble

2080	Caroline A Fairfax	Widow of Farmer	1868	60	Domestic Affliction
2096	Mary Jane Carr	Widow of Laborer	1868	42	Domestic Trouble
2111	Rebecca Allison	Widow of Laborer	1868	47	Epilepsy
2114	Susan D McCready	Widow of Farmer	1868	42	Domestic Trouble
2129	Caroline C. Clarke	Widow of Physician	1868	63	Death of a Husband (Recurrence)
2141	Susan Turner	Widow of Laborer	1868	40	Loss of Child
2213	Mahala Wooldridge	Carpenter Widow	1869	65	Poverty
2214	Frances Taylor	Seamstress	1869	40	Domestic Affliction
2254	Jan G O Willey	Widow of Physician	1869	64	Not Listed
2270; 1352	Eleanor A. Hayton	Widow of Farmer	1869	52	Domestic Affliction & Loss of Property
2275	Nancy Larkan	Widow of Forgeman	1870	74	Old Age
2305	Mary Stokes	Widow of Brickmason	1870	41	Not Listed
2306	Peggy F. Patton	Widow of Lawyer	1870	66	Domestic Affliction
2307	Eliza McC. Gold	Widow of Physician	1870	59	overtaxed energies
2313	Ann J. Mosely	Widow of Physician	1870	50	Ill Health
2330	Mary L. Rennoe	Widow of Farmer	1870	40	Ill Health
2384; 1327	Louisa J. Reaney	Widow of Merchant	1872	58	(Recurrence)
2439	Mary M. P. Newton	Widow of Lawyer	1873	38	Harsh Treatment by Employer
2443; 2096	Mary J. Carr	Widow of Laborer	1873	47	Not Listed (Recurrence)
2449	Lucy A. Fisher	Widow of Tobacconist	1873	55	Ill Health
2452; 2254	Jane G C Willey	Widow of Physician	1873	68	Not Listed (Recurrence)
2458	Malinda F. Raikes	Not Listed	1873	33	Indigence

2466	Ann M. Lawrence	Widow of Farmer	1873	37	Domestic troubles
2515; 2449	Lucy A. Fisher	Widow of Tobacconist	1874	56	Recurrence
2526	Mildred C. Aboll	Farmer's Widow	1874	62	Ill Health
2615	Margaret Marshall	House Work	1875	38	Poverty and Ague
2656	Mary J. Barden	Farmer's Widow	1876	51	Loss of Home
2718	Ann Snaveley	Farmer's Widow	1877	52	Menapausis
2725	Cynthia A. Johnson	House Work	1877	40	Death of son
2726	Jane E. Lomax	Physicians' Widow	1877	45	Pecuniary Loss
2729	Elizabeth M. H. Check	Housework	1877	42	Ill Health
2764	Mary S Golden	Seamstress	1877	53	Poverty
2767	Laura H. Powell	Farmer's Widow	1877	27	Death of Husband
2772	Sarah McAlexander	Carpenter Widow	1878	34	Death of Husband
2792	Mary B. Shelton	None	1878	46	Ill Health
2820	Nancy M. Watson	Clerk's Widow	1878	53	Loss of Property
2833	Hannah Horton	Laborer's Widow	1878	37	Not Listed
2834	Anne Gray	Farmer's Widow	1878	40	Tuberculosis
2865	Susan W. McGhee	Farmer's wife	1878	69	Ill Health
2873	Mildred F. Meadows	Farmer's Widow	1878	Not Listed	Not Listed
2881	Mary Norton	Not Listed	1878	72	Poverty and Loneliness
2886; 2069	Ann Cole	Laborer's Widow	1878	61	Not Listed
2894; 2729	Eliz. M H Check	Housework	1878	43	Not Listed (Recurrence)
2897	Ellen Gwinn	Farmer's Widow	1878	50	Heredity

2909	Nancy Morris	Pauper	1878	78	Not Listed
2912	Virginia P. Hudson	Tinner's Widow	1878	45	Menapausis
2925	Sarah A. Fry	Laborer's Widow	1879	Not Listed	Not Listed
2951	Sarah A. Kenney	Laborer's Widow	1879	56	Not Listed
2955	Eliza Draped	plasterer's Widow	1879	70	Death of Husband
2986	Frances Garrison	Farmer's Widow	1879	41	Recurrence
2991	Susanna Mays	Farmer's Widow	1879	48	Fracture of Cranium
2995	Pamelia Lee	Widow	1879	78	Old Age
2999; 1754	Nancy McBride	Merchant's Widow	1879	58	Heredity
3000	Catherine E Evans	Widow	1879	53	Domestic troubles
3002	Sarah Eger	Farmer's Widow	1879	52	Menapausis
3005	Polly Fox	Pauper	1879	70	Paralysis
3008	Sophia L Motley	Widow	1879	40	Not Listed
3010	Susan E. Perkins	Farmer's Widow	1879	55	Death of Husband
3018	Emma Fireash	Pauper	1879	65	Ill Health
3030	Aunell Seal	Not Listed	1880	47	Not Listed
3031	Risa Florsheim	Not Listed	1880	60	Not Listed
3032	Mary McCabe	Not Listed	1880	75	Not Listed
3043	Patsy Harhraden	Farmer's Widow	1880	55	Domestic Affliction
3054	Margaret Kennedy	Not Listed	1880	65	Destitution and Bad Conduct of Sons
3057	Catherine S. Teagle	Not Listed	1880	63	Not Listed

Source: Case Numbers 1715-3085 in Admission Register 1828-1868, Vol. 247 and Admission Register, 1868-1880, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV.

Table 2.
Widows as a Percent of Population Admitted to Western State Hospital by Year.

Year	Percent	Year	Percent
1861	1.19%	1871	0%
1862	0%	1872	1.19%
1863	1.19%	1873	7.14%
1864	4.76%	1874	2.38%
1865	5.95%	1875	1.19%
1866	7.14%	1876	1.19%
1867	2.38%	1877	7.14%
1868	7.14%	1878	15.48%
1869	4.76%	1879	15.48%
1870	7.14%	1880	7.14%

Source: Case Numbers 1715-2160, Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, LOV; Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV.

Table 3.
Widows' Supposed Cause of Admission, 1861-August 1867.

Supposed Cause	Percent of Widows
Domestic Affliction	36%
The War	16%
Death of a Husband	8%
Death of a Child	4%
Poverty	4%
Physical Ailment	4%
Old Age	4%
Recurrence	4%
Not Listed	20%

Source: Case Numbers 1715-2160, Admission Register 1828-1868, in Admission Records, Vo. 247, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. This volume represents patients from 1861 to August 1868. I grouped supposed causes into categories. One Widow was admitted twice for the same cause. Her second admission was labeled as a recurrence.

Table 4.

Widows Supposed Cause of Admission, August 1868- July 1880.

Supposed Cause	**Percent of Widows**
Physical	18.6%
Poverty	15.3%
Domestic Afflictions	10.2%
Death of Husband	6.8%
Menopause	5.1%
Age	3.4%
Heredity	3.4%
Recurrence	8.5%
Overwork	3.4%
Death of Son	1.7%
Not Listed	22.0%

Source: Case Numbers 2161-3085, Admission Register, 1868-1880, in Admission Records, Vol. 248, Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, #41253, LOV. Five Widows who were previously listed in the sample from 1861-1880 reentered the hospital during these dates. I renamed their supposed cause of insanity to recurrence, if it was not already so labeled.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives and Manuscript Collections

Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama

Annual/Biennial Reports, State Publications 1862-1900, Bryce Hospital (Tuscaloosa)
Benjamin R. Glover Letters, 1862-1865
Capt. Pierre Costello Civil War Letters, 1861-1862
Confederate Veterans & Widows 1859-1940, Public Information Subject Files
Eliza Kendrick Walker, Other Days: Reminiscences, 1924
John F. Davenport Civil War Letters, 1862-1864
Military Volunteer Family Assistance Records, 1861-1865, W.P.A. Project #1584
Mrs. I. M. Porter Ockenden, "the Confederate Monument on Capitol Hill…Montgomery, Alabama, Ladies Memorial Association 1911, Alabama Associations Collection, 1850-1984
Nancy Gilliam Papers, 1850-1904
Sally Randle Perry Diary, 1867-1868
Talladega Ladies Memorial Association, 1867-1901, Alabama Associations Collections, 1850-1984
Thomas T. Bigbie Letters, 1862-1864
Washington Pickens Nance Civil War Papers, 1859-1865, Washington Nance's Diary

Department of Special Collections and Archives, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama

Armistead L. Galloway Letters, 1862-1983
Asa T. Martin Papers
Denney Family Letters
George Family Papers, 1860-1866
James S. Alexander Collection

Documenting the American South

Agnew, Samuel Andrew. *Diary, September 27, 1863-June 30, 1864*, Samuel A. Agnew Diary, 1851-1902, Southern Historical Collection. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/agnew/agnew.html.

"Annual Report of the Board of Directors and the Superintendent of the North Carolina Insane Asylum, for the Year Ending November 30, 1884." Raleigh, N.C.: Ashe & Gatling Printers and Binders, Presses of Uzzell & Gatling, 1884. , http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asylum1884/asylum1884.html

Atkinson, Joseph M. *Christian Duty in the Present Time of Trouble: a Sermon Preached at St. James' Church, Wilmington, N.C., on the Fifth Sunday After Easter, 1861.* Wilmington, NC: Fulton & Price, Steam Power Press Printers, 1861. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/atkinsonsermon/atkinson.html.

——— *God, the Giver of Victory and Peace: A Thanksgiving Sermon, Delivered in the Presbyterian Church, September 18, 1862, Raleigh, N.C.* Raleigh, NC: s.n., 1862. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/giver/giver.html

Benedict, Samuel. *The Blessed Dead Waiting for Us. A Sermon Preached in St.*

James' Church, Marietta, Georgia, on the Festival of All Saints, November 1st, 1863. Macon, GA: Burke, Boykin, & Co., 1863. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/benedict/benedict.html.

"Reports of the Board of Directors and Superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane of North-Carolina." Raleigh, N.C.: Holden and Wilson, Printers to the State, 1857. http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/asyl1856/asyl1856.html.

Wadley, Sarah Lois, Diary August 8, 1859-Mary 15, 1865, Typescript from Sarah Lois Wadley Papers #1258, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, March 8, 2014, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/wadley/wadley.html.

Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

Charles Scott Venable Papers
John M. Holcomb Papers
Joshua K. Callaway Papers
William W. Black Family Papers

Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia

Hunt-Morgan-Hill Family Collection
J.E.B. Stuart Collection
Thomas J. Jackson Papers

Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia

Alberta Malone, "History of the Atlanta Ladies Memorial Association, 1866-1946: Markers and Monuments, 1946," Typescript copy.

Celathiel Helms Letters, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3

Charles Augustus Lafayette Lamar Family Papers, 1830-1884, 1963, Microfilm Drawer 283, Box 65

Chunn/Land Family Papers, AC 44-101

UDC, Atlanta Chapter Scrapbook, 1895-1939, Volume One and Two, AC 71-241

James M. Jordan Letters, Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1860-1865, United Daughters of the Confederacy Bound Typescripts Vol. 2, Microfilm Drawer 194, Box 3

Lang Family Civil War Letters, Microfilm Drawer 252, Box 9

Richard W. Milner Collection, Microfilm Drawer 171, Box 40

W. G. Thomas Letters, 1863-1864, CSA Personal Narratives, Microfilm Drawer 57, Box 65

White-Hill Letters, Confederate Records, Microfilm Drawer 49, Box 74

Hargett Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia

Eliza MacKay Elliot Scrapbook, 1864

Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfurt, Kentucky
George M. Johnson Papers
Emilie Todd Helm Papers

Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia
United Daughters of the Confederacy, Virginia Division Papers, #21706
Dabney-Jackson Collection, T.J. Jackson Papers, #24816
Emma Lavinia Baber Garnett Letters, 1847-1863, #27083
Highland County: List of Indigent Soldiers' Families, 1862-1865, #1205104
Home for Needy Confederate Women, #34092
Jackson Family Papers, 1861-1875, #22070
Jonathan D. St. Clair Letters, #33958
Newton M. Lee Correspondence, 1865-1880, Misc. Reel 4379
Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, Casebook, #41404
Records of Western State Hospital, 1825-1995, Admission Registers, #41253
Reynolds Family Papers, 1845-1869, #22998
Samuel J. Thompson Letter, #42500
Applications, UDC Appomattox County, 1908-1984, Misc. Reels 1141-2
United Daughters of the Confederacy, Virginia Division Minutes, 1894-1899, #29254
Virginia Confederate Pension Applications
West, Johnston & Company Records, 1876-1893, Misc Reels 4385-4387
William Henry Ruffner Papers, 1845-1907, #24814

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
Eliza Griffin Johnston Letter
Etta Kosnegary Letter, 1862 November 12
John E. Beck Letter, 1863 March 7

Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Nicholls Family Papers, 1729-1965, Manuscript Collection 639

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Unknown UDC Bound Volume, Membership Applications, Transcripts

North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina
Ladies Memorial Association of Wake County Records
Mrs. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch (1817-1903) Papers.

Papers of Jefferson Davis, Rice University, Houston, Texas
Letters to Jefferson Davis

Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Avery Family of North Carolina Papers, 1777-1890, 1906 #033
Ellen Long Daniel Papers, #202-z

Gale and Polk Family Papers #266
Harrison and Smith Family Papers #5144
Sarah Lois Wadley Papers #1258
Spears and Hicks Family Papers #4622
Polk Family Papers, #4207
Walton Family Papers #1437
William Dorsey Pender Papers, 1860-1863 #1059

Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
Bellamy Family Papers, 1825-1894
Nixon Letters
Stephens-Bryant Family Papers

State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida
Chapman Family Papers 1858-1883
Clara Ryder Hayden Chapter, UDC
Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy, Historic Records Vol. 1
Thomas J. Clark Papers, 1862-1864
Washington Waters Papers, 1863-1864

The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana
Leonidas Polk Family Papers
Wilkinson Stark Family Papers

The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee
Polk, Frances Ann Devereux. Undated manuscript. "Leonidas Polk, A memoir written by his wife for their children."
Polk Family Collection, MS 90
Fairbanks Collection

Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia
Bailey Family Papers
Bradley Tyler Johnson Letter
Comfort Family Papers, 1848-1900
Dearing Family Papers
Episcopal Church, Diocese of Virginia, Papers, 1709-1972
George Freaner Letter, 1864
Gordon Family Papers, 1849-1921
Harrison Family Papers
Henry Brainerd McClellan Letter, 1864 October 16, Below Petersburg [VA], to Flora Cooke Stuart
J.E.B. Stuart Papers, 1833-1962
Jones Family Papers, 1812-1930
Ladies Memorial Association of Appomattox Minute Book
Paul Hamilton Hayne Letters, 1885 March 18-June 16

Lewis Family Papers, 1856-1863
Maria Mason Tabb Hubard Diary, 1860-1862
Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917
McIntosh Family Papers, 1827-1966
Pegram-Johnson-McIntosh Family Papers, 1825-1941
Samuel Edwin Lewis Papers, 1861-1917
Smith Family Papers, 1808-1928
Stanard Family Papers, 1707-1950
Unprocessed Flora Stuart Papers (will become Stuart Family Papers, ca. 1846-1925)
Wilson Miles Cary Papers, 1877-1905

Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas
Ann Marie Turner Correspondence, 1851-1913
James L. Autry Papers, 1832-1998

Government Records

Alabama, Coosa County. 1860 U.S. Census. Population Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. August 15, 2012.

Alabama, Coosa County. 1870 U.S. Census. Population Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. August 15, 2012.

Confederate Service Record of Asa T. Martin, 12th Alabama Infantry, M311, R213, RG109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. Digital Image. Footnote.com. August 6, 2012.

Georgia. Pike County. 1860 U.S. Federal Census. Population Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. May 15, 2012.

Georgia Archives, Pike County Cemetery Records. Transcript. US GenWeb Archives. October 9, 2013. http://files.usgwarchives.net/ga/pike/cemeteries/hebron.txt

Georgia Archives Virtual Vault, Confederate Pension Applications, 1870-1960. From RG 058-01-001. Record for Mrs. Helen C. Plane. Digital Image. Accessed January 14, 2014.http://cdm.sos.state.ga.us:2011/cdm/compoundobject/collection/TestApps/id/276948/rec/1

Laws of Florida. 1861-1865.

Tennessee. Carroll County. 1870 U.S. Federal Census. Population Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. May 8, 2012.

Virginia. Frederick County. 1860 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. August 20, 2012.

Virginia. Mecklenburg County. 1860 U.S. Census. Population Schedule. Digital Image. Ancestry.com. May 8, 2012.

Published Primary Sources

Atthill, Lombe. *Clinical Lectures on Diseases Peculiar to Women*. Dublin: Fannin and Co., Seventh Edition, 1883.

Beecher, Henry Ward. *Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes foro the Use of Christian Congregations*. New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1869. January 14, 2014. http://books,google.com/ebooks.

Blair, Hugh. "Lecture 34: Philosophical Writing, Dialogue, Epistolary Writing, Fictitious History." In *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres; Chiefly from the Lectures of Dr. Blair.* Abraham Mills, A.M., ed. New York: James Conner, 1832. January 14, 2014. http://books,google.com/ebooks.

"Brig. Gen. Chas. S Winder." *Charleston Mercury*. 20 August 1862. Transcript. Accessible Archives. October 10, 2013. http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=1&AADocStyle=STYLED&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=2.14.1.0.1

Brock, R.A., ed. "The Execution of Dr. David Minton Wright: By the Federal Authorities, at Norfolk, Virginia, October 23, 1862," *Southern Historical Society Papers,* 21 (1893), 326-337. Accessed January 14, 2014. http://books.google.com/ebooks.

Catalogue of the Confederate Museum. Richmond, VA: Ware & Duke, Print, 1905. February 24, 2014. www.google.com/books.

Chesnut, Mary Boykin Miller. *A Diary From Dixie*. New York: Portland House, 1997.

"Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing Simplified…To Which is Appended the Complete Rules of Etiquette, and The usages of Society…" 1857. reprint, New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, Publishers, 1867. January 14, 2014. http://books.google.com/ebooks.

Dabney, Robert Lewis. *True Courage: A Discourse Commemorative of Lieut. General Thomas J. Jackson*. Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication of the Confederate States, 1863. From etext transcription at Documenting the American South. University Library. University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/dabney/dabney.html

Davis, Mrs. Jefferson. "The Widow of Stonewall Jackson." *The Ladies' Home Journal.* September 1893. 5.

Elliot, Rt. Rev Stephen, D.D. *Address of the Rt. Rev. Stephen Elliott, D.D., to the Thirty-ninth*

Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia. Savannah: Power Press of John M. Cooper & Company, 1861. From etext transcription at Documenting the American South. University Library. University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliott39/elliott.html

——— *Funeral Services at the Burial of the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D. Together with the Sermon Delivered in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Ga., on June 29, 1864: Being the Feast of St. Peter the Apostle.* Columbia, S.C.: Evans & Cogswell, 1864. From etext transcription at Documenting the American South. University Library. University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliotts2/elliott.html.

——— *"Vain is the Help of Man": A Sermon Preached in Christ church, Savannah, on Thursday, September 15, 1864, Being the Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, Approved by the Governor of the State of Georgia* (Macon, GA: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864). From etext transcription at Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliotts/elliotts.html

Everett, Dr. A. Brooks and Rev. B. Manly Jr., D.D. *Baptist Chorals: a tune and hymn book designed to promote general congregational singing; containing one hundred and sixty four tunes adapted to about four hundred choice hymns*. New York: Sheldon & Co., 1860. January 14, 2014. http://books,google.com/ebooks.

"Gen. Jeb Stuart Buried in Richmond: Funeral of Major Gen. Stuart." *Chicago Tribune*. 21 May 1864. Digital Image. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. October 9, 2013. http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/docview/175362414/142F7309A274FBD36AF/1?accountid=14244.

Habersham, Leila Elliot. "A Sketch of the Life of Frederick Augustus Habersham (1831-1863)*."* Quoted in Anna Habersham Wright Smith ed., *A Savannah Family 1830-1901*. Milledgeville, GA: Boyd Publishing, 1999.

Hassler, William W., ed. *One of Lee's Best Men: The Civil War Letters of General William Dorsey Pender*. 1965. reprint, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

"In Pace," *Staunton Spectator*, 26 November 1867, Vol. 45, No. 12, accessed 18 December 2013, http://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=d&d=SS18671126.1.1#

Jackson, Mary Anna. *Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson).* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892.

——— *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson By His Widow.* Louisville, KY: The Prentice Press, 1895.

Lansing, John Burrows. *Shiloh: A Sermon.* [between1861 and 1865]. From etext

transcription at Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina. http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/burrows/burrows.html

"Last Honors to the Heroes of Manassas." *Charleston Mercury*. 27 July 1861. Accessible Archives. Transcript. October 10, 2013. http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/preLog?LinkType=SERIALSSOLUTIONS&ArticleID=TheCharlestonMercury.CI1861072703.01889

London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation, Volume 12. London: William Clowes and Sons, 1867. Digital Image, March 8, 2014. www.google.com/books

Lowe, Jeffery C. and Sam Hodges, ed. *Letters to Amanda: The Civil War Letters of Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, Army of Northern Virginia*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998.

McDonald, Cornelia Peake. *A Woman's Civil War: A Diary, with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862*. Minrose C. Gwin, ed. New York: Gramercy Books, 1992.
Hill.

"Memorial Day at Savannah, GA. "*The Confederate Veteran Magazine* 3, no.5 (1895): 130-131.

Polk, William Mecklenburg. *Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General*. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1893. February 10, 2013. www.google.com/books

Ratchford, R. U. and K. C. Heise, "Confederate Pensions," *Southern Economic Journal* 5, no. 2 (1938): 207-217. Accessed February 28, 2014. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1052448.

Richey, Homer, ed. "Memorial History of the John Bowie Strange Camp, UCV (1920). February 25, 2014. Archive.org.

Seddon, James A. and War Department. *Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, 1864.* Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1864. January 14, 2014. http://books,google.com/ebooks.

The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According o the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David. New York: W.B. Gilley, 1819.

The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments; and Other Rite and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David. Philadelphia: Burns & Sieg, 1860.

"The Death of Morgan." *Charleston Mercury.* 17 September 1864. Transcript. Accessible

Archives. October 10, 2013. http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=1&AADocStyle=&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=10.1.1.3.1.

"The Late General Jackson Jackson." *Charleston Mercury*. 16 May 1863. Transcript. Accessible Archives. October 10, 2013. http://www.accessible.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/accessible/print?AADocList=6&AADocStyle=STYLED&AAStyleFile=&AABeanName=toc1&AANextPage=/printFullDocFromXML.jsp&AACheck=9.25.6.

"Third Convention Grad Division of Virginia." *Confederate Veteran*. 6 (1898): 502-503. From the etext version at The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War. Virginia Center for Digital History. University of Virginia. http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/mem/AM0032.

Wesley, Rev. Charles M.A. *Hymns for the Use of Families and on Various Occassions*. London: J. Kershaw, 1825. Second Edition.

Wharton, Mary E and Ellen F Williams, eds. *Peach Leather Rebel Gray: Bluegrass Life and the War*. Lexington, KY: The Helicon Company, 1986.

Wilson, Adelaide. *Historic and Picturesque Savannah*. Boston: Boston Photogravure Company, 1889. January 29, 2014. http://books,google.com/ebooks.

Secondary Sources

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Antonov-Ovseyenko, Anton. *The Time of Stalin: Portrait of a Tyranny*. Translated by George Saunders. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981.

Aries, Phillippe, *The Hour of Our Death*. trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Vintage Books, 1982.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Santa Fe, N.M.: Green Lion Press, 1999.

Banks II, Herbert C., ed. *United Daughters of the Confederacy*. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1999.

Benowitz, June Melby. "Johnston, Eliza Griffin," Handbook of Texas Online. February 5, 2014. http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fjoba.

Beringer, Richard E., Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr. *Why the South Lost the Civil War*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.

Berry, Stephen W. *All that Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

——— *House of Abraham: Lincoln & the Todds, A Family Divided By War*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2007, reprint 2009.

Blair, William. *Virginia's Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Bleser, Carol, ed. *In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Bleser, Carol K. and Lesley J. Gordon. *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Rev. Ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Blumer, Herbert. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. 1969; Berkley: University of California Press, 1998.

Boles, John B. *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972.

Bowlby, John. *Attachment*, Vol. 1 of *Attachment and Loss*. London: Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1969.

Brewer, Marilynn B. and Miles Hewston. *Self and Social Identity.* Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2000.

Brinch, Paul and Christopher Shelley, *The Self and Personality Structure*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002.

Brundage, W. Fitzhugh *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race Memory*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005.

Butler, Diana Hochstedt *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990).

Caner, Emir and Ergun Caner. *The Sacred Trust: Sketches of the Southern Baptist*

Convention Presidents. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003.

Cartmell, Thomas Kemp. *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederic County, Virginia.* Winchester, VA: The Eddy Press Corporation, 1909.

Catton, Bruce. *A Stillness at Appomattox*. New York: Doubleday, 1953.

Censer, Jane Turner. *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003.

Cerulo, Karen A. "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 23: 1997: 385-409.

Chesebrough, David B. *"God Ordained This War": Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991.

Clinton, Catherine. *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.

Cooley, Charles Horton. *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909.

Corsini, Cantharis Raymond J. *The Dictionary of Psychology*. New York: Brunner Routledge, 2002.

Coulter, Ellis Merton. *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947.

Cox, Karen L. *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.

Darwin, Charles. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. London: J. Murray, 1890.

Decker, Hannah, *The Making of DSM-III: A Diagnostic Manual's Conquest of American \ Psychiatry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Department of Defense, Defense Suicide Prevention Office, "Suicide and Military Families: A Report on the Feasibility of Tracking Deaths by Suicide among Military Family Members," by Jacqueline Garrick, RefID 2-819BC86. N.P: 2013. http://buildingcapacity.usc.edu/resources/Suicide%20and%20Family%20Members_DSPO_final_report.pdf. Accessed March 12, 2014.

Doka, Kenneth J. "Grief and the DSM: A Brief Q&A," *Huffington Post*, March 29, 2013. Accessed March 8, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-j-doka/grief-and-the-dsm_b_3340216.html

Edwards, Laura. "Law, Domestic Violence, and the Limits of Patriarchal Authority in the Antebellum South." *Journal of Southern History* 65:4 (1999): 733-770.

——— *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Enstad, Nan. *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Faust, Drew Gilpin. *Mothers of Invention: Women in the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

——— "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army." *The Journal of Southern History* 53(1): 63-90.

——— *Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*. The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

——— *Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992.

——— *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008).

Foner, Eric. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970);

——— *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Foote, Shelby. *The Civil War: A Narrative; Red River to Appomattox*. New York: Random House, 1974.

Fortson III, S. Donald. *The Presbyterian Creed: A Confessional Tradition in America*, *1729-1870*. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2008.

Foster, Gaines M. *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia" In *Collected Papers*. New York: Harper

Collins, 1959.

Friedman, Jean. *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Gallagher, Gary W. *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could not Stave off Defeat.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Garvey, Ellen Gruber. "Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Appropriation," *Common-Place* 7, no. 3 (April, 2007), http://www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-03/garvey/.

Glatthaar, Joseph T. *General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse*. New York: Free Press, 2008.

——— *Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia: A Statistical Portrait of the Troops Who Served under Robert E. Lee.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Grob, Gerald N. *Mental Institutions in America: Social Policy to 1875*. 1973. reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey, 2009.

Gross, Jennifer Lynn. "You All Must Do the Best You Can': The Civil War Widows of Brunswick County, Virginia, 1860-1920." M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1995.

———"'Good Angels': Confederate Widows in Virginia, in Catherine Clinton, ed. *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict during the Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

———"'Good Angels': Confederate Widowhood in the Reassurance of Patriarchy in the Postbellum South." PhD diss, University of Georgia, Athens, 2001.

———"'And for the Widow and Orphan': Confederate Widows, Poverty, and Public Assistance." In *Inside the Confederate Nation: Essays in Honor of Emory M. Thomas*. Leslie J. Gordon and John C. Inscoe eds. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.

——— "The United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate Widows, and the Lost Cause: 'We Must Not Forget or Neglect the Widows" In *Women on Their Own: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Rudolph M. Bell and Virginia Yans, ed. Piscataway, NC: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Hall, Richard H. *Women on the Civil War Battlefront*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006.

Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 1830-1870. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Hazan, C. and Shaver, P.R. "Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.* 52 (1990): 511-524.

Helfand, Jessica. *Scrapbooks: An American History.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008.

Heuvel, Sean, ed. *Life After J.E.B. Stuart: The Memoirs of His Granddaughter, Marrow Stuart Smith*. Lanham. MD: University Press of America Inc., 2012.

Heyrman, Christine. *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Holifield, E. Brooks. *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Holmes, *A Brief History of the Episcopal Church*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993.

Jalland, Patricia. *Death in the Victorian Family*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

James, William. *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One*. New York: Dover Publications, 1950.

Janney, Caroline E. *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations & the Lost Cause*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Johnson, Nan. *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910*. Carbondale: Southern University Press, 2002.

Johnson, Walter. "On Agency." *Journal of Social History.* 37, No.1 (2003): 113-124.

Jones, Wilmer L. *Generals in Blue and Gray: Davis's Generals*. Vol. 2. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004.

Kandel, Eric. *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of the Mind*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006..

Kenzer, Robert. *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County North Carolina, 1849-1881.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

——— "The Uncertainty of Life: A Profile of Virginia's Civil War Widows." In *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Kete, Mary Louise. *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969.

Laderman, Gary. *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes towards Death, 1799-1883*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.

Lebsock, Suzanne. *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985.

Lewis, S. Joseph, Jr. Ed. "Letters of William Fisher Plane, C.S.A. to His Wife." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1964): 215-228.

Loeffel-Atkins, Bernadette. *Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils: Mourning Rituals in 19th Century America*. Personal Publication, 2008, revised.

Maj, Mario. "Bereavement-related depression in the DSM-5 and ICD-11, *World Psychiatry* 11, no. 1 (2012), 1-2. Accessed U.S. National Library of Medicine. March 8, 2014. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3266754/

Manross, Reverand William Wilson. *A History of the American Episcopal Church*. New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co, 1950.

Mathews, Donald G. *Religion in the Old South*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Miller, Randall M. Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds. *Religion and the American Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

McClurken, Jeffrey. *To Care of the Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Northern Virginia*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

McCurry, Stephanie. *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

———*Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

McPherson, James. *For Cause & Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Moore, Albert Burton. *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy*. 1924. Reprint, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996.

Mullin, Robert Bruce *Episcopal Vision/American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

National Archives. "Confederate Pension Records." Accessed February 28, 2014. http://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html

Olick, Jeffery. "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," Sociological Theory, 17 (November 1999), 333-48.

Rable, George C. *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Ramage, James A. *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986.

Rankin, Richard. *Ambivalent Churchmen and Evangelical Churchwomen the Religion of the Episcopal Elite in North Carolina, 1800-1860*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993.

Reardon, Carol. *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina. 1997.

Reddy, William M. "Historical Research on the Self and Emotions," *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009), 302-315.

———*The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Renda, Mary A. *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation & the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Rhodes, James Ford. *History of the Civil War, 1861-1865*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917.

Ridgway, Richard F. *Self-Sufficiency at All Costs: Confederate Post Office Operations in North Carolina, 1861-1865*. Charlotte: North Carolina Postal History Society, 1988.

Robins, Glenn. *The Bishop of the Old South: The Ministry and Civil War Legacy of Leonidas Polk.* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006.

Rubin, Anne Sarah. *A Shattered Nation: the Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Scott, Anne Firor. *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Schantz, Mark S. *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Schweiger, Beth Barton. *The Gospel Working Up: Progress and the Pulpit in Nineteenth-Century Virginia*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Sheehan-Dean, Aaron, "The Long Civil War: A Historiography of the Consequences of the Civil War," *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* 119, no. 2 (March 2011): 106. *MasterFile Complete, EBSCOhost.* Accessed March 17, 2014.

Skinner, Sidney E. *An Introduction to Homeopathic Medicine in Primary Care.* Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers, 2001.

Smith, Anna Habersham Wright, ed. *A Savannah Family 1830-1901*. Milledgeville, GA: Boyd Publishing, 1999.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th Century America" *Social Research* 39 (1972): 652-678. Reprint in *Disorderly Conduct : Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Stearns, Peter N. and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985):813-836.

Stearns, Peter N. and Jan Lewis, eds. *An Emotional History of the United States.* New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Stephens, Scott. "Authoring the Good Death: Illness, Deathbed Narratives, and Women's Authority." In *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Stowell, Daniel W. "Stonewall Jackson and the Providence of God." In Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, ed. *Religion in the American Civil War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Stramm, Polly Powers. "Savannah Widows' Society May Be One of the City's Best Kept \ Secrets." *Savannah Morning News.* Accessed August 21, 2013.

http://savannahnow.com/stories/112403/LOC_stramm.shtml.

Stroebe, Margaret. et al.. "Broken Hearts or Broken Bonds: Love and Death in Historical Perspective." *American Psychologist.* 47, no. 10 (1992): 1205-1212.

Theriot, Nancy. " Diagnosing Unnatural Motherhood: Nineteenth-Century Physicians and "Puerperal Insanity." In Judith Walzer Leavitt ed., *Women in Health in America: Historical Readings*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Thomas, Edison H. *John Hunt Morgan and His Raiders*. 1975. reprint, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985.

Tucker, Susan, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, eds. *The Scrapbook in American Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.

Volo, James M. and Dorothy Denneen Volo. *Family Life in 19th-Century America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007.

Wagner, Margaret E., Gary W. Gallagher, and Paul Finkelman, eds. *The Library of Congress Civil War Desk Reference*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2002.

Wallenstein, Peter. "Laissez Faire and the Lunatic Asylum: State Welfare Institutions in Georgia—the First Half Century, 1830s-1880s." In *Before the New Deal: Social Welfare in the South from Colonial Times to World War I*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999.

Wells, Robert V. *Facing the "King of Terrors": Death and Society in an American Community, 1750-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Wert, Jeffrey D. *Cavalrymen of the Lost Cause: A Biography of J.E.B. Stuart.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.

Wilson, Charles Reagan. *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980.

Wilson, Lisa. *Life After Death: Widows in Pennsylvania 1750-1850*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

Wilson, Mary L. "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia: The Programs and the People." PhD diss, University of North Texas, 2004.

Wisner, Elizabeth. *Social Welfare in the South from Colonial Times to World War I*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999, orig. 1990.

Wood, Kirsten E. *Masterful Women: Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution Through the Civil War.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Woodworth, Steven E. *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001.

Worden, William J. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 3rd Ed. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2002.

Wright, Catherine M. "Flora Cooke Stuart." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. January 10, 2014. http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Stuart_Flora_Cooke_1836-1923

Wurgaft, Lewis D. "Identity in World History: A Postmodern Perspective," *History and Theory* 34, no. 2 (1995): 67-85.